

TRI-MUNICIPAL **REGIONAL** PLAN



Phase 5

Final Cultural Strategy – Version 6

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural strategies enable local governments to identify, leverage and strengthen cultural resources and integrate those resources across all facets of local and regional planning. Culture strategies are developed with the collaboration and input from arts and culture stakeholders, municipal staff, and the broader community. The **Tri-Municipal Regional Strategy** represents a holistic and coordinated effort to enhance and formalize collaboration across the region in terms of land use, services, infrastructure, and operational deployment. Furthermore, it signals a laudable recognition by the participating municipalities of the evidenced interdependencies between the arts, culture, heritage, recreation, social services, and economic development.

Methodology and Process

In July 2020, the Tri-Municipal Region engaged Nordicity to develop a sustainable, cost-effective, and comprehensive Cultural Strategy on behalf of the City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain, and Parkland County (the Tri-Municipal Region), as part of the larger Tri-Municipal Regional Plan. In order to establish a baseline understanding, the Project Team first conducted an assessment of cultural undertakings for the Tri-Municipal Region, including art, culture and heritage. To fulfil this mandate, Nordicity deployed a mixed-methods approach described below:

- ◆ A **Document Review** including existing plans, documents, and materials from each municipal partner, as outlined in the Tantus Document Catalogue.
- ◆ **Internal Interviews** with 12 stakeholders across Parkland County, Spruce Grove and the Stony Plain.
- ◆ A **Comparative Jurisdiction Review** of comparable regional and municipal approaches to culture, including governance models, funding, and leading practices. The review included primary and secondary research into how municipalities with a comparable population size and geography are delivering arts and culture services to their communities. Strathcona County, the Regional District of Fraser Fort George (RDFFG), and Hastings County + Quinte Region were identified as similar jurisdictions pursuing regional cultural strategies. Nordicity developed case studies highlighting their individual relevance to the Tri-Municipal Region (Appendix C).

The findings from the research described above were then presented to Tri-Municipal Regional representatives in a validation and visioning session. The workshop focused on discussing the findings as they relate to future directions for the cultural strategy, which directly informed the development of the strategic priorities described in Section 5.

This Cultural Strategy provides a preliminary Vision Statement and Principles (Section 4) as well as Strategic Priorities, Objectives, and Supporting Actions (Section 5) to set a roadmap for achieving the goals of the plan and Implementation Considerations (Section 6). Where possible, the Implementation Considerations include recommendations on effectively integrating the Cultural Strategy into the wider, regional planning process.

Note, this strategic planning document responds directly to the Tri-Municipal Region's interest in working together regionally to produce efficiencies and enhance cultural benefits. The strategic priorities have been guided by the Tri-Municipal Regional Strategy's overarching objective to optimize services through closer collaboration – producing more impactful outcomes, more efficiently, across the three municipalities.

2. STATE OF CULTURE

The Tri-Municipal Region is home to three distinct yet interconnected communities, each with their own unique offerings to residents and visitors alike. While this document highlights the unique strengths of these localities throughout, this section provides a brief overview of the demographic, economic, and social factors that impact regional cultural planning processes:

- ◆ As one of the largest and highest populated rural municipalities in Alberta, **Parkland County** boasts rich natural heritage and is home to long-standing generations of families steeped in agricultural traditions.
- ◆ Touted as the “Community of Choice” for its residents, with modern amenities and proximity to Edmonton, **Spruce Grove** offers families a strong mix of community, commerce, and industry, acting as a central hub for sports, recreation and cultural activities.
- ◆ **Stony Plain** is a vibrant community rich in cultural heritage and pioneer history. Its close proximity to Edmonton and major highways allows residents to enjoy a close-knit community while being close to major commercial centres.

Demographic and Geographic Context

The Tri-Municipal Region spans more than 600,000 acres and is home to nearly 86,000 residents, populated as follows:

- ◆ Parkland County: 32,097¹
- ◆ City of Spruce Grove: 35,766²
- ◆ Town of Stony Plain: 17,842³



**~86,000 residents in
the Tri-Municipal
Region**

Each of the municipalities is expected to grow in the coming years and decades, with high-end estimates suggesting that the City of Spruce Grove, alone, could be home to more than 100,000 residents by 2067.^{4,5} While the region is growing, it is also an **aging population**. As a result, the nature of the services required is shifting, as is the need for residents to be closer to the services offered. In addition, the region is welcoming a growing proportion of **newcomers** to the area, and also remains home to growing **First Nations communities**, including the Enoch Cree and Paul First Nation. These demographic dynamics are noted as important opportunities to advance **inclusion** within the community.

Geographic considerations are also key. Indeed, the push-pull factors linked to being proximate to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, such as cost of living and access to commercial centre services, are taken into account across all municipal planning, but primarily, of

Proximity to Edmonton

“We have access to the airport in 45 mins. [The Tri-Region’s] western boundary is only half an hour to Edmonton. You could live in Stony Plain and work in Edmonton. We don’t promote this enough.” – *Internal Municipal Staff Member*

¹ 2016 Federal Census

² City of Spruce Grove Demographic Report 2018

³ Town of Stony Plain website and Municipal Census Demographic Report

⁴ Spruce Grove Growth Study 2016. Overall figures for all municipalities may be updated to reflect Population Forecast data from Applications Management Team.

⁵ Note, this figure will need to be updated when the centralized forecast becomes available.

course, for Spruce Grove. Other considerations, such as the East/West demographic divide within Parkland County, whereby the western neighbourhoods are more sparsely populated than eastern, are important factors when considering the accessibility of cultural services and offerings. The Tri-Municipal Region's unique character straddling 'country charm' and easy access to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, further exemplifies the importance of an integrated and coordinated approach to cultural service delivery and programming.

Policy Context

The collective approach to the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan demonstrates the interconnectedness of culture, recreation, social services, and economic development. In turn, this Regional Cultural Strategy builds on existing cultural strategies developed by each of the municipalities, described below:

- ◆ The Stony Plain's Cultural Master Plan, published in 2012, was updated in 2020 to an Arts, Culture & Heritage Action Plan working from goals established in 2012.
- ◆ Spruce Grove's Cultural Master Plan, published in 2016, has laid the foundation for increased investment in cultural activities in the city.
- ◆ Parkland County's 2017 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan incorporated culture into its strong suit of parks and recreation assets, while recognizing the need to continue cost-sharing with Stony Plain and Spruce Grove.

The municipalities also collaborate through Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework agreements, separate to working within the Tri-Municipal Region, which comprise of Parkland County, Stony Plain, and Spruce Grove. Indeed, coordinated planning efforts have included:

- ◆ Cost-sharing agreements for operating cultural assets and events located in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain (as described below);
- ◆ Wider strategic plans such as the EMRB Regional Growth Plan and Labour Market Profiles; and,
- ◆ Targeted planning initiatives such as the 2017 Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy for the Tri-Municipal Region and operationalization of the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre.

Cultural Spending

Cultural spending varies greatly across the three municipalities. In total, the \$2,612,128 that was spent on culture between the three municipalities equals almost \$30.5 per capita in the region. Cultural spending for each municipality, however, is highlighted below:

- ◆ Parkland County: \$277,299⁶
- ◆ City of Spruce Grove: \$1,554,000⁷
- ◆ Town of Stony Plain: \$780,829⁸



**\$2.61m spent on culture
in 2018 in the region**

In addition to supporting operational costs, the budgets support direct community grants such as the Community Initiatives Program in Stony Plain and

⁶ Given Parkland County 2018 Financial Statements do not breakdown operating budgets beyond *Community Services*, this figure was provided by Parkland County staff for 2019, which include contributions to the Pioneer Museum, the Multicultural Heritage Centre, Horizon Stage and municipal art maintenance.

⁷ City of Spruce Grove Consolidated Financial Statements December 31, 2018.

⁸ Figure provided by Cultural Services staff for 2019, including salaries for staff and spending on programming and events.

Spruce Grove, and Parkland County's Community Association Grant. Culture is also supported through municipal capital budgets, such as operating reserves for public art in the Town of Stony Plain.

The municipalities also support culture through **cost sharing agreements** to provide regional access to 'anchor' cultural facilities, which has led to strong working relationships based on an understanding of each municipality's strengths. These agreements include the Horizon Stage Cost Sharing Agreement between Parkland County and the City of Spruce Grove. In addition, Stony Plain and Parkland County, respectively, have their own agreements with both the Multicultural Heritage Centre and the Pioneer Museum.

Current Staffing Structure

Staff dedicated to cultural services vary significantly between the three municipalities, reflecting the identities of each municipality, their respective populations, and their unique cultural strengths and assets. Staffing levels and responsibilities are described below and expanded on in Appendix A:

- ◆ Parkland County's **.25 FTE** liaises with cultural services from other municipalities as well as manages the municipal art collection and plans the volunteer development program.
- ◆ City of Spruce Grove's **11.8 FTE** are responsible for managing Horizon Stage, hosting larger community events, and managing the City's art collection. This includes participation in the Canada Day hospitality team.
- ◆ Town of Stony Plain's **2.5 FTE** are responsible for cultural and tourism services, events, and programming, and currently support related economic development and capacity building initiatives.

Cultural Asset Inventory

The Tri-Municipal Region is home to **134 creative and cultural industry businesses**. It was commonly agreed that Stony Plain is the richest in creative industry activity, including in music, fine craft, photography, design, and performing arts.

With the largest number of creative and cultural industry operators in the sub-region, Stony Plain is also bolstered by its heritage assets and attractions such as its Mural Program.



205 creative and cultural organizations in the region

With **71 community cultural organizations**⁹, the Tri-Region offers something for everyone – from pottery to multicultural learning opportunities. These organizations are the pillars of the Tri-Region's cultural identity, strengthened by volunteers and community members at the grassroots level.

The region is also home to a **large variety of collections and archived works**. Parkland County's Municipal Arts Program has built a significant visual art collection, displayed for the public at the Parkland County Centre, holding 87 works of art.¹⁰ Located in Stony Plain, the Pioneer Museum and the

⁹ While the mainstream cultural assets across the sub-region are often accounted for, it is noted that there is a 'basement economy' (as described by internal staff) of creatives that are not necessarily reflected in official figures. As noted in interviews, some of these 'underground' artists are located throughout Parkland County, home to fewer registered organizations

¹⁰ Parkland County website – Arts and Culture

Multicultural Heritage Centre are home to collections and archives chronicling the various aspects of the sub-region's history. The City of Spruce Grove's public art collection, supported by Melcor Developments Ltd., has attained over 200 pieces since its establishment in 1982.



184 heritage assets in the region

Out of **110 natural heritage assets** in the Tri-Region, Parkland County is home to the largest number of parks and trails (nearly half of the regions total with 58), offering residents from all municipalities an opportunity to explore the region's diverse and expansive natural heritage. This asset is by far

Parkland County's strength, drawing visitors regularly from the Edmonton area.

Stony Plain is largely responsible for hosting the majority (54%) of the region's **74 cultural heritage assets**, followed by Spruce Grove. The Multicultural Centre, Pioneer Museum, Potters' Guild, and new Library are flagship cultural institutions that anchor the downtown and create a cultural corridor within Stony Plain.

The Tri-Municipal Region hosts **46 festivals and events yearly**. Of those, Canada Day celebrations in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain are some of the most widely attended, and each offers unique experiences that attract thousands of visitors from around the region. Others include: Blueberry Bluegrass^{*11}, Intergenerational Dinners, Cowboy Poetry*, Grove Cruise*, the Concert Series* and Family Fest.

The Tri-Region is home to **121 cultural facilities and spaces**. This category includes schools and religious institutions, as noted in Spruce Grove's comparative analysis within its Cultural Master Plan. Spruce Grove is home to the highest number of cultural facilities and spaces. Horizon Stage Performing Arts Centre, Spruce Grove's 318-seat theatre, is a centerpiece for the sub-region within the arts and is supported by Parkland County. Stony Plain has numerous institutions with cultural facilities. Previously mentioned anchor institutions include the Multicultural Heritage Centre, the Public Library and the Pioneer Museum.



121 cultural facilities and assets in the region

Parkland County Community Halls

"20-30 years ago, community halls were the cultural hubs. That's one of [Parkland County's] strengths and there are opportunities in this."
– Municipal Staff Member

Parkland County also enjoys numerous gathering places, primarily due to the number of **community halls**, which are counted as cultural centres as well as multi-purpose facilities. While not providing specific cultural offerings or services given their more prominent service being recreational programming, these community halls still act as central community 'hubs' and gathering spaces for the Parkland County community.

Stony Plain's historic Old Town and proliferation of **murals and public art** has developed a recognition among residents that it remains the cultural heart of the area. It is well known for its outdoor paintings commissioned via the

¹¹ Events with an asterisk (*), including in events noted in Table 5, are organizationally-run, independent of the Town of Stony Plain and the City of Spruce Grove.

murals program and accompanied by horse and wagon tours. Over 39 murals are located throughout downtown and surrounding areas, and artworks have been created by 23 different artists from across Canada. The highlighting of **Indigenous culture and heritage** through public art is also a part of each municipal cultural plan. Stony Plain's Aboriginal Medicine Wheel is an example of ongoing programs to highlight Indigenous culture.

3. DEPARTURE POINTS

This section outlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified through the research phase, namely the document review and interviews with 12 municipal staff members from across Parkland County, the City of Spruce Grove and the Town of Stony Plain. From **pioneering heritage** to the legacy of **longstanding organizations**, the sub-region holds several **unique attributes** that bring about many opportunities, despite persisting challenges. The following table highlights the most high-level themes drawn from research, while the following sub-sections provide a more detailed outline of commonly identified themes across the Tri-Municipal Region.

Table 1: High-level SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
◆ Multiple offerings – natural heritage (Parkland County), cultural heritage (Stony Plain), performing arts and recreation (Spruce Grove) ◆ Collaboration is valued over competition - history of resource sharing and long-term partnerships ◆ Deep understanding of each municipality's unique strengths ◆ Strong sense of community connecting the region – residents do not see borders	◆ Lack of capacity/resources within cultural services staff ◆ Lack of standardized and formalized working agreements ◆ Implementation of current cultural plans deemed challenging, and state of implementation of certain actions is unclear (capacity, resources, and funding) ◆ The sub-region is perceived as a 'bedroom community', limiting possibility for community-building and engagement with culture ◆ Staff turnover (i.e. cultural champions leave) means prior collaborations are discontinued
Opportunities	Threats
◆ Increased collaboration for a strengthened regional approach to culture ◆ Leveraging tourism, including attracting more interested visitors/partners from Edmonton ◆ Further empowering community-based organizations ◆ Standardizing the approach to collaboration and resource sharing agreements	◆ Potentially increased challenge of drawing Edmontonians to cultural events ◆ Sustained lack of purpose-built cultural facilities (e.g. dance, theatre) ◆ Current demographic shifts and changing lifestyles (i.e. working from home, reluctance to attend events)

History of Regional Complementarity

The strength of the Tri-Municipal Region's cultural identity is found in its **various and diverse communities**. There is a deep understanding of each other's unique offerings: Parkland County with its rich and expansive natural heritage, Stony Plain's historic downtown and commitment to creative endeavours, and Spruce Grove's strengths in recreation and the performing arts. While the municipalities that make up the sub-region are unique in their identities, they are indeed complementary and respondents report there is a desire to further leverage each other's unique attributes. Despite their own strengths, this does not mean that cultural offerings need to be siloed within the sub-region. While Spruce Grove is most known for housing Horizon Stage, City representatives identified an opportunity for the cultural department to encourage alternative and non-traditional streams of culture, outside of performing arts.

Long-Standing Inter-municipal Partnerships

As previously introduced, the complementary relationship between the three municipalities means that **cost and resource sharing** is a key characteristic (and ongoing requirement) of the region's cultural offer. Indeed, the **Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (2014)** indicates a recognition of the Tri-Municipal Advantage and the benefit of sustainable partnerships. Internal staff noted that historically, some agreements have existed as 'gentlemen handshakes', meaning that they are not standardized or formalized but rather dependent on the goodwill of each benefitting organization. Internal stakeholders noted that as these relationships develop and as population size grows, there will be a need to **formalize agreements** so that each municipality can count on one another to deliver on cost sharing and resource sharing agreements. Current weaknesses identified in this area include a **lack of accountability** between municipalities (i.e. a lack of long term commitment to joint initiatives), and there is opportunity for all agreements to reflect the successes of joint agreements that have resulted in stronger collaboration.

"All of us work so closely together. We have the same programs, different buildings, and there are ways to do resource development more efficiently." – *Municipal Staff Member*

Strong Partnerships with Community and Businesses

Artist and community resiliency, grassroots organizations, and **community-led efforts in delivering cultural programming are key assets** to the sub-region's cultural identity. Particularly in Parkland County, where there is no dedicated cultural services team, artists and creative communities typically come together to form partnerships and alliances that benefit residents across the three municipalities.

There is an understanding that culture is not siloed and, rather, has potential to strengthen other sectors, including the **economic development** of the region. For example, direct investment is strengthened by the existence of cultural amenities and programs that improve the attraction and retention of employees in the Tri-Municipal Region. Stony Plain has recognized the wider **interdependency of culture and economic development**, particularly within the context of housing developments, whereby developers often ask "*where is the community?*" and "*who is promoting culture?*" when assessing viability of new projects. The intersection of economic development and culture has played out in growing cities globally, with an emphasis on the potential for the *creative class* (artists, designers, creators, and knowledge-based professionals) to be a clustering force for urban revival and a driving force for economic development. Of course, the creative and innovative growth

trajectory path requires continued attention to matters of equity and access, as addressed in Strategic Priority 4 and across contemporary movements advocating for inclusive urbanism.

Along with the identification of some **untapped potential for community partnerships**, there are too few alternative funding sources for culture. While the sub-region considers new ways to attract investment, **there is no standardized method by which municipalities seek out and give out grants or external funding**, and limited capacity to engage in such activity.

Lack of Capacity for Regional Collaboration

While Spruce Grove has a larger team of cultural service professionals¹² than Stony Plain, which has one culture and tourism officer and some support from Community Services, Parkland County is able to benefit from those staff members through contributing to the cost of running cultural facilities and events (e.g. Horizon Stage). Despite these mutual benefits, there is difficulty in organizing for more collaborative efforts. Noted during engagement with internal staff was a **lack of existing capacity** to liaise effectively between Parkland County, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. The cost of coordination is also a challenge and linked to current financial and staffing constraints. Currently, there is no collective, unified brand through which the Tri-Regional cultural sector operates, making the prospect of increased collaboration challenging, despite the longer-term benefits. Addressing this challenge will need to be viewed through the lens of the potential benefits of collaboration across all projects within the larger Tri-Municipal Regional Plan.

Few Purpose-Built Spaces

“We get very random questions from people looking for a space to practice their medium especially around Stony Plain. We really don’t have it- maybe it’s time for a joint theatre outside of the high school space. **We need a space for creating.** How can we make it collaborative without huge cost of rent?” – *Municipal Staff Member*

Identified as lacking within the Tri-Municipal Region are purpose-built cultural infrastructure to advance the vibrancy of the region’s urban cores and improve cultural access for its residents and visitors.

Spruce Grove’s Horizon Stage, for example, has been a **cultural hub** for the sub-region, bringing a wide range of performances to residents and bolstering the creative and arts community. As a space where people come together, it brings both **tangible and intangible benefits**, like many cultural offerings and services. Social media has proven a useful resource for

garnering high-quality performances, often leveraged to ask residents what they would like to see more of at Horizon Stage.

However, Spruce Grove would like to be recognized for more than just Horizon Stage, and Parkland County and Stony Plain have numerous cultural organizations spaces and interested parties who wish to see a **greater diversity and utility of available spaces**. Indeed, while intangible and tangible benefits have arisen from Horizon Stage’s offerings, there is greater need throughout the sub-region for different and purpose-built spaces. An example of this is a lack of dance rehearsal and performance space in Stony Plain, as such activity often requires bussing school children to **neighbouring municipalities** for access to appropriate facilities. This is the case for many dance studios in the region, such as KaRAR

¹² However, as noted in the State of Culture, Spruce Grove has had to reduce the cultural services team size due to COVID-19.

Performing Arts¹³, a Stony Plain dance studio, where performances take place in Fort Saskatchewan due to a lack of adequate purpose-built space more locally.

Recognizing similar needs, the Arts & Culture Facility Plan and Conceptual Design study conducted by the Town of Stony Plain in December 2019 reviewed the sub-region's spaces inventory and solutions. Recommendations included in this plan included a "new build option" and/or renovation or purchasing of existing facilities as potential solutions to this universally felt need for cultural space. Likewise, Spruce Grove's Cultural Master Plan indicated two actions related to the building of a Cultural Centre, including "undertaking a feasibility study for building a Cultural Centre in the City Centre" (Action 8.2) and "examining the potential" for a "large performing arts facility (550-800 seat)" (Action 11.1).

The lack of a **modern performance venue** is a key weakness for the region. This gap means that many in the community do not have the space they need to thrive, and a potential visitor draw from outside the sub-region (e.g. Edmonton) remains a missed opportunity.

Underused Existing Space for Culture

Interviews and existing cultural plans also indicated the current **lack of creative placemaking initiatives** and multi-purposing of facilities for culture. Discussed frequently in interviews was the existence of red tape and **bureaucratic processes** maintained by municipalities, making community-driven cultural events challenging, particularly for the use of municipal-owned space. It is important to recognize that prioritizing the building of a new cultural space may not be feasible within coming years due to fiscal constraints. Stated in the Tri-Region Indoor Facility Study (2017), recreation planning initiatives were to prioritize the integration of culture into facilities, but the extent to which this has been implemented is unclear.

"It's less about creating anything new and instead looking at what we already have."
– Municipal Staff Member

Need for Improved Accessibility, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

"We need less red tape, particularly when it comes to **spontaneous cultural activities**. It takes a lot of hoop jumping – **we put up barriers instead of making it easier.**" – Municipal Staff Member

With changing demographics, such as an aging population and an increasing number of newcomers, the sub-region is **experiencing shifting cultural values** which are impacting the kinds of cultural services and offerings most desired by residents and creatives alike. Evolving norms and values, a recognition of the **benefits of diversity and inclusion**, and the need to make cultural assets accessible to children, seniors, and all those in between, are priorities across all three municipalities. Changing norms and the need for greater awareness has allowed for gender-based analysis training at the municipal staff level, notably at the City of Spruce Grove.

The **accessibility** of culture and cultural facilities is also an important consideration. Within Spruce Grove for example, roughly 70% of all facilities are religious institutions (e.g. churches) and schools.¹⁴ Spruce Grove's Cultural Master Plan acknowledged that not all facilities open their doors to support community cultural activity, particularly if facility owners and artists/performers/cultural organizations have

¹³ KaRAR is a not-for-profit dance studio.

¹⁴ Spruce Grove Culture Master Plan.

differing values. The Tri-Municipal Region should look to make spaces, facilities, and events used for culture **as accessible as possible**, while also allowing residents to explore and experience culture in non-traditional and spontaneous ways.

Within the context of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is careful consideration of **Indigenous heritage, history, and the First Nations communities** which have long cared for the land on which the Tri-Municipal Region is located. More specifically, each cultural plan indicates engagement with First Nations communities as a priority. Listed are samples of what has been noted as existing cultural planning goals and actions:

- ◆ Parkland County's Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan notes the priority of "**improving communication and collaboration with Aboriginal communities** in the County and explore programming opportunities", particularly through the Municipal Art Program.
- ◆ Similarly, Stony Plain's Goal #1 within its Action Plan is to "expand upon the successes of the Mural Program to introduce new murals that **highlight contemporary and Indigenous stories** throughout Downtown."
- ◆ In the same vein, Spruce Grove has prioritized using public art as a means for celebrating and highlight Indigenous culture in the region: "Leverage the power of public art to **increase the profile for Aboriginal communities** within Spruce Grove. Whenever possible use Aboriginal artists to produce this work."

It is unclear to what extent the above actions been implemented since the publishing of the respective cultural plans. While the lack of expression on Indigenous engagement by municipal staff engaged is not necessarily indicative of sub-regional priorities, it does indicate that the opportunity to lead reconciliation efforts has yet to be actioned.

The Challenge in Balancing Support vs. Service Delivery

Limited capacity to achieve all objectives set out in existing cultural plans was noted by some municipal staff, primarily due to a lack of resources and funding. With this challenge in mind, there is a desire to balance community-led efforts in culture with services which are delivered by municipalities, to leverage the strengths of a resilient cultural and creative community that engages residents in as optimized fashion as possible. This need becomes all the more important given minimal **staff capacity and fiscal constraints**.

There is also a notable gap in the provision of the tools and frameworks needed for cultural organizations to take a more active role in cultural service delivery. This lack of formalized support is also closely tied with **implementation and feasibility** challenges – i.e. determining who is paying for events and facilities, and who is responsible for maintenance.

The Impact of COVID-19

Permeating the above considerations is the recognition of the unprecedented times in which this plan has been developed. Recent months have impacted every industry to varying degrees, including the cultural sector, making the need to come together to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic all more urgent. Similarly, municipal governments around the world are currently navigating their responses to the crisis and its impact on the creative and cultural sector.

The secondary data that informed this report was collected prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Municipal staff (who were interviewed during COVID-19 in August and September 2020) noted that recent months have brought the **fragility of work in arts culture** to the forefront. There was wide agreement around the need to come together to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic to alleviate **uncertainty and instability**.

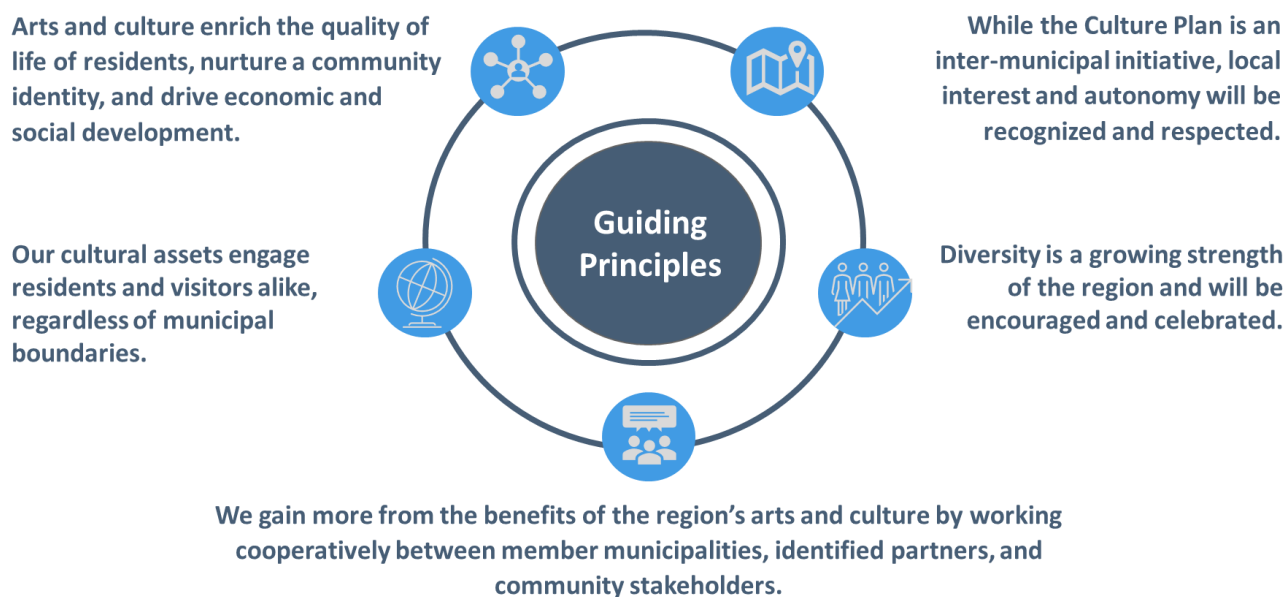
While the total long-term impact is unknown at the time of this research, there is already evidence that the cultural sector has and will continue to be especially hard-hit. In monitoring developing challenges, it has yet to be seen to what extent cultural and creative sector organizations have experienced success in pivoting to online exhibitions and performances (e.g. art galleries, museums, performing arts groups). Such considerations will be important as planning processes factor in current and future constraints, and they have informed the development of the following vision, guiding principles, and strategic priorities that are designed to empower the sector to recover and thrive in the 'new normal'.

4. VISION STATEMENT

The aforementioned Departure Points have directed the vision for the future of cultural planning in the Tri-Municipal Region by highlighting strengths and challenges, as well as internal and external factors impacting the unique communities that each municipality serves.

In years to come, the Tri-Municipal Region will be home to **a coordinated, inclusive network of diverse arts and cultural opportunities that draw on the Tri-Municipal Region's rich heritage and changing regional dynamics.**

Figure 1: Guiding Principles



5. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following section outlines Strategic Priorities, informed by the Departure Points, the State of Culture findings, and the review of comparable jurisdictions' approach to regional arts and culture planning (Appendix C). The Strategic Priorities aim to guide the Tri-Municipal Region towards more connected, collaborative, and inclusive cultural programming. The following table offers an overview of Strategic Priorities, Objectives, and Supporting Actions designed to help the Tri-Municipal Region to reach its goals.

Table 2: Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority 1: Collaboration and Accountability	Strategic Priority 2: A Community Supported through Culture	Strategic Priority 3: Space for Everyone	Strategic Priority 4: Equal Opportunities, Inclusivity, Celebration of Diversity
Tri-municipal partners work collaboratively in support of a regional vision for culture driven by complementarities rather than competition	Arts and cultural organizations and businesses in the Tri-Municipal Region are supported in their growth and feel empowered in shaping the community's future	The Tri-Municipal Region is a place where everyone has equal access to cultural facilities and spaces that meet needs and nurture a strong cultural ecosystem	The Tri-Municipal Region is welcoming, inclusive, celebrates diversity, and tackles societal barriers that hinder cultural participation
Formalize municipal roles within regional cultural services to increase accountability, coordination mechanisms and collective leadership	Enhance community capacities to leverage the social and economic impacts of arts and culture	Repurpose existing space for culture	Improve knowledge and understanding of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) needs by municipalities
Further develop a unified regional brand that drives sustainable cultural heritage tourism	Advance third-party service delivery for a shared cultural offer that counters existing duplications	Build a new, partnership driven, purpose-built space – i.e. Regional Cultural Hub	Ensure that Indigenous voices and stories are reflected in ongoing cultural planning
	Creative economy strategies are integrated into economic development planning		Ensure that arts and cultural offers are diverse and inclusive to engage all residents

Each Strategic Priority is explicated in the following sections. Recommended Strategic Priorities are broken down into Objectives with accompanying Actions that are short term (1-3 years), medium term (3-5 years) and long term (5-10+ years). Implementation Considerations (Section 6) following the Strategic Priorities outline estimated costing and suggested resources to carry out short term actions. It is also important to note that there are assumptions built into the accompanying Actions, meaning that some medium- and long-term Actions assume the occurrence of preceding recommended short-term actions.

Strategic Priority 1: Collaboration & Accountability

Leading practice and literature on cultural planning and development suggests that a regional approach can be immensely impactful to communities and cultural organizations alike if the institutions that support them work collaboratively with one another. The Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC) report *Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture*¹⁵ examines cultural development in small towns and larger rural areas. The report found that cultural activities support capacity building, empowerment, collaboration, expanded networking opportunities, and transformation. This can be done most effectively in rural, tight-knit, and growing communities like those within the Tri-Municipal Region through a **capacity building approach to regional development**.

More **intentional and diverse collaboration** through a regional approach to culture would allow for the region to effectively leverage one another's strengths and offerings. Celebrating the **diverse cultural portfolio** of each municipality, while also building on each one's strengths, will position all groups to benefit. The Town of Stony Plain's consideration of wayfinding signage for a 'cultural corridor',¹⁶ for example, could be extended to Spruce Grove and Parkland County to highlight regional cultural assets through **joint tourism initiatives**.

As sub-regional relationships develop and as population size grows, it will be important to **formalize agreements** in areas where informal activity has historically taken place. For example, this could include developing a standard collaboration approval and actualization process to enhance current collaborative efforts and

establishing a Regional Cultural Services Advisory Board to take ownership of selected actions. This formalized approach will help to ensure that each municipality can count on one another, allowing unified cultural services and programming to thrive into the future. As highlighted in the Comparative Jurisdiction Review (Appendix C), the collaborative approach undertaken by the Regional District of Fraser Fort George (RDFFG) has effectively offered opportunities for the pooling of resources and cost-sharing. This formalization has included employing a full-time Cultural and Communications Coordinator to oversee the implementation of the regional cultural plan and marketing strategy, mandating that larger directly-funded cultural sites provide curatorial support to smaller ones as part of their funding agreements. Meanwhile, a lack of dedicated staff and formalized agreements has posed challenges in achieving the ambitions of Hasting County + Quinte Region's shared cultural plan. Improved formality between tri-municipal partners would likely allow for more **trust to be built between municipalities** and building on a number of successful cost share agreements. Assessing the foundation already built by past joint projects such as the regional tourism planning to date (e.g. reviewing where challenges occurred) will allow for further formalization and trust going forward.

Clarity on cost-sharing for culture will facilitate improved collaboration. While average per capita spending in municipalities can vary significantly, it is worth noting that the Tri-Municipal Region's combined allocation (\$30.5) is higher than the Canadian average (\$19.22), comparator regions like RDFFG (\$19.53), or even

¹⁵ Creative City Network of Canada (2009). *Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Culture*.

¹⁶ Town of Stony Plain Arts Culture & Heritage Action Plan Goal #2.

large cities like Calgary (\$11.31).¹⁷ This relatively high level of spending per capita indicates a solid departure point for future fiscal support for culture (including opportunities for collaboration), while remaining sensitive to fiscal constraints in each municipality.

Identified equally through the following supporting actions for collaboration and accountability is a need to **clarify the current relevancy and prioritization of the goals and action items** mandated in each respective cultural plan. Indeed, this clarification would aim to define what regional initiatives may be of interest to some but not necessarily all three municipal partners. Going forward, the use of a *scorecard* will enable a more targeted approach to identifying the progress of a Tri-Regional Cultural Plan, (i.e. measurable goals and action items within coming years). As centralized collaborative efforts develop, a *Regional Cultural Liaison*, and a *Regional Cultural Advisory Committee* are other levers to ensure synergistic planning and sustainable accountability.

¹⁷ Based on Nordicity research.

Goal: Tri-municipal partners work collaboratively in support of a regional vision for culture, driven by complementarities rather than competition

Objective 1.1: Formalize municipal roles within regional cultural services to increase accountability, coordination mechanisms and collective leadership		
Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions	Long Term Actions
Formalize municipal cost-sharing agreements and related conditions between municipal stakeholders	Establish a Cultural Services Advisory Committee	Employ a <i>Regional Cultural Liaison</i> and recruit <i>Advisory Committee</i> members; create task-based working groups to oversee implementation of specific actions of the Regional Cultural Plan
Align and update municipal cultural plans to integrate and include cultural planning goals identified herein	Explore potential for a <i>Cultural Scorecard</i> process as a measurement for joint tri-municipal cultural development	Develop a <i>Cultural Summit (possibly annually)</i> for people working in the cultural sector across the region to identify opportunities for collaborative projects/initiatives, and to build networks
Assess feasibility and scope of a <i>Regional Cultural Liaison</i> position to ensure centralized leadership		

Objective 1.2: Further develop a unified regional brand that drives sustainable cultural heritage tourism		
Review existing agreements, online platforms, marketing materials previously developed for the Tri-Region Tourism Project to assess current relevance	Develop a 'regional cultural heritage story' that drives a joint marketing campaign (e.g., social media) to support and raise awareness of regional cultural tourism assets and program offers	Assess tourism KPIs via survey-based visitor testimonials and other data sources
Review recent tourism development initiatives in the Tri-Municipal Region to understand trends impacting the Cultural Plan (e.g. existing planning documents, municipality websites)	Apply a <i>Cultural Corridor</i> tourism model to link cultural facilities/activities to related businesses (e.g., recreation, hospitality) through the development of tourism packages and itineraries	
Build relationships with Enoch Cree and Paul First Nation to encourage participation in tourism products	Leverage provincial tourism initiatives specific to culture to support the Tri-Municipal Region in increasing visitation from urban hubs (e.g., Edmonton)	
Further the cultural components of the regional tourism brand that highlights each municipality's unique cultural identities and assets, as well as events that would benefit from increased collaboration (e.g., Canada Day).	Develop online platform for virtual cultural offerings (e.g., virtual art walk)	
	Develop a <i>Cultural Tourism Evaluation Framework</i> , including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), positioned within broader Alberta cultural tourism mandates Support training and networking opportunities related to strengthening skills and knowledge of cultural/heritage-driven tourism	

Strategic Priority 2: A Community Supported Through Culture

Tri-Municipal Region partners recognize that their biggest and shared strength is the community that they serve. As such, a community that is supported to engage in and organize for culture is essential to **elevating and increasing the value of cultural planning** and development. Culture, art, heritage are contributors to social well-being, social development, and community wellness. At the core of **healthy cultural ecosystems** are the **strong relationships between municipality and community**, where culture acts as a multi-layered connector. In this way, elevating culture provides opportunities for engagement and participation by all residents through self-directed cultural engagement, creating a diversity of perspectives and a sense of ownership over different aspects of one's community.

In times of fiscal and staffing constraints, there is an increased need for this **community ownership** to support and complement municipal departments' efforts to offer affordable and accessible cultural programming and events. In order to do this, however, the community requires the necessary tools and frameworks, empowered by respective municipalities or the sub-region to carry out such activities **without municipality-imposed red-tape**. This hybrid approach draws on the strengths of an already resilient cultural and creative community and engages residents in ways they otherwise may not. With a community-led approach to culture, **"host your own" Cultural Toolkits** for cultural events and pop-up performances can both elevate cultural and creative practitioners. Building on this approach and learning from the various successes of comparative jurisdictions in providing certain tools, has potential to create a **community-based coalition for culture**. The shared responsibility of service delivery also relates closely to the need for seizing opportunities for **alternatives sources of funding**. Given that

some can only be accessed by community organizations, there is an opportunity for the Tri-Municipality to support such initiatives as a critical partner, leading to new revenue streams and incentives for creative and cultural organizations. Partnership with economic development departments and third-party actors are also key opportunities to better utilize shared resources. This approach could also have inter-sectoral benefits, whereby developer incentives and the onboarding of private landowners to engage in culture leads to tangible benefits for community and businesses. Similarly, increasing collaboration with **existing support networks** and organizations would enable culture to be integrated into other community-wide support systems.

The need for **elevating existing community and cultural organizations** that have upheld the Tri-Municipal Region's arts and culture community for years (e.g. Cowboy Poetry, Potters Guild, dance communities) was also noted. Particularly as demographic shifts occur (e.g. urban-to-rural migration), community-led organizations can act as a bulwark for such growth. At the same time, **multi-generational engagement** through culture can also enable lasting community connection that encourage a new generation of community cultural leaders to remain in (and strengthen) their communities.

Hosting a regional *Community Gathering* of arts and cultural organizations could be an effective way to promote networking, learning and collaboration between local groups while elevating the profile of arts practitioners and groups in the region. As noted in the comparative case study of Hastings County + Quinte Region, ON (Appendix C), the region's joint Cultural Summits have been highly successful and popular events, offering the community an

opportunity to network and review the cultural plan ongoing, while also raising the profile of local arts and culture. An annual summit or Community Gathering for the Tri-Municipal Region could also offer practical capacity-building workshops for cultural groups and creative entrepreneurs - for example, on how to market your cultural practice or how to write effective grant applications.

Capacity building programs help to support communities by building a workforce to drive the commercial opportunities of culture (e.g. the creative economy) in the region. As described in Stony Plain's Arts, Culture & Heritage Action Plan Community Connections Goals, supporting and encouraging the community to participate in the creation of ongoing, accessible activities that build appreciation for local arts, culture and creative businesses, also supports the **creative economy** to thrive. Considering more strategic approaches to creative economy ventures would also leverage the economic impacts of the region's creative sector. As the province of Alberta looks to pivot towards more sustainable industry, the benefit of the Tri-Municipal Region's **investment in the creative industries** not only elevates community residents' quality of life, but also attracts and retains creative professionals in the Tri-Municipal Region.

Goal: Arts and cultural organizations and businesses in the Tri-Municipal Region are supported in their growth and feel empowered in shaping the community's future

Objective 2.1: Enhance community capacities to leverage the social and economic impacts of arts and culture		
Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions	Long Term Actions
Reduce 'red-tape' and discrepancies in permission levels for community-led arts and cultural activities so as to support more activity across region	Based on consultation outcomes, support an enabling environment through the development of a Tri-Municipal <i>Cultural Toolkit</i> for community organizations that fosters self-directed cultural participation	Ascertain feedback from partners (possibly through an annual Community Gathering) to update <i>Cultural Toolkit</i>
Host a <i>Community Gathering</i> of arts and cultural organizations that have current or prospective relationships with the Tri-Municipal Region to deepen an understanding on opportunities for - and hindrances to - collaboration		

Objective 2.2: Advance third-party service delivery for a shared cultural offer that counters existing duplications		
Document gaps in third-party service provision in support of culture across the region (e.g. commissioning of public art, annual events, pop-up plazas)	If gaps identified, employ third-party providers to enhance existing cultural activities and develop service agreements	Evaluate outcomes of service delivery agreements based on tailored performance measurement built into such agreements
	Develop a grant opportunity that supports the region's cultural vibrancy, equity, diversity, and inclusion Support capacity building within organizations to access additional supports (e.g., grant database, federal funding for digital strategies)	

Objective 2.3: Creative economy strategies are integrated into economic development planning		
Encourage involvement of cultural and creative businesses and arts groups in business networking activities to stimulate collaboration and partnerships via existing groups/events (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Community Compass, Small Business Week, Shop Local Company)	Develop a <i>Film Industry Attraction Strategy</i> reflective of opportunities in conjunction with Alberta Film and the City of Edmonton	Support Tri-Municipal-led programming at a 'maker lab' (possibly at the <i>Regional Cultural Hub</i>), in conjunction with the region's start-up community to provide support (and co-working space) to creative entrepreneurs
Assess creative entrepreneurship skills development opportunities in collaboration with existing initiatives (e.g., ACT Social Lab Digital Literacy Outreach, Community Futures Capital Region)		
Leverage learnings from Stony Plain's integration between culture and economic development departments for the regional level		

Strategic Priority 3: Space for Everyone

Municipalities play a pivotal role in developing and maintaining cultural places and facilities, as well as planning for and **animating creative spaces**. While the responsibility to do can be shared with cultural organizations who supply evidence of this need alongside residents, municipalities are responsible for ensuring that adequate facilities are made available for residents to practice, rehearse, gather and learn in safe, accessible, and welcoming spaces. This responsibility includes the leveraging of existing spaces as well as the development of cultural facilities and infrastructure as essential gathering places - functioning as **cornerstones of community cohesion and community building**. Such spaces also play a role in the development of **viable urban cores**, elevating quality of life through quality of space. Currently, purpose-built spaces for culture - whether for dance rehearsals or high-quality theatre performances - are lacking in the Tri-Municipal Region.

With an understanding of fiscal constraints and the opportunity to repurpose existing facilities, **creative placemaking** is a key component of cultural tourism in the sub-region, particularly in Stony Plain which lacks a dedicated space for culture (despite the density of cultural organizations). Creative placemaking (e.g. repurposing outdoor spaces, downtown plazas) is an aspect of diversifying and growing local economies through cultural tourism, wherein the sub-region is well aligned to showcase its unique attributes. Creative placemaking initiatives are well positioned for community halls in Parkland County, and within the Tri-Leisure Centre, in helping to create the *third places* for residents (i.e. spaces outside of the home and workplace).

One approach to creative placemaking is by integrating public art to enhance the sense of place (or personality) of different locations. Strathcona County Council takes an especially intentional approach

to public art acquisition and community engagement, as outlined in Appendix C. For example, the County has a specific Public Art Plan with principles on how to effectively integrate public art into the urban and rural fabric. Implemented recommendations of the plan include developing a Public Art Fund and employing a Public Art Coordinator. The process of selecting public artworks is designed to engage the community ongoing; an Art Collection Advisory Committee assists the County Council, and potential artworks are judged by an annually elected Art Collection Jury.

Creative placemaking can also involve **accommodating cultural activity within other types of infrastructure**, such as recreation facilities and private facilities like movie theatres (as described in Stony Plain Arts, Culture & Heritage Action Plan). As outlined in the Tri-Region Indoor Facility Study (2017), there is a need for recreation facilities planning to integrate culture into recreation facilities by reviewing respective cultural plans. The business community also has opportunity to engage in creative placemaking, through flexible co-working spaces and cultural hubs, bringing creative entrepreneurs into shared space designed for collaboration.

Conversely, purpose-built cultural spaces and places are often critical to delivering high quality programs and services and cannot always be achieved through retrofitting existing infrastructure. A new, *Regional Cultural Hub* in the Tri-Municipal Region could provide a purpose-built space for people to gather, learn, engage, create and enjoy culture. Renowned for its success in providing such community connectedness is Kelowna's Rotary Centre for the Arts, which combines diverse art forms, flexible space, maker labs, and studios, driven by public-private partnerships. Integrated into this **multipurpose space concept** for the Tri-Municipal Region would be a **performance capacity** that better serves the growing community,

allowing for the creative and cultural community to thrive and grow and attract those from outside the sub region.

Without minimizing the importance of developing new cultural spaces, it is equally important to use available spaces to their highest potential. Recently, the limitation of traditional public and private spaces due to COVID-19 has amplified **the importance of found spaces** as many residents took advantage of local outdoor spaces and natural heritage as impromptu play and safe gathering spaces. Furthermore, **accessible, and barrier-free spaces** can enhance the availability, affordability, and accessibility of culture for all in the community and must remain a priority for the planning of existing and prospective cultural spaces.

Online events and experiences can supplement and enhance cultural programming and engagement. A current trend within cultural planning is to host public events (e.g. live performances, learning workshops, interviews with artists, tours of galleries and museums) via social media (e.g. Instagram TV (IGTV), Facebook Live), or conferencing platforms (e.g. Zoom), while responding to audience questions in real time. Larger, virtual events such as annual Art Walks have also moved towards hybrid online-offline models in 2020 in response to COVID-19.

Goal: The Tri-Municipal Region is a place where everyone has equal access to cultural facilities and spaces that meet needs and nurture a strong cultural ecosystem

Objective 3.1: Repurpose existing space for culture		
Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions	Long Term Actions
Develop a <i>Cultural Spaces and Facilities Framework</i> as a guide for phased investment and planning, including plans to leverage existing spaces for culture	Look at regulatory measures which may be preventing the use and development of artist/creative production spaces and develop guidelines to allow more flexibility, as appropriate (e.g. co-op models)	Consider a regional public art program (building on Stony Plain's learnings), including within residential neighbourhoods, coherent with the regional cultural tourism brand
Identify opportunities to leverage virtual space that transcends borders in conjunction with a regional cultural brand (e.g., virtual masterclasses, thought leaders' forums, self-directed apps)	Institute planning incentives for private development of cultural amenities	
	Consider access for citizens to cultural institutions in the planning of public transit and municipal trails/pathways, including encouraging communication between municipal transit and cultural departments (possibly through the <i>Regional Cultural Advisory Committee</i>)	

Objective 3.2: Build a new, partnership driven, purpose-built space – i.e. Regional Cultural Hub		
Re-visit feasibility studies for a <i>Cultural Hub</i> (incl. black box theatre) vis-à-vis current community needs (e.g. Stony Plains' Old Town Community Plan's Cultural Campus and Arts & Culture Facility Plan & Conceptual Design; Spruce Grove's Cultural Masterplan)	Commission regional audience attraction study for a new centre (i.e., draw from nearby urban centres), including current usage rates/demographics of existing cultural facilities	Dependent on sufficient funds raised (e.g. PPPs) and collective agreement by all municipalities, break ground on the <i>Regional Cultural Hub</i> that reflects evolving community need
	Seize opportunities to work with across Tri-Municipal Regional departments towards securing funding for a new space within broader capital infrastructure planning processes	
	Identify and apply for external funding sources (e.g., provincial/federal infrastructure funds) in support of the development of a new <i>Regional Cultural Hub</i>	

Strategic Priority 4: Equal Opportunities, Inclusivity, Celebration of Diversity

Continuing efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within and among each municipality are required to **meet the needs of a changing community**. There is an opportunity for the Tri-Municipal Region partners to **improve relationships with Indigenous communities**, seeking out stronger partnerships and learning from Indigenous artists and cultural practitioners. This work requires humility, listening, and learning.

Foundational to the Tri-Municipal Region's history is its Indigenous communities. The Enoch Cree and Paul First Nation have lived on and cared for the land on which Parkland County, the Spruce Grove and the Town of Stony Plain are situated. It is important, too, to be reminded that some of the Tri-Municipal Region's built heritage and pioneer history is representative of colonialism. The release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in 2015 have called us into a **new era of reconciliation**, and a need to address the rights of Indigenous communities.

As part of this reconciliation process, it is no longer sufficient to simply engage Indigenous communities. Consultation, partnerships, and open communication must be established to begin to **move beyond tokenism** in cultural planning, towards reconciliation, through improved attention to the richness of the region's Indigenous heritage. The Tri-Municipal Region can play a vital role in ensuring that places, spaces, events and activities are supported to enable First Nations to celebrate their history and tell their stories, whether through grants, municipal art programs, and other partnerships. By **actively including Indigenous voices** and stories, opportunities are created for the broader public to learn about reconciliation and heritage from the perspective of Indigenous

peoples. This commitment to reconciliation also needs not only to include Indigenous voices, but to actively seek out opportunities to support Indigenous artists, performers and businesses that contribute to the richness of the region's cultural offer and/or the development of its creative industries.

Art galleries and museums especially offer opportunities for shared stories, perspectives, and education. Every year in Strathcona County, the council-run Gallery@501 frequently exhibits the work of Indigenous artists. Each year, the gallery presents an exhibit focused on issues identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, such as Indian residential schools and colonialism. Similarly, the RDFFG-supported Two Rivers Gallery has actively sought to provide an inclusive and safe place to express diverse voices. In 2019, for example, the Gallery presented REDRESS: Sacred Obligation – Indigenous Voices on Reconciliation, curated by Indigenous Curator Rose Spahan, Lower Nicola & Tsartlip Nations and Two Rivers Gallery's George Harris.

Within the context of equity, diversity and inclusion is the need to ensure that everyone can engage equally in cultural events and activities in the Tri-Municipal Region. All three municipalities have made strides in this area, from looking to increase access to cultural spaces (Spruce Grove), launching dialogue through a cultural roundtable (Stony Plain) and involvement in supporting Indigenous celebrations (Parkland County). Diversity represents not only the topic of multiculturalism, but also the aspects that make individuals unique, including **ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion**. Demographic changes, including an aging population, and a growing number of newcomers to the region, require consideration within the context of cultural planning. This consideration must occur both internally (possibly HR-led) at the municipal level and

externally through community events, facilitation of dialogue, and development of opportunity.

As communities become more diverse, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and gender-based analysis training at the municipal staff level is needed so that cultural services can better understand and address its communities of interest. These offerings could include greater efforts to celebrate Pride or different religious or cultural holidays, for example. Externally, engaging more formally with groups such as LGBTQ+ community as part of broader equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts, could enable municipalities to **become a platform to showcase and celebrate a broad range of diverse events and occasions**. Equally, by prioritizing spaces that are inclusive and that offer diverse and accessible programs and events supporting a range of abilities, the Tri-Municipal Region partners can advance essential priorities. When considering these priorities, it may be that some municipalities adopt certain recommendations (e.g. an internal online platform) to a greater extent than others, depending on suitability.

Goal: The Tri-Municipal Region is welcoming, inclusive, celebrates diversity, and tackles societal barriers that hinder cultural participation

Objective 4.1: Improve knowledge and understanding of EDI needs by municipalities		
Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions	Long Term Actions
Establish an internal online platform where municipal staff can anonymously share concerns regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion	In collaboration with HR, establish third party-run EDI training for all existing and future staff across municipal cultural and community services	
	Incorporate EDI principles into regional cultural plan implementation (including in hiring processes)	

Objective 4.2: Ensure that Indigenous voices and stories are reflected in ongoing cultural planning		
Review the status of work to date regarding engagement and partnerships with Indigenous communities (e.g., Stony Plain's Aboriginal Day Partnership & Ambassador Program, support for Indigenous cultural organizations)	Incorporate Indigenous cultural, intangible, and natural heritage into regional cultural planning by seeking direct feedback from Indigenous community representatives on this Regional Cultural Plan	Identify ways to adhere to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through partnership with First Nations (e.g. addressing TRC's Call 79 on <i>Commemoration of Indigenous history, heritage values and memory practices</i> by incorporating Indigenous heritage into municipally organized cultural events)
Implement existing recommendations to leverage public art programs to support Indigenous communities and commissioning Indigenous artists such as Parkland County's municipal art program	Work in partnership with Indigenous representatives to establish communication and protocols between local First Nations and the Tri-Municipal Region for making Indigenous participation a central programming feature of Canada Day celebrations	

Objective 4.3: Ensure that the regional arts and cultural offer is diverse and inclusive to engage all residents		
Use culture as a tool for community wellness by opening dialogue and opportunities for marginalized communities through inclusivity initiatives (e.g., ticket access, free events and programs) with identified partners	Encourage community dialogue between faith-based organizations and cultural groups to assess optimizing facilities and space that is more inclusive and reflective of the Tri-Municipality's EDI principles	Consider addressing aging population projections in relation to the need for accessible, welcoming spaces
Consider accessibility solutions to participation in cultural activities and facilities throughout the sub-region (e.g., shuttles to events, satellite events)	Consider the creation of a grant program specifically supporting EDI projects led by cultural organizations, or include an EDI stream in existing granting	Develop an <i>Inclusion and Accessibility Framework</i> for Tri-Municipal cultural programming and events, addressing issues such as proximity to cultural spaces and wheelchair accessibility at outdoor events

6. IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The **Tri-Municipal Regional Strategy** represents a holistic and coordinated effort to enhance and formalize collaboration across the region in terms of land use, services, infrastructure, and operational deployment. This **Cultural Strategy** fits within this overall project intention and is built upon the following vision statement for cultural services in the region:

In years to come, the Tri-Municipal Region will be home to a **coordinated, inclusive, region-wide network of diverse arts and cultural opportunities that draw on the Tri-Municipal Region’s rich heritage and changing regional dynamics.**

Building upon this vision and based on a list of key guiding principles, this Strategy includes 4 strategic priorities, a set of objectives for each and a myriad of short-, medium- and long-term actions that can be undertaken by the partners independently and together in order to further enhance the value of culture in the region.

The following **Implementation Considerations** suggest sequencing of the action items based on input from key stakeholders and current market conditions. It is important to note that since this Cultural Strategy is but one of 8 new strategies and plans that the partners will use to achieve the broader intentions of the Tri-Municipal Regional Strategy, there may be overlaps and synergies across services areas, such as economic development, recreation, and social services, that could impact the timing, sequencing, and deployment of these actions. It is also important to note that the following is meant to **provide guidance** but also enable the creativity and flexibility of cultural stakeholders in Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and Parkland County in working towards the collaborative vision outlined above.

The following table outlines details regarding the implementation of the identified short-term action items. Although the medium- and long-term actions are also important, it would not be appropriate to attempt to forecast schedule and impact for them as they are, for the most part, dependent on successful implementation of the short-term actions. The implementation of the specific actions can reflect some flexibility; there is no specific recipe for how it will occur. As such, the resource requirements necessary for implementation should be considered guides, signaling that additional staff time is required beyond what is understood to exist. As well, some incremental costs to existing budgets may be necessary for implementation.

The human resource implications presented in the table should be **considered as signals** that the short-term actions require some dedicated personnel time for implementation. The inclusion of any FTEs is an indication that the action is beyond what currently is undertaken by municipal staff. Depending upon existing capacity within the existing municipal human resource complement, the action may be subsumed by current staff. Efficiencies may be achieved as well through collective effort on the recommended short-term actions within the cultural departments or even across departments; this has not been accounted for in the table. The actual efficiencies or resources required can only be determined as specific project or work plans are developed for each short-term action.

Note, the FTEs identified in the table with an asterisk (*) may indeed be included in the **Regional Cultural Liaison** position, the recruitment of which is currently identified as a long-term action for

Objective 1.1. While the short-term action related to this proposed ultimate hire includes a requisite feasibility study (i.e. evidencing the need for the role), if the Tri-Municipal Region agrees on the sooner need for such recruitment, all incremental FTEs noted below could be subsumed in that position. Complete compensation (including benefits) for the Regional Cultural Liaison position, based on the Project Team's market comparable analysis, would likely be ~\$90,000 per annum.

Broadly speaking, for the cost implications presented in the subsequent tables, once detailed approaches are developed for each short-term action, a more refined estimate of cost can be determined. As with the human resource implications, the cost estimates aligned with the individual short-term actions serves as a signal that some additional costs may be necessary as implementation occurs.

The expectation is that, within the context of the Tri-Municipal Regional Strategy, the efficiencies/reduced redundancies produced as a result of closer collaboration would develop more robust strategies and build a competitive advantage not previously leveraged. The efficiency-driving implementation considerations, therefore, are expected to come to fruition over time, supported through the integration stage, at which point complementarities between culture, recreation, social and economic development strategies can be better identified.

Table 3: Implementation Considerations

Goal/Objective/Short term action	Key steps and considerations	Human resource implications - incremental FTE (D=project based; O=ongoing)	Operating cost implications (non-staff, ongoing, annual)	One-time operating cost (start-up)
Goal: Tri-municipal partners work collaboratively in support of a regional vision for culture, driven by complementarities rather than competition				
Objective 1.1: Formalize municipal roles within regional cultural services to increase accountability, coordination mechanisms and collective leadership				
Formalize municipal cost-sharing agreements and related conditions between municipal stakeholders	Ensure that cost sharing mechanisms for cultural services align with other service areas	0.25* D	n/a	n/a
Align and update municipal cultural plans to integrate and include cultural planning goals identified herein	Contracting those consultants that helped author initial cultural plans would be ideal to secure in helping with this task (Note: staff time needed for project management)	n/a	n/a	\$75,000
Assess feasibility and scope of a <i>Regional Cultural Liaison</i> position to ensure centralized leadership	Look to leverage existing staff resources and consider using the TLC Part 9 as a delivery model	n/a	n/a	\$10,000
Objective 1.2: Develop a unified regional brand that drives sustainable cultural heritage tourism				
Review existing agreements, online platforms, marketing materials previously developed for the Tri-Region Tourism Project to assess current relevance	Reduce duplication and leverage collective investment in media buys, graphic design services, etc.	n/a	\$10,000	n/a
Review recent tourism development initiatives in the Tri-Municipal Region to understand trends impacting the Cultural Plan (e.g. existing planning documents, municipality websites)		n/a	n/a	n/a
Build relationships with Enoch Cree and Paul First Nation to encourage participation in tourism products	Relationship building requires consistency in personnel and may extend beyond tourism	0.25*	5,000	n/a
Further the cultural components of the regional tourism brand that highlights each municipality's unique cultural identities and assets, as well as events that would		0.25*	\$10,000	n/a

benefit from increased collaboration (e.g., Canada Day)

Sub total		0.75*	\$25,000	\$85,000
Goal: Arts and cultural organizations and businesses in the Tri-Municipal Region are supported in their growth and feel empowered in shaping the community's future				
Objective 2.1: Enhance community capacities to leverage the social and economic impacts of arts and culture				
Reduce 'red-tape' and discrepancies in permission levels for community-led arts and cultural activities to support more activity across region	Identify bureaucratic processes in each regional municipality; support from a consultant may assist in this process (Note: staff time needed for project management)	n/a	n/a	\$15,000
Host a Community Gathering ¹⁸ of arts and cultural organizations that have current or prospective relationships with the Tri-Municipal Region to deepen an understanding on opportunities for - and hindrances to - collaboration	This may require the assistance of a consultant (Note: staff time needed for project management)	0.2* D	n/a	\$5,000
Objective 2.2: Advance third-party service delivery for a shared cultural offer that counters existing duplications				
Identify gaps in third-party service provision in support of culture across the region (e.g. commissioning of public art, annual events, pop-up plazas)		n/a	n/a	n/a
Objective 2.3: Creative economy strategies are integrated into economic development planning				
Encourage involvement of cultural and creative businesses and arts groups in business networking activities to stimulate collaboration and partnerships via existing groups/events (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Community Compass, Small	Utilizing a directory of cultural and creative businesses and groups communicate the opportunities and potential benefits	n/a	n/a	n/a

¹⁸ Note, this session is envisioned as a more informal, likely virtual session with municipal stakeholders and community arts representatives/leaders. A consultant would be hired to a) facilitate the roundtable with the objective of identifying opportunities and challenges in collaboration across the region and b) summarize outcomes of the discussion. This gathering can be considered a 'taster' for the proposed annual Tri-Municipal Cultural Summit (long-term action).

Business Week, Shop Local Company)					
Assess creative entrepreneurship skills development opportunities in collaboration with existing initiatives (e.g., ACT Social Lab Digital Literacy Outreach, Community Futures Capital Region)	Determine entrepreneurial skills needed as well as opportunities for attaining skills	n/a	n/a	\$15,000	
Leverage learnings from Stony Plain's integration between culture and economic development departments for the regional level	Identify and share key learnings with municipal partners	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Sub total		0.2*	0	\$35,000	
Goal: The Tri-Municipal Region is a place where everyone has equal access to cultural facilities and spaces that meet needs and nurture a strong cultural ecosystem					
Objective 3.1: Repurpose existing space for culture					
Develop a Cultural Spaces and Facilities Framework as a guide for phased investment and planning, including plans to leverage existing spaces for culture	Cultural facilities master plan may require a consultant. (Note: staff time needed for project management)	n/a	n/a	\$60,000	
Identify opportunities leverage virtual space that transcends borders in conjunction with a regional cultural brand (e.g., virtual masterclasses, thought leaders' forums, self-directed apps)		0.25* D	\$10,000	n/a	
Objective 3.2: Build a new, partnership-driven <i>Regional Cultural Hub</i>					
Re-visit feasibility studies for a Cultural Hub (incl. black box theatre) vis-à-vis current community needs (e.g. Stony Plains' Old Town Community Plan's Cultural Campus and Arts & Culture Facility Plan & Conceptual Design; Spruce Grove's Cultural Masterplan	Update to feasibility study	n/a	n/a	\$60,000	
Sub total		0.25*	\$10,000	\$120,000	
Goal: The Tri-Municipal Region is welcoming, inclusive, celebrates diversity, and tackles societal barriers that hinder cultural participation					

Objective 4.1: Improve knowledge and understanding of EDI needs by municipalities				
Establish an internal online platform where municipal staff can anonymously share concerns regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion	Clear definitions on concepts of EDI needed. The action is likely in tandem with further HR-led work outside of cultural services	0.2* O	\$5,000	\$10,000
Objective 4.2: Ensure that Indigenous voices and stories are reflected in ongoing cultural planning				
Review the status of work to date regarding engagement and partnerships with Indigenous communities	Need to identify efficiencies across municipal departments engaging in similar work and outreach	n/a	n/a	\$10,000
Implement existing recommendations to leverage public art programs to support Indigenous communities and commissioning Indigenous artists, such as Parkland County's municipal art program		n/a	\$10,000	n/a
Objective 4.3: Ensure that the regional arts and cultural offer is diverse and inclusive to engage all residents				
Use culture as a tool for community wellness by opening dialogue and opportunities for marginalized communities through inclusivity initiatives (e.g., ticket access, free events, and programs) with identified partners	Identification of marginalized communities and partners	0.5* O	\$5,000	n/a
Consider accessibility solutions to participation in cultural activities and facilities throughout the sub-region (e.g., shuttles to events, satellite events)	Identify barriers to participation and specific mitigation strategies	n/a	\$5,000	\$10,000
Sub total		0.7*	\$25,000	\$30,000
Totals		1.9*	\$60,000	\$270,000

As can be seen, the short-term implications of the Cultural Strategy are an incremental 1.95 FTEs, \$60,000 in operating dollars (ongoing) and \$290,000 in capital expenses (one time). It is important to note that these figures are meant to provide **an order of magnitude (+/-50%)** indication of the impacts

of strategy implementation and may be subject to change. It is equally important to note that these implications are considered prior to project integration by the Primary Consultant, operating under the assumption of an unconstrained Cultural Strategy.

As it relates to measuring successful implementation, the following metrics are proposed. Those that are accepted by all partners should be reported on every year.

Table 4: Proposed Metrics

	Metric	Source
Community Indicators		
Participation at regional events	# of attendees # of events % of capacity Degree of satisfaction?	Public surveys Event exit surveys Reporting from event hosting groups
Participation in regional programs	# of program registrants # of programs % of capacity Degree of satisfaction?	Public surveys Registration software reporting Municipal records
Visitation (local and non-local) at local heritage assets	# of visitors by venue	Registration software reporting Entrance surveys at venues
Organizational Indicators		
Dollars invested in Strategy initiatives	Annual investment in Strategy implementation	Municipal operating and capital budgets
Staff hours spent on Strategy initiatives	Hours of staff time expended on Strategy implementation	Municipal timesheets
New regional projects initiated	# of new regional projects (infrastructure or program related) initiated # of new regional projects (infrastructure or program related) completed	Municipal operating and capital budgets Municipal annual reporting
Efficiency & Effectiveness	Staff perspectives on gains through collaboration	Annual reviews Cultural Services Advisory Committee-led strategic assessment and planning exercises

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Culture (and Culture-Related) Service Delivery Responsibilities

Parkland County	City of Spruce Grove	Town of Stony Plain
Facilitates, enables, and supports the provision of other municipal-led cultural programming, public art, and cultural events. Undertakes cost sharing for the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and management of regional level cultural facilities. Provides leadership and support to Community Associations (such as Community Halls). Facilitates, enables, and supports volunteerism. Plans policy and bylaw development relating to culture.	Plays a leadership role in fostering and supporting cultural expression for the benefit of the entire community. Cultural Services also provides operational support to the Spruce Grove Public Library. Operates Horizon Stage Performing Arts Centre in partnership with Parkland School Division #70 and Parkland County - hosts a varied season of professional productions, including live theatre, concerts, and dance. Supports the visual arts in the community by working closely with the Allied Arts Council of Spruce Grove, a not-for-profit organization.	Manages culture and tourism budgets and corporate plan initiatives, policy as required. Acts as the administrative lead on the Cultural Roundtable (including Council members and community stakeholders). Completes grant applications and reporting. Provides direct funding and support to creative and cultural organizations, e.g. the Agricultural Heritage Society which operates the Multicultural Heritage Centre. Works with contracted artists on implementation of Mural Program. Community & Protective Services are responsible for events, Community Initiative Grant Program, and the Shikaoi Exchange.

Appendix B: Event Participation Data

Table 5: Town of Stony Plain Cultural Event Participation Data

Cultural Asset/Service	Attendance/Participation (2019)	Notes
Potters Guild*	65 members 120 per session (fall & winter) Guest Lecture Workshops – 50 attendees Gallery sees 750-1250 visitors/year 100 visitors during Alberta Culture Days Open House	Collaborated with the 2012 Winter games to offer a cultural experience to their athletes. The results are the tiles on the outside of Potters Guild building. Successful in providing a cultural presence in the community.
Town of Stony Plain Community Services		
Adult Ballroom Dance	120	Includes all sessions for the year.
Seniors Jamboree	900	Annual attendance for 9 sessions.
Canada Day	750-1200	Weather dependent – 2018 saw 1200 visitors, while 2019 saw 750 due to rain.
Outdoor Movie	500-1500	Weather dependent – 2018 saw 1500 visitors while 2019 saw 500 due to rain.
Shikaoi Exchange Program	10 people to Shikaoi (student exchange), 3 ALTs to Shikaoi, 66 people from Shikaoi (student exchange)	
Mini Monster Bash	2500	Note, this event is also included as part of Spruce Grove's cultural asset inventory.
Family Fest	3500	
Christmas Light Up	3000	

Multicultural Heritage Centre*	34,633	Events include Mystical Fair, Holiday Happenings, Valentine's Tea, Seedy Saturday, Easter Egg Hunt, Fibre in the Park, and Pride at the Centre). Programs include Organic Master Gardener Program, Organic Master Gardener Work Bees, school programs, Zap! Electrical Safety, Community Gardeners, Bingos, Mural Tours. (The final figure for 2019 does not include board meetings, operational meetings, archives inquiries, museum or community inquiries. PERC Facility Users make up 16,800 of this participation figure).
Stony Plain and Parkland Pioneer Museum*	17,894 visitors	This figure includes visitors such as students (1000) and participants of ongoing museum education programs (217), as well as Farmer's Days (5500) and visitors on Canada Day (500 in 2019 due to rain, but 2500 in previous years).
Kinsmen Farmers Days Rodeo	~ 18,000 visitors	
Town of Stony Plain Culture and Tourism		
Summer Sessions	3000	
Artwalk	20-30 participating artists	Attendance is varied as this event has been a part of Canada Day.
Citizenship Ceremony	150-250 including public attendees	Dependent on number of people taking their citizenship oath.
Mural/Public art unveilings	25-75	Depending on community partner involved (in 2019 there were 3 unveilings).

City of Spruce Grove

Horizon Stage performances and Canada Day are Spruce Grove's biggest draws, as demonstrated by the following attendance data, followed by cornerstone yearly events such as Christmas in Central Park. The following data was provided by Spruce Grove Cultural Services team:

Table 6: City of Spruce Grove Cultural Event Participation Data

Event	Estimated Attendance/Participation	Notes
Horizon Stage Performances	Performances operated by Cultural Services: 10,172 ticket sales 29 season presentations 16 rentals Performances operated by other parties: 73 rentals 21,200 ticket sales	Horizon Stage, operated by Cultural Services, is also used for external rentals given its agreement with the Parkland School Board. These figures were differentiated by internal staff.
Mini Monster Bash	2000	Takes place with Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County.
Remembrance Day	2500	
Christmas in Central Park	3000	This is an outdoor event without a point of access to control numbers.
Canada Day	12,000 – 16,000	Depends on the year and weather, and this is an outdoor event without a point of access to control numbers.

Parkland County

There is no attendance or participation data pertaining to Parkland County as the County does not operate specific cultural events or services, though it does have banquet facilities, community halls and festival grounds. The Project Team understands that while events and festivals are primarily organized by Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, Parkland residents make up a sizeable portion of these attendance figures, though this cannot be quantified. Indeed, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan outlines figures that indicate participation of Parkland residents in culture is 47% as compared to 71%

for recreation activities¹⁹, indicating that residents do take significant interest in culture, even though it is more for recreation.²⁰

It is of interest to note, as indicated in the Master Plan, that the household survey appeared to confirm the trend that **households with higher incomes are more likely to participate in local cultural activities**, and that new or expanded programs responding to this demographic profile has potential to attract more of this segment of the population. Equally important to note is the willingness for Parkland County residents to spend on culture, indicating that out of \$100 spending, Parkland County residents would be willing to spend \$16.10 on culture. Indeed, given that Parkland's 27 community associations are primary supporters of cultural programs (directly or through community halls), this model of service delivery indicates the grassroots and self-reliant nature of Parkland County residents' participation in culture.

¹⁹ Parkland County Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan Executive Summary – p. v

²⁰ Note to Client: The Project Team sought out the source of the above percentages, which could lead to more concrete attendance and participation data for Parkland County. Justin Ellis from RC Strategies +PERC was on the team that undertook a household survey as part of the Parkland County PRC Plan (as a Stantec team member). The survey indeed inquired about participation levels in cultural activities and use of facilities. To retrieve these survey findings, the Project Team suggests contacting Glynis Middleton (Stantec) for the survey file.

Appendix C: Comparative Jurisdiction Review

Following Nordicity's research into comparable jurisdictions, Appendix C identifies three similar regional municipalities and highlights their relevance to the Tri-Municipal Region. The following review describes how each regional municipality is delivering arts and culture services to its communities, underscoring best practice in resource sharing to promote regional vibrancy and wellbeing. Finally, findings within this Appendix served as useful benchmarks for how the jurisdictions compare to the Tri-Municipal Region.

Table 7: Comparable Review Overview

	<u>Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (BC)</u>	<u>Hastings County + Quinte Region (ON)</u>	<u>Strathcona County (AB)</u>
Population (2016 Census)	94,506	39,588 (Hastings County only) and 139,268 including Belleville, Quinte West and the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory	98,000
Municipality Type	Regional district	Upper Tier municipal council (Hastings County) and separated cities (Belleville and Quinte West)	Specialized municipality
Geography Type	Primarily rural, excepting Prince George and MacKenzie	Rural and urban (Cities of Belleville and Quinte West and smaller towns in Hastings County)	Rural and urban (Sherwood Park)
Governance Model	Municipal committee reporting to the District's Board of Directors	Municipal departments	Municipal department plus a municipal committee
Service Delivery Model	Delivered by the Cultural and Communications Coordinator and cultural sites funded by the Regional District	Primarily delivered by member municipalities' local arts and culture organizations; some activities organized by regional cultural Working Group	Delivered by the County's Recreation, Parks and Culture department alongside a local arts council and a municipal Art Collection Advisory Committee

Cultural Plan	Cultural Plan 2016-2020 (2015)	A 10 Year Cultural Plan for Hastings County + Quinte Region (2012)	Recreation and Culture Strategy (2019)
Arts and Culture FTEs	1 – a 50/50 split focus on cultural marketing and corporate communications	0 – no specific cultural employees	2 – plus the Director of the Recreation, Parks and Culture department
Arts and Culture Funding ²¹	Cultural expenditure (from 2019 operating budget): \$1.836 M Grants (2019 one-time annual funding): \$9,697	Cultural expenditure (2019): City of Belleville: \$2.754 M including library that houses gallery; \$608,267 without. ²² City of Quinte West: \$74,500 issued via annual grants. ²³ Hastings County Council does not directly fund museums and cultural organizations through its operating budgets. ²⁴	Cultural expenditure (2019): \$100,000 allocated in grants to local museum and local arts, culture and heritage groups and organizations. ²⁵
Estimated Cultural Spend	\$19.53	City of Belleville: \$54.30 including library/gallery; \$11.99 without	\$1.02

²¹ From operational budget (not likely to include capital spending)

²² Figures for 2019 derived from City of Belleville 2020 Budget Departmental Expenditures, published June 24, 2020 <https://www.belleville.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Documents/Finance-Documents/2020-Operating-Budget---Final-Website.pdf>

²³ Allocated via one-time annual grants, not operating budget. Communicated via email on September 23, 2020 and October 16, 2020 by Jennifer Rushlow, Senior Tourism & Special Events Officer at Quinte West, who oversees the Cultural Plan.

²⁴ Communicated via email on September 23, 2020 by Andrew Redden, Economic & Tourism Development Manager at Hastings County Council, who oversees the Cultural Plan. Hastings County's 14 member municipalities are responsible for cultural expenditure, rather than the Upper Tier municipality. However, Hastings County Council will provide one-time grants in response to specific requests (grant figures are not available).

²⁵ This figure does not include spending on Strathcona County's Public Art program. Figures shared by Chris Munn, Community Liaison Office - Culture at Strathcona County Council via email on September 30, 2020. Nordicity requested the precise operating budget figures and the request was forwarded to the financial department. Nordicity followed up on October 16, 2020, but the information has not yet been received. Strathcona County Council's gross and net operating budgets for Recreation, Parks and Culture were \$46.768 M and \$26.029 M respectively in 2019, according to the 2019 Multi-year Budget (<https://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/cp-budget-2020.pdf>). Spending on culture is not separated in the budget report.

per Capita (2019)		City of Quinte West: \$1.70 Hastings County Council: N/A	
Number of Cultural Facilities ²⁶	8	City of Belleville: 3 Hastings County: 0 City of Quinte West: 0	3

Research Approach

The first stage of this Comparative Jurisdiction Review involved liaising with the client alongside secondary research to identify municipalities that are comparable to the Tri-Municipal Region in terms of population size and geography. The jurisdictions of Strathcona County, the Regional District of Fraser Fort George, and Hastings County + Quinte Region were identified as three key comparable regions for the Project Team's investigation.

The second stage of the review included primary and secondary research to develop case studies on each jurisdiction's approach to the governance and delivery of arts and culture. The secondary research involved reviewing cultural plans and strategies, council policies, annual reviews, financial statements and adjacent plans, and mapping key delivery partners in each region. Governance and service delivery approaches were compared to typical municipal development models, outlined in **Section 5.2**. Primary research involved contacting municipal staff in each region who had been identified as responsible for arts and culture governance or delivery, to request further information or for clarification where required. The individuals that Nordicity contacted are as follows:

Chris Munn, Community Liaison Officer, Strathcona County Council

Hilary Erasmus, Cultural & Communications Coordinator, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George

Andrew Redden, Economic & Tourism Development Manager, Hastings County Council

Jennifer Rushlow, Senior Tourism & Special Events Officer, City of Quinte West

Mark Fluhrer, Director of Recreation, Culture & Community Services, City of Belleville

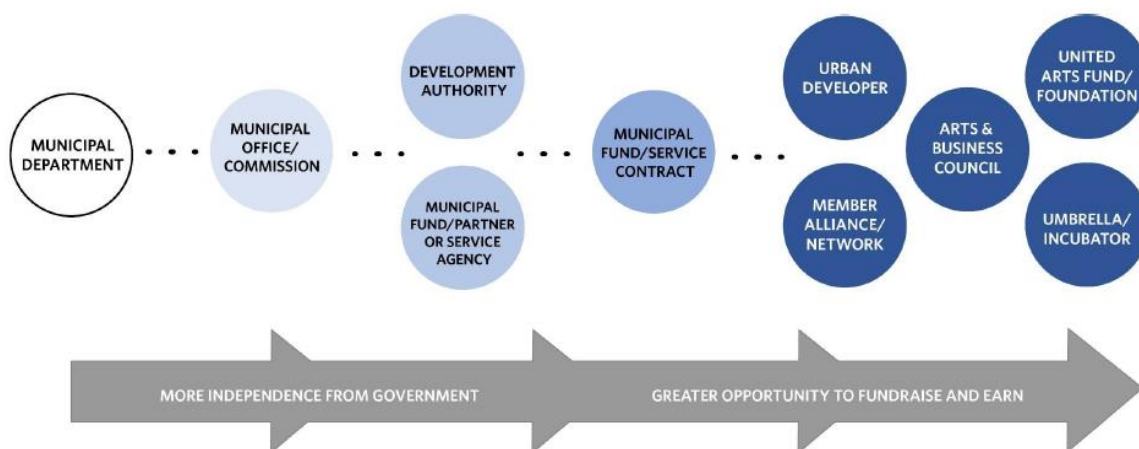
Types of Municipal Development Models

The following diagram illustrates the spectrum of cultural sector development models, while the sections that follow describe the most used models for supporting arts culture and heritage. Appendix B includes descriptions of the remaining types of models. While each jurisdiction is unique, the model is

²⁶ Supported by the municipality

used as a starting point to contextualize the variety of ways through which culture can be supported. This spectrum is useful to illustrate the wide range of influence municipal departments can have on supporting culture – from directly responsible for almost all development and delivery of culture, to completely hands-off approach, where key stakeholders (e.g. arts councils, foundations or incubators) lead the development of culture.

Figure 2: Cultural Development Models²⁷



Municipal Department

A local government (the municipality) is responsible for providing a range of services for its community, which sometimes include cultural services. In some cities, culture is a department unto itself. In others, culture is one division in a larger department with other services (usually recreation, parks, or economic development), such as the City of Spruce Grove's Cultural Services, which falls under Community and Protective Services. In this model, core cultural functions and services are predominantly delivered by dedicated paid municipal staff, although they may be supported by outside agencies or third-party providers through service agreements and advisory committees. An annual department budget is set each year during the municipal budgeting process.

Although this model is the closest standardized description of arts and culture governance in **Hastings County and the Quinte Region**, the region combines three separate jurisdictions. Individual municipalities are responsible for deciding the local delivery model (see **Section 5.4.1**).

Municipal Office/Commission/Advisory

The municipality establishes a "commission" to work alongside the municipal office (department or unit) responsible for culture. The commission is a board of volunteer citizens, arts, culture and heritage professionals, and councilors. Its members are appointed by the mayor and city council, sometimes with input from the sector. A commission's mandate is enacted by legislation through policy, charter, or bylaw, etc. and some decision-making power is given to the board. The commission meets regularly to discuss relevant issues, direct municipal staff and city council in overall matters concerning the sector and advises on other matters which are referred to it. This often includes developing policy and planning

²⁷ Nordicity and Lord Cultural Resources, 2018

recommendations, making decisions on funding and programming, and working to increase public awareness of arts and cultural activities. An annual department budget is set each year during the municipal budgeting process and the commission is granted a small administration budget.

While the above is a generalized archetype, this model most directly relates to the arts and culture governance and delivery model in the **Regional District of Fraser-Fort George**, as described further in **Section 5.3.1**).

Municipal Fund/Service or Partner Agency/Council

In this case, the municipality establishes an arms-length non-profit or charitable agency and its mandate is enacted by legislation. A board of citizens, professionals and councilors are appointed by the mayor and city council to manage it. This model is similar to the cultural development authority model; however, it is primarily a vehicle for the delivery of select programs and services, rather than a comprehensive array.

With regard to culture, an agency's key function is most often the administration of a municipal fund through a grant-making program. The agency also advises on other sector-related matters which are referred to it by council. In the previous model, the culture department was eliminated. In this model the municipality maintains its culture department to deliver other cultural functions and services and coordinates with the agency. The agency must adhere to its legislated mandate only, and any changes to its operations or activities would require a motion to be passed at council. An annual city contribution towards overall operation is set each year during the municipal budgeting process. The amount given depends entirely on the municipality, but it is often expected that the agency's operating budget is supplemented from other sources.

This model is the closest standardized description of governance and delivery in **Strathcona County**, as it provides funding and liaison staff to an arts council. However, the County Council also has two full-time arts and culture employees, and its Recreation, Parks and Culture department is guided by a Public Art Advisory Committee (see **Section 5.5.1**).

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG)

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) is a municipal government in the central interior of British Columbia. As Regional District, RDFFG provides joint or shared services to its municipalities and rural areas. The District includes the four municipalities of the City of Prince George, the District of Mackenzie, the Village of Valemount, the Village of McBride, and seven electoral areas. The population was 94,506 in 2016 (Census 2016).

Reason for selection: RDFFG was selected as a case study due to its regional makeup and its similar population size to the Tri-Municipal Region. The Regional District also runs an interesting regional marketing strategy to promotes RDFFG-supported cultural sites in partnership with other regional attractions.

Governance Model

Arts and culture are governed at the Regional District level by a committee that reports to the RDFFG's Board of Directors. At least one member of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee must be a director on the Regional Board. The Committee supports the implementation of a regional Cultural Plan (see

“Service Delivery”) as well as ongoing communication amongst RDFFG-funded cultural sites. The Committee makes written recommendations to the Board as often as required, including an annual recommendation on Arts, Culture, History Grant recipients. Since 2018, the Committee has included a Cultural and Communications Coordinator. This is a full-time position with duties split 50/50 between cultural marketing and corporate communications.

RDFFG has established a strategic cultural planning framework rooted in recurring five-year plans. The focus of the Cultural Plan 2016-2020 is primarily on eight RDFFG-funded culture and heritage sites and includes regional initiatives such as a successful joint cultural marketing strategy (see following section on **Partnerships**).

Service delivery

The Cultural Plan recognizes the distinctive goals and priorities of the designated cultural locations while providing an overarching framework to support planning, collaboration, and resource sharing. This collaboration enables RDFFG-funded cultural sites to deliver more activities than would be possible or affordable with each group working independently. The Cultural and Communications Coordinator runs the regional marketing strategy and supports all RDFFG-funded cultural sites and has been described as especially valuable to smaller sites with limited staff and resources.

"The Cultural Plan provides funding and support to eight regional museums, galleries and historic sites. That certainty and stability allows these cultural sites to plan their work more effectively and to continue to enrich our communities through history, art and science."

– Regional District of Fraser Fort George
Annual Cultural Report 2019

Two key RDFFG-funded cultural sites, The Exploration Place and Two Rivers Gallery, provide curatorial expertise and support to other RDFFG funded cultural sites as a requirement of their funding agreements. Formalizing the collaboration in this way helps to ensure ongoing cost savings through skills sharing.

Partnerships

Since 2008, the eight cultural sites funded by the RDFFG have collaborated on a joint cultural marketing strategy, previously called the Golden Raven Marketing Program and now named the **Northern Routes Cultural Experience**. Since 2010, Barkerville Historic Town and Park and the Fort St. James National Historic Site have paid to participate as partners in the program. The RDFFG-funded sites and partner attractions mutually benefit from the shared exposure, whilst generating further income for the Regional District.

According to the latest Cultural Plan, the joint marketing strategy has contributed to expanded awareness of culture and heritage in the region and has led to increased attendance of cultural attractions. Although a direct causal link is difficult to confirm, all RDFFG-funded sites have stated that the joint strategy has increased visitor numbers.

Guiding plans

Latest cultural plan:

[2016-2020 Cultural Plan](#), launched September 2015. The Plan's consultation efforts sought input from a range of organizations working outside the cultural field including Tourism Prince George, Initiatives PG, Prince George Chamber of Commerce, University of Northern British Columbia, and the Prince George Council of Seniors among others.

[RDFFG Annual Cultural Report](#), 2019 – the latest annual cultural report from RDFFG

Adjacent plans:

Northern Routes Cultural Experience marketing strategy – a new joint consumer marketing program for RDFFG-funded cultural sites, launched following the 2016-2020 Cultural Plan. Approximately \$75,000

was spent on the cultural marketing program during 2019 and a new website, northernroutes.ca, went live at the beginning of April 2019.

Funding

Table 8: RDFFG Cultural Spend

Direct Cultural Investment from RDFFG Operating Budgets	Grants (one-time annual funding)	Estimated Cultural Spend per Capita
\$1.836M in 2019 (total operating grants to support eight cultural sites)	\$9,697 in 2019 (x2 grants)	\$19.53

In addition to direct spending on eight designated cultural sites, the RDFFG distributes grants from a Cultural Endowment Fund annually. The Arts, Culture, History Grant program was established in 2017 to provide funding for special projects that align with the regional Cultural Plan. Any group in the regional district can apply for an Arts, Culture, History Grant of up to \$5,000 each year.

Key Themes

Public art

The RDFFG does not have any public art programs, although some individual municipalities have public art collections. For example, Prince George has created a [Self-Guided Public Art Tour](#) document (2012) which includes both city artworks and privately-owned pieces in the public realm. Whilst the document itself is quite basic, cataloguing public realm artworks even in a simple way is one method of making public artworks visible to wider audiences.

Cultural Facilities

The eight cultural locations funded by the RDFFG include five museums (one also housing a science centre), a historic homestead and two galleries. As outlined above, the Cultural Plan 2016-2020 encourages collaboration and strong working relationships between the sites.

The RDFFG-funded sites are only part of the cultural landscape in the region. There are several other organizations that support arts and culture service delivery, such as Mackenzie Community Arts Council, the Prince George Community Foundation, Robson Valley Arts & Culture Council, and Valemount Arts and Cultural Society. However, there are no official relationships or funding agreements between the RDFFG and these organizations.

Indigenous Arts and Diversity

The Cultural Plan of 2016-2020 states that the cultural needs and aspirations of First Nations communities are a priority for all sites, plus developing welcoming and inclusive programming for new immigrants and diverse communities in the region. One of the goals of the Cultural Plan 2016-2020 was

to convene a First Nations Cultural Roundtable, although it appears that this event has not yet taken place.

Over the past years, the RDFFG-supported Two Rivers Gallery especially has sought to be an inclusive and safe place for the expression of diverse voices. In 2019, the Gallery presented REDRESS: Sacred Obligation – Indigenous Voices on Reconciliation, curated by Two Rivers Gallery’s George Harris and Indigenous Curator Rose Spahan, Lower Nicola & Tsartlip Nations. In 2019, the Gallery also complemented this effort with a regional outreach exhibition exploring the artistic trajectories of four BC-based Indigenous artists.

Key Festivals and Events

The RDFFG-funded cultural sites each organize a range of events and activities each year, and the Regional District's member municipalities also host various festivals. Established events include the Fraser Heritage Festival in McBride, Prince George & District Music Festival, BMO Kids ArtDayz in Prince George and the city's downtown Summerfest and Winterfest street festivals. The RDFFG only directly funds events in response to specific applications for Arts, Culture, History Grants. Prince George’s Winterfest 2020 has been funded via the grant program.

The Cultural Plan of 2016-2020 recognized an opportunity for regional collaboration to create fewer but larger festivals with the capacity to attract people from further afield. Planned actions include examining the potential to secure funding from the Canada Council for a Storytelling Festival and/or a “signature festival” to reflect the culture and identity of the region. Creating a festival with a unique offering directly relevant to the region would emphasize and complement the regional marketing strategy, potentially growing “brand” awareness and tourism from further afield.

Summary: Relevance to the Tri-Municipal Region

The RDFFG’s collaborative approach aids the delivery of the regional Cultural Plan while saving costs. The complementary relationship between member municipalities and cultural sites has been formalized in several ways to enable this: via the regional Cultural Plan and marketing strategy; by mandating that larger directly-funded cultural sites provide curatorial expertise and support to smaller ones as part of their funding agreements; and by employing a full-time Cultural and Communications Coordinator. These efforts are especially relevant to the Tri Municipal Region, as recognized in the SWOT Analysis (outlined in **Section 4.3**). Formalizing collaborative agreements and employing a cultural services officer both represent potential opportunities for resource sharing.

Furthermore, the RDFFG’s cultural marketing strategy, [Northern Routes Cultural Experience](#), is a strong example of a regional campaign to grow tourism. Charging other cultural organizations and attractions a fee to participate in the program provides another income stream to fund the promotion of arts and culture.

Hastings County + Quinte Region, ON

Hastings County is located on the border of Eastern and Central Ontario, around 200 kilometres from Toronto and Ottawa. It is the second largest county in the province in geographical terms, stretching nearly 160 kilometres from the Bay of Quinte on Lake Ontario to Algonquin Provincial Park. Hastings County Council is an Upper Tier municipality representing 14 member municipalities, whilst the county's geographical area includes the separated cities of Belleville and Quinte West and the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. The population of Hastings County's 14 municipalities was 39,588 in 2016 and, including the two separated Cities and Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, it was 139,268 (Census 2016).

Reason for selection: Like the Tri-Municipal Region, Hastings Council and the Quinte region's joint Cultural Plan encompasses three jurisdictions: two cities and a more sparsely populated rural county. The combined population of Hastings County and the two cities is also of a comparable size to the Tri-Municipal Region.

Governance Model

Arts and culture in Hastings County and the Quinte Region are primarily managed at the individual municipal level rather than as a formalized joint effort. Hastings County Council has an informal collaborative working relationship with the Cities of Belleville and Quinte West where they partner on specific economic development, tourism, culture, and other related activities when it is deemed beneficial. A Working Group representing each municipality and key organizations such as arts councils meets to discuss and review the activities of the regional Cultural Plan, described under the following section on Partnerships.

None of the three municipalities employ dedicated arts and culture staff. At Hastings County Council management of arts and culture is part of the mandate of the Manager of Economic and Tourism Development in the Planning & Development Department. Part of the mandate of the Economic and Tourism Development Office is to support and highlight local culture and heritage assets and sectors as economic drivers. The Office also works with Hastings County's 14 municipalities and regional service providers to help businesses grow.

At the City of Belleville, arts and culture are managed by the Recreation, Culture & Community Services department. A Heritage Committee advises on local heritage matters and assists with heritage conservation programs. Meanwhile, at Quinte West, arts and culture come under the remit of the Economic Development and Tourism Services department. The Department has a Culture and Heritage sub-committee which meets infrequently, approximately once a year.

Service delivery

Each municipality separately provides arts and culture services to its community. In Hastings County, the 14 member municipalities decide the governance and service delivery models for their local communities.

In Belleville, arts and culture are primarily delivered by the Belleville Public Library which houses the John M. Parrott Art Gallery, and by Quinte Arts Council. Quinte Arts Council were involved in the development of the regional Cultural Plan and are also currently leading the regional cultural Working Group. The arts council receives municipal funding from the City of Belleville as well as provincial

funding and income from other sources such as memberships and donations. The City's Heritage Belleville Committee and assists with the designation of heritage buildings.

In Quinte West, the grassroots, member-driven organization Arts Quinte West works to promote all art forms in the area. Arts Quinte West works with the City municipality to action the regional Cultural Plan, and the City provides the group with an exhibition space in the foyer of City Hall. However, although the group has received some grants in previous years from the City Council, it is primarily funded by Quinte West Chamber of Commerce.

Partnerships

The region's shared Cultural Plan was developed as a partnership between Hastings County Council and the municipalities of the City of Belleville and the City of Quinte West. Approved in fall 2012, the 10-year Plan was guided by a three-member Steering Committee representing each of the three municipalities. This team was supported by an Advisory Committee of 16 local stakeholders with strong connections to the region's cultural assets.

The main goals of the Cultural Plan are as follows: to foster regional cultural collaboration whilst minimizing competition; to grow culture-driven economic development; to celebrate the region's history and heritage; and to build a strong and collaborative cultural sector.

"The regional approach to cultural planning is breaking new ground in Ontario. Regional cultural planning formalizes a 'better together' philosophy, minimizing competition while fostering regional collaboration and partnership."

— A 10-year Cultural Plan for Hastings County + Quinte Region

In practice, the Cultural Plan has only been partially implemented due to the lack of dedicated arts and culture staff to manage it. Consequently, many of the Plan's aims have not been realized or activities have been discontinued. Activities that have been Implemented include a successful Cultural Summit (see following "Festivals and Events"), the [Arts Route](#) discovery trail and online map (launched 2010) which leads to local galleries, artists and artisans in the county, and the Cultural Portal (launched 2015 at www.culturalportal.ca) which is no longer live. The Portal was an interesting collaboration as it included an interactive map showcasing over 750 cultural resources across the region. Visitors could browse culturally significant sites and suggest the addition of new or missing ones, and community groups or individuals could also post local stories and contribute to an events calendar. The dedicated platform offered the municipalities the opportunity to engage the community whilst sharing the task of administrative updates, but in practice dedicated support was still required to manage the platform. This challenge underscores that activities are often most successful and sustainable when they are driven by a specific organization, department, or staff member. A budget is also required to promote and drive web traffic to the platform.

Guiding Plans

Latest plan:

[10-Year Cultural Plan for Hasting County + Quinte Region](#), launched fall 2012.

Adjacent plans:

[Hastings County Tourism Masterplan Review](#), June 2016. One of the opportunities highlighted by the report is to "connect cultural plan/portal with tourism efforts" (p10).

[North Hastings Municipal Cultural Plan Project report](#), 2010. The regional Cultural Plan of 2012 was partly undertaken to complement and integrate the findings and recommendations of this document.

Funding

Figure 3: Funding for Hastings County + Quinte Region

	Direct Cultural Investment from Operating Budgets (2019)	Grants (one-time annual funding, 2019)	Estimated Cultural Spend per Capita (2019)
Hastings County Council	Does not directly fund culture.	Not available ²⁸	–
City of Quinte West	Does not directly fund culture from operating budget.	\$74,500	\$1.70
City of Belleville	City of Belleville: \$2.754 M including library that houses gallery; \$608,267 without.	–	\$54.30 including library/gallery; \$11.99 without

Each municipality approved \$5,000 funding per year for activities relating to the joint Cultural Plan. However, the funds were not spent in their entirety in 2019 or will be in 2020.²⁹

Hastings County Council does not have ongoing budgeted funds to support museums or arts and culture specifically. The County Council delivers funding primarily in the form of one-time grants in response to specific requests. Organizations seeking funding make formal requests to the County Council prior to the budget being set for the next calendar year, and the request is reviewed by a Committee of Council who take recommendations to the Council for final approval.³⁰

Similarly, the City of Quinte West does not specifically fund culture within its operating budget. However, it provides grants for cultural sites and activities. Recipients include The National Air Force Museum of Canada (\$37,000), Air Force City Pipe Band (\$5,000), an agricultural museum (\$5,000), a

²⁸ Hastings County Council will provide one-time grants in response to specific requests. Nordicity requested figures but has not received them, and they appear not to be available in the public domain.

²⁹ Communicated via email by Jennifer Rushlow, Senior Tourism & Special Events Officer at Quinte West on September 23, 2020.

³⁰ Communicated via email on September 23, 2020 by Andrew Redden, Economic & Tourism Development Manager at Hastings County Council, who oversees the Cultural Plan.

local film festival (\$15,000), travelling Shakespeare performances (\$2,500) and a Summer Concert Series (\$8,000), and has provided Community Fund Grants to Arts Quinte West (\$2,000; all figures 2019).³¹

City of Belleville allocates direct cultural spending to a museum (\$527,646), Heritage Belleville Committee (\$4,158), archive facility (\$76,463), a gallery based in the municipal library (\$2,145,500 combined; all figures 2019).³²

Key Themes

Public Art

In Hastings County, public art is managed at the local level by individual member municipalities and not the County Council directly. The cities of Quinte West and Belleville do not have an official municipal art collections or funding programs.

Cultural Facilities

The City of Belleville funds three key cultural facilities; Glanmore Historic Museum, and the John M. Parrott Gallery –, the Quinte region’s only public art gallery – and the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County facility, both of which are located in Belleville Public Library.

Hastings County Council and the City of Quinte West do not directly fund museums and cultural facilities or organizations through operating budgets.

Indigenous Arts and Diversity

Although the Cultural Plan highlights the importance of celebrating the arts, culture, and history of Hasting County’s First Nations, there do not appear to be specific programs that focus on Indigenous arts. As described in **Partnerships** above, there is a need for a specific department or employee to be mandated to oversee the delivery of cultural plans to meet their objectives.

Key Festivals and Events

Two regional Cultural Summits have been held following the regional Cultural Plan, organized by municipal staff from Hastings County and the Cities of Quinte West and Belleville. Taking place in 2015 and 2018, the summits were highly successful, offering networking opportunities, information sharing and the promotion of culture across the region. 2018 was the larger of the two events and attracted 161 attendees. Hosting a summit like this provides a forum for the community to identify new issues and opportunities emerging from a cultural plan on an annual basis and is perhaps an initiative that the Tri-Municipal Region could explore.

The City of Quinte West employ two event coordinators, and although they are not specifically mandated to produce cultural events. The City hosts or supports several culture-themed events including Quinte Canadian Film Festival, the Weekly Summer Concert Series, and the Travelling

³¹ Communicated via email by Jennifer Rushlow, Senior Tourism & Special Events Officer at Quinte West on October 16, 2020.

³² Figures for 2019 derived from City of Belleville 2020 Budget Departmental Expenditures, published June 24, 2020 <https://www.belleville.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Documents/Finance-Documents/2020-Operating-Budget---Final-Website.pdf>

Shakespeare Troupe. The City promotes cultural activities and events organized by others in the community via event calendars, social media and in a Discovery Guide.

The City of Belleville has supported a fine art show called Arts on the Square, taking place most years since 2002. In 2019 the City of Belleville hosted an inaugural Arts Week in 2019, which featured a Mayor's Concert for the Arts featuring the Quinte Symphony Orchestra and an En Plein Air Artists' Reception at the public art gallery exhibiting works by Quinte Arts Council members

Summary: Relevance to the Tri-Municipal Region

Hastings County + the Quinte Region's Cultural Plan is especially relevant to the Tri-Municipal Region as it also aims to promote arts and culture across three jurisdictions. Although the Plan's "better together" philosophy is laudable in its ambition to promote collaboration while minimizing competition, a lack of formalized agreements and dedicated staff to deliver it means that it is difficult to implement in practice. This case study emphasizes that the Tri-Municipal Region should consider appointing a dedicated employee or department to oversee the implementation of the cultural strategy, potentially reporting to a joint cultural committee or cultural roundtable representing the Region's three municipalities.

Strathcona County, AB

Strathcona County is a specialized municipality located between Edmonton and Elk Island National Park in central Alberta. The County comprises the urban area of Sherwood Park and a large adjacent rural area of eight hamlets and farms, with a total population of 98,000 residents (2016 Census). As a result, the needs of residents in various parts of the community are quite different.

Reason for selection: Like the Tri-Municipal Region, Strathcona County is located only around 30 kilometres from Edmonton. Its population is of a comparable size and it also includes both urban and rural communities.

Governance Model

Arts and culture services at Strathcona County Council are managed by the Recreation, Parks and Culture department in the Community Services Division. The Department's a budget is approved by the County Council for the delivery the services to both a rural and urban population. The cultural team includes the department Director, a Community Liaison Officer for Culture and a Public Art Coordinator, who are supported by Art Collection Advisory Committee.

In July 2019, the County Council launched a Recreation and Culture Strategy outlining plans for the next 12 years. The Strategy's priorities are aligned with the County's overall strategic goal "to become Canada's most livable community." A Recreation and Culture Strategy Advisory Committee was established at the outset to guide the develop of the strategy, comprising 11 community members, five agency members and the strategy's Executive and Project Sponsors.

The new Strategy will be supplemented by an implementation plan which prioritizes short-term, mid-term and long-term initiatives in four-year increments. The plan is in development and will be presented to the County Council in late fall for implementation in 2021. The plan aims to guide the operations and capital projects of the Recreation, Parks and Culture department, focusing on five areas: community needs, inclusion, building capacity, environmental sustainability and fiscal responsibility. It will be reviewed annually and adjusted to align with and account for County and community priorities.

Service Delivery and Partnerships

The Recreation and Culture Strategy is designed to be delivered through combined efforts and investment by local government, non-profit organizations and community groups, as well as private businesses. The Community Liaison Officer for Culture supports an annual cultural grant program, service delivery and dialogue between the Council and the local museum and arts, culture and heritage groups and organizations.

One of the most prominent organizations that Strathcona County works with is the [Arts & Culture Council of Strathcona County](#) (ACCSC), run by a volunteer Executive Board and supported by Strathcona County Council and liaison staff from its Recreation Parks and Culture department. The ACCSC promotes arts and culture and its members via its website, workshops, and events. There is also a separate [Arts Society of Strathcona County](#) (ASSC) which also promotes the works of local artists, which is a member organization of the Arts & Culture Council and not directly associated with the County Council.

Guiding Plans

Latest cultural plan:

[Recreation and Culture Strategy](#), approved July 2019

Adjacent plans:

[Recreation, Parks and Culture Department Business Plan 2020-2023](#), published January 2020

[What We Heard](#) - Public report to inform the Recreation and Culture Strategy, prepared February 2019

[Public Art Plan 2014-2019](#), approved June 2014

[Public Art Map](#), developed by the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department at Strathcona County:

[Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy \(OSRFS\)](#) - previous strategy that guided the County's provision of recreation and cultural facilities

Funding

Table 9: Funding for Strathcona County

Direct Cultural Investment from Strathcona County Operating Budgets (2019)	Grants (one-time annual funding, 2019)	Estimated Cultural Spend per Capita (2019)
N/A – spending allocated via grants issued by the Recreation, Parks and Culture department.	\$100,000	\$1.02

There is an Arts, Culture and Heritage Community Investment Program with five categories: Arts Development/Program/Project; Capital Equipment; Individual Artist Development; Organizational Development and the Special Event or Festival Grant. There are two application deadlines annually.

Strathcona County Council issues **\$100,000 in grants each year** to the local museum and other arts, culture, and heritage groups and organizations.

Key Themes

Public Art

An Art Collection Advisory Committee guides the County Council on matters relating to public art. The Committee assists with the Strathcona County Public Art Program and the Strathcona County Annual Art Acquisition Program, which was established in 1987. Artworks submitted via the acquisition program are reviewed by the Art Collection Advisory Committee and by members of the Council's Recreation, Parks & Culture Cultural Services branch, and then put forward to be judged by an Art Collection jury. The jury includes arts professionals and non-residents of Strathcona County who are appointed annually. Art purchased via the program is displayed in public areas in Strathcona County Council buildings.

Strathcona County Council has developed a five-year [Public Art Plan](#) (2014-2019) which aims to integrate art into the public environment whilst engaging the community. The Plan was developed through a community planning process involving the Art Collection Advisory Committee, the council, a number of artists and other members of the public. The plan identifies the benefits of public art in the urban and rural fabric, principles for future public art projects, administrative and management structures and guidelines and procedures, a funding model, public awareness strategy and a monitoring and evaluation framework. Implemented recommendations include developing a Public Art Fund and creating a new Public Art Coordinator position (now hired) as part of the Council's Recreation, Parks and Culture department.

"Art makes public spaces more welcoming and creates deeper interaction with our environment..."

Successful public art collections must be supported by a strategic management framework of initiatives and actions that create awareness, promote engagement and ensure longevity through responsible stewardship."

– Strathcona County Public Art Plan 2014-2019

Strathcona Council's intentional planning approach engages the community, raises the awareness of public art, and potentially increases its positive impact. Part of the reason for this success is due to there being a dedicated Committee and Public Art Coordinator. It is potentially an approach that the Tri-Municipal Region could draw from, depending on available funding.

Cultural Facilities

The Recreation, Parks and Culture department operates and maintains 15 indoor facilities, including an art gallery, a performance theatre, swimming pools, arenas, indoor play areas, indoor sports fields, gymnasiums, wellness centres, outdoor education facilities, meeting rooms and social and banquet areas. The department also delivers over 52,000 hours of facility-based recreation and culture activities and experiences annually.

Strathcona County's three main municipal arts and culture facilities are Festival Place for performing arts, Gallery@501 and Smeltzer House Visual Arts Centre which includes pottery and fused glass studios. Visual arts programming is offered from the latter two locations, including programs for students of all ages as well as classes for private groups and schools. Festival Place offers extensive performing arts workshops and programming.

Indigenous Arts and Diversity

One of the core principles of the Recreation and Culture Strategy is inclusion, to ensure that recreation and culture spaces are welcoming for all. In the spirit of reconciliation, the Strategy pledges to embrace Indigenous voices and culture. In June 2020, Strathcona County Council installed land acknowledgment plaques along the Heritage Mile, as part of its recognition for National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21. The wording was developed in consultation with Whitefish Lake First Nation.

The council-run Gallery@501 frequently exhibits the work of Indigenous artists. Each year, the gallery offers an exhibit focused on issues identified by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, in particular, Indian residential schools and colonialism.

Key Festivals and Events

Each County Council-funded facility offers programs, including high profile events such as Canada Day and News Eve events. Signature arts and culture events include the Strathcona County Culture Fest and the Arty Party which are organized by the Council-supported Arts & Culture Council of Strathcona County.

The County Council reports that its art programs, performance venue, and special events are often over-subscribed. Rather than facing competition with the City of Edmonton, the County has hosted collaborative events with other art venues in Edmonton and surrounding areas. The County's performing arts centre and art gallery have hosted many high-profile events, attracting residents as well others in the Edmonton region.

Summary: Relevance to the Tri-Municipal Region

Strathcona County Council has an especially established and intentional approach to public art acquisition and integration into the community. The public art strategy appears to be highly successful and is potentially an approach that the Tri-Municipal Region could follow. To do so, however, the Tri-Municipal Region would need to invest in developing a Public Art Committee and potentially also a specific public art plan for the sub-region and dedicated staff member. Another helpful approach would be to implement the same financial reporting approach for public art spending across each municipality, as noted in Section 3.1 above. For example, works of art and cultural and historic assets as capital assets could be recorded as capital spending and amortized. Implementing the same financial accounting approach would enable direct comparison on public art spending possible across each municipality.

Benchmarking the Tri-Municipal Region with Comparative Jurisdictions

The case studies above highlight some areas of leading practice which could be especially relevant for the Tri-Municipal Region.

The RDFFG's formalization of collaboration between its funded cultural sites, regional Cultural Coordinator, and the regional Northern Cultural Experience marketing campaign appear to have been highly productive strategies which offer opportunities for the pooling of resources and cost sharing.

Although success in implementing Hasting County + Quinte Region's shared Cultural Plan has been limited due to the lack of formalized agreements and dedicated staff, the joint Cultural Summit has been a success. The Summit has offered the community an opportunity to network and review the Plan, while raising the profile of arts and culture in the region. An annual summit like this can provide a form of annual community evaluation, enabling municipalities to tailor the delivery of the cultural strategy to reflect current realities and priorities.

Arts and cultural governance appears to be more clearly defined in Strathcona County than in the Tri-Municipal Region. At Strathcona County, it is managed at municipal level by a single cultural team that includes the Director of the Recreation, Parks and Culture department, a Cultural Development Officer and a Public Art Coordinator. However, Strathcona County is a specialized municipality, which makes some aspects of delivering cultural services easier. For example, as the county operates as a single municipal government, implementing a cultural plan does not require a joined-up effort across municipalities as it does in the Tri-Municipal Region. Despite this major difference, the Tri-Municipal Region can still look to Strathcona County's apparently highly effective approach to acquiring and managing public art. For example, Strathcona County's Public Art Plan aims to further integrate art into

public areas to increase opportunities for placemaking and public awareness and engagement with shared cultural assets. These goals are synonymous with some of Parkland County's, Spruce Grove's, and Stony Plain's goals of making art more accessible to residents, further engaging residents to benefit from creative placemaking efforts.

Appendix D: Interviewee List**Stony Plain**

Chantelle Laberge	Culture and Tourism Development Officer - Town of Stony Plain
Shawn McCauley	Economic Development Officer - Town of Stony Plain
Melanie Samson	Manager, Community Programs and Services
Chelseay Rudolph	Sustainability Planner

Spruce Grove

David Wolanski	GM Community and Protective Services
Brent Oliver ³³	Director of Cultural Services
David Schuster	Cultural Services Administrator
Sylvia Miller	Event Supervisor
Angela Watt	Information Management Supervisor - Angela plays a stakeholder role for this project given her previous work on events and cultural initiatives in the region

Parkland County

Dave Cross	GM, Agriculture, Community, and Protective Services
Sarah Mate	Director, Community Services
Suzanne Merrills	Community Development Coordinator
Carilyn Bjarnason	Community Development Coordinator

³³ Note, this interview did not take place due to Brent being out of the office for the foreseeable future.