



Town of  
**East Gwillimbury**



# Town of East Gwillimbury Municipal Cultural Plan

September 2012

**AUTHENTICITY**  
A DIVISION OF MILLIER DICKINSON BLAIS INC.



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# Executive Summary

In 2011, the Town of East Gwillimbury undertook a Cultural Mapping project that was the first step toward the development of this Municipal Cultural Plan (MCP). The Municipal Cultural Plan has also been developed in the context of two major recent planning initiatives. In 2010, the Town approved a new Official Plan and in 2011 adopted its first Economic Development Strategy. The overall goal identified by the Town for the Municipal Cultural Plan was to:

**Develop a complete and comprehensive Cultural Plan that will recommend an overall vision and set of strategies to guide cultural development in the Town of East Gwillimbury.**

Specific objectives identified for the Plan include:

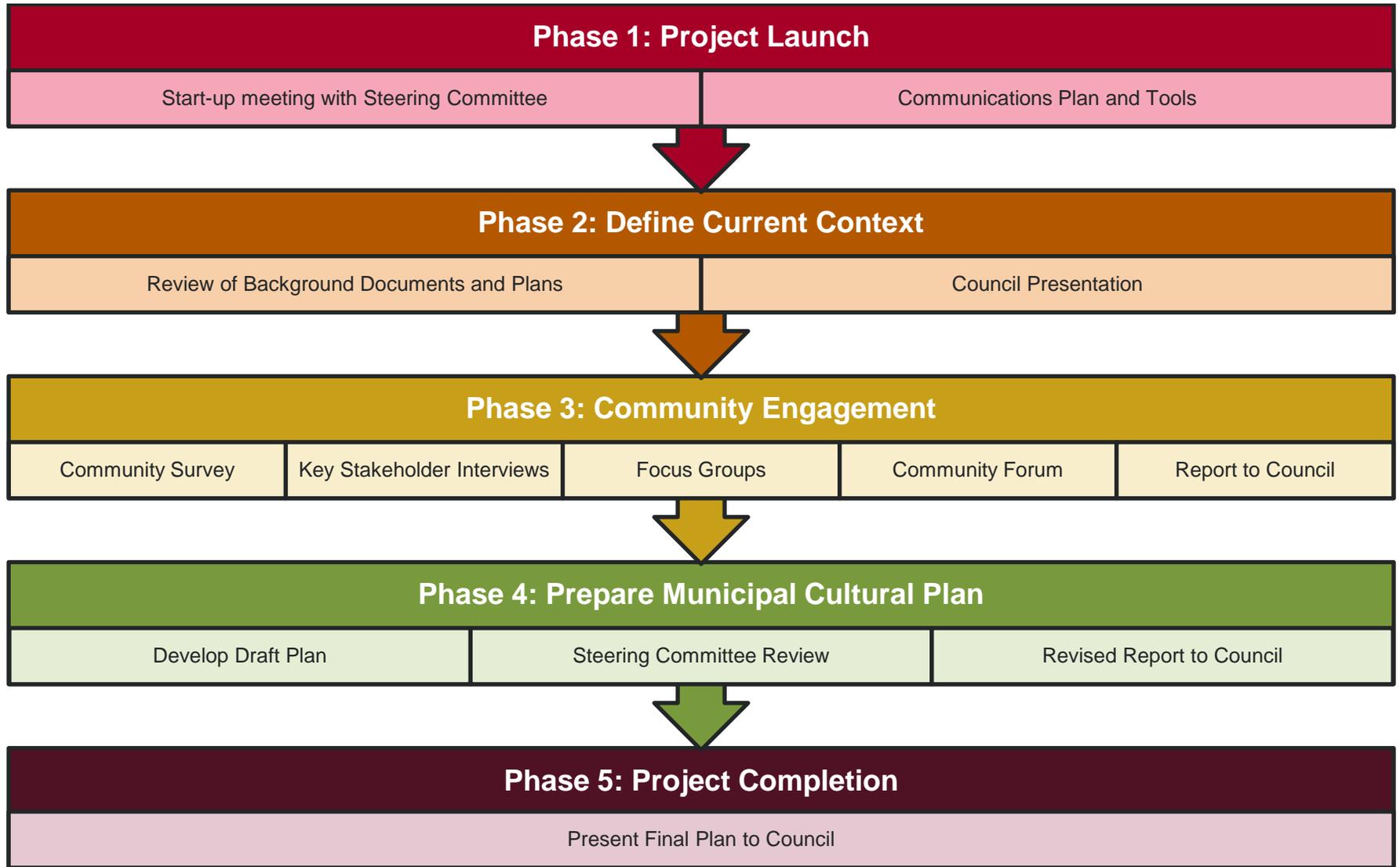
- To recommend strategies to strengthen and sustain heritage and cultural organizations, facilities, services and activities
- To establish strategies and actions to strengthen the engagement and participation of residents in cultural programs and services
- To strengthen collective engagement and collaboration within the cultural sector in order to increase its capacity to support cultural development
- To define strategies to connect the cultural sector to key business and community groups and initiatives in support of mutual objectives including the delivery of cultural services
- To provide the municipality with strategies and recommendations that identify potential partnerships and their suggested timeframes for completion (short, medium, long term)

The development of the Municipal Cultural Plan took place over a 6-month period between April and September 2012. The planning process is illustrated in Figure 1. The project was guided by a Steering Committee consisting of Town staff and community representatives. Members of the Steering Committee are identified in Appendix A. The development of the Municipal Cultural Plan was supported by the Creative Communities Prosperity Fund of the Government of Ontario.

An overview of the Municipal Cultural Plan follows Figure 1, and is elaborated later in the document.



FIGURE 1: THE PLANNING PROCESS





# Overview of the Municipal Cultural Plan

The following provides an overview of the major components of the Cultural Plan.

## Vision Statement

*Celebrating and leveraging the Town of East Gwillimbury's diverse cultural resources to build shared identity and future prosperity.*

## Guiding Principles

In pursuing this vision, the Town of East Gwillimbury embraces the following guiding principles.

- We see our cultural resources and amenities as major drivers in attracting people to live, work, play and invest in our community
- We see our evolving history, from past to present as the bedrock of our culture and source of shared identity
- We see our natural heritage and rural landscapes as defining characteristics of East Gwillimbury to be celebrated and preserved
- We see cultural resources and activities as essential to making downtown cores the social, economic and cultural hubs across the Town
- We see our growing diversity as a source of strength and vitality
- We see a community in which cultural programs and activities are accessible to all community members throughout their lifetime
- We see a community that values and supports strong cultural organizations that work together toward common goals

## Goals

- **Goal 1: Broaden the Town's Leadership Role**
- **Goal 2: Build a Strong and Collaborative Cultural Sector**
- **Goal 3: Grow Culture-Driven Economic Development**
- **Goal 4: Conserve and Promote History and Heritage**
- **Goal 5: Celebrate Diversity and Inclusivity**



FIGURE 2: 10-YEAR ACTION PLAN

### **Goal 1: Broaden the Town's Leadership Role**

- Promote the plan widely across the municipality
- Discuss and identify staff and administrative requirements to implement the plan
- Create a cultural roundtable or cultural resources committee
- Convene a staff forum on the municipal cultural plan
- Convene a cultural summit or rally
- Establish a cultural fund
- Integrate culture into municipal planning and decision-making
- Leverage cultural opportunities presented by East Gwillimbury Official Plan
- Invest in a public art program
- Investigate rural-based public art opportunities

### **Goal 2: Build a Strong and Collaborative Cultural Sector**

- Strengthen cultural networks
  - Hold Regular networking sessions
  - Create a continuously updated community calendar of events
  - Ensure strong collaboration in York Region
- Expand collaboration programming and cross-promotion
- Expand cultural marketing and promotion
- Address cultural facility needs
  - Undertake a comprehensive inventory of cultural spaces and facilities
  - Investigate the potential for establishing a multipurpose cultural facility
  - Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Heritage Centre
- Support and leverage the Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum



### **Goal 3: Expand Culture-Led Economic Development**

- Develop more integrated experience-based tourism offerings
- Develop integrated cultural and agri-tourism offerings and experiences
- Implement a program to support start-up enterprises in underutilized downtown spaces
- Support youth engagement and retention
- Strengthen festivals
- Continue cultural mapping

### **Goal 4: Conserve and Promote History and Heritage**

- Undertake heritage conservation district studies
- Re-establish and strengthen the East Gwillimbury Heritage Committee
- Launch a cultural heritage landscape study
- Launch a community storytelling program
- Launch a regional murmur project

### **Goal 5: Celebrate Diversity and Inclusivity**

- Increase public awareness of the positive impact of immigration and diversity
- Seek out multilingual cultural volunteers
- Provide cultural sensitivity training for volunteers and staff
- Leverage current and future library programs addressing diversity



# 1 Guiding Assumptions



## 1.1 Municipal Cultural Planning

Municipal cultural planning is a priority for the Government of Ontario. The Government of Ontario recognizes the increasingly important role played by creativity, culture and quality of place in growing local economies and enhancing community health and well-being. In order to leverage these benefits, a new set of tools and assumptions was needed to leverage cultural resources and to better integrate culture across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making. Municipal cultural planning is a response to this need.

The following definition has been endorsed by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and has guided the development of the Municipal Cultural Plan for the Town of East Gwillimbury.

*A municipal led process approved by Council, for identifying and leveraging a community's cultural resources, strengthening the management of those resources, and integrating those cultural resources across all facets of local government planning and decision-making.*

*Municipal cultural planning is part of an integrated, place-based approach to planning and development that takes into account four pillars of sustainability: economic prosperity, social equity, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality.*

The following Guiding Assumptions have also been identified to support municipalities in undertaking municipal cultural plans (MCP).

- **Cultural resources** – MCP embraces a broad definition of cultural resources that includes creative cultural industries, cultural spaces and facilities, natural and cultural heritage, festivals and events and community cultural organizations
- **Cultural mapping** – MCP begins with cultural mapping, a systematic approach to identifying and recording a community's tangible and intangible cultural resources
- **Adopting a 'cultural lens'** – MCP involves establishing processes to integrate culture as a consideration across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making
- **Cross-sectoral strategies** – MCP requires new partnerships or shared governance mechanisms (such as Cultural Roundtables) to support ongoing collaboration between the municipality and its community and business partners
- **Networks and engagement** – MCP involves strengthening networks across the cultural sector with comprehensive and ongoing strategies to support community engagement



## 1.2 Culture and Economic Development

Undertaking municipal cultural planning in the Town of East Gwillimbury comes at an opportune time. Many communities in Ontario – specifically in suburban and rural Ontario – are undergoing a profound shift in their economic base. It is a shift away from manufacturing, and other ‘traditional’ industries as the foundation of many local economies, and toward a creative economy driven by ideas, innovation, knowledge, collaboration and creativity. Communities that can identify and support elements of their creative economies – starting with cultural resources – will be well-positioned to capitalize on the opportunities that this shift produces.

These opportunities relate to the growing number of small and medium-sized creative businesses responding to new consumer demands for original and local place-based products and services in the fields of information technology, graphic design, food, wine, and hospitality - to name a few. Scholars interested in the creative rural economy have also examined the role of artists in culture-led economic development. They have noted that smaller areas can be ‘havens’ for artists because of factors such as natural amenities, arts infrastructure and the cost of living, leading to the attraction of creative talent. Developing a comprehensive understanding of the unique local resources that can support a creative economy is a critical early step in this process.

Successful municipalities will be those that offer an appealing and attractive community, that are diverse and welcoming, that have interesting public spaces, that celebrate public art and urban design, and that understand linking these elements as a magnet to attract people and talent. Cultural assets contribute to the overall attractiveness and vitality of a community, which in turn increases its competitiveness. This connection was confirmed by research completed by the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto which found that the overall attractiveness and aesthetic character of a community has a positive and significant effect on community satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the most significant factors alongside economic security, good schools and the capacity for social interaction.

In a presentation by Betsy Donald, Professor of Geography at Queen’s University given at the 2012 Economic Revitalization Conference hosted by the Monieson Centre, Professor Donald outlined the need for a new approach to policies and programs in rural economic development. Professor Donald spoke specifically about new approaches requiring a stronger integration of the arts and culture into the rural economy; she developed the notion of “the art of the rural”. This includes crafting a unique regional identity for rural places and developing a multidisciplinary and multifaceted approach that links identity creation, cultural development and economic development.

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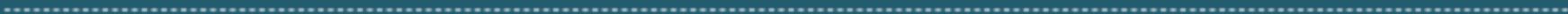
<sup>1</sup> Beautiful Places: The Role of Perceived Aesthetic Beauty in Community Satisfaction. Working Paper Series: Martin Prosperity Research. Prepared by: Richard Florida, University of Toronto, Charlotta Mellander, Jönköping International Business School, Kevin Stolarick, University of Toronto March 2009



The Municipal Cultural Plan for the Town of East Gwillimbury has produced a body of information and recommendations to support this new vision of economic development consistent with many of the principles and recommendations found in the Town of East Gwillimbury Economic Development Strategy.



## 2 Summary of Findings





## 2.1 The Cultural Mapping Project

In 2011, the Town of East Gwillimbury completed a Cultural Mapping Project as a first step toward the development of a Municipal Cultural Plan. Cultural mapping is a systematic approach to identifying, documenting and analyzing a community's cultural resources. The Cultural Mapping Project was intended to provide the Town with an understanding of the rich diversity of cultural resources in the community, and serve as a tool to support the launch of the Municipal Cultural Plan, as well as economic and broader community development objectives. Specific objectives for the Cultural Mapping Project included:

- Compiling a cultural asset inventory in the Town that will inform the development of the Municipal Cultural Plan
- Developing an asset inventory to also support the Town's Economic Development Strategy and enhance the role of culture in the Town's strategic initiatives
- Engaging with community cultural representatives and stakeholders regarding strategic cultural development needs, and supporting information gathering for the cultural mapping project
- Compile, code and present data for integration into the Town's GIS system, and work with the Town to develop a Maintenance Plan for the ongoing use and maintenance of this system over time

Figure 3 summarizes baseline findings from the Cultural Mapping Project. The Cultural Mapping Project represents the beginning, not the end of cultural mapping in the Town. It has established a solid baseline inventory of cultural resources that can be broadened and deepened over time. This baseline represents information on cultural resources of all kinds that the Town can use as a benchmark against which to assess future growth and development of cultural resources. The information will support and inform the implementation of Recommended Actions set out in the Municipal Cultural Plan and again provide figures to assess progress in addressing a range of those recommendations. The final Cultural Mapping Report also identified issues and initial recommendations related to the development of a Municipal Cultural Plan that has informed this Plan.

A question frequently asked in municipalities is how findings from cultural mapping compare to those in other communities. Such assessments are difficult and of questionable value due to widely varying geographic locations, population bases, patterns of development, among other factors. Nevertheless, the Cultural Mapping Project has shown that East Gwillimbury, for a community of its size, has a strong base of cultural resources from which to build.

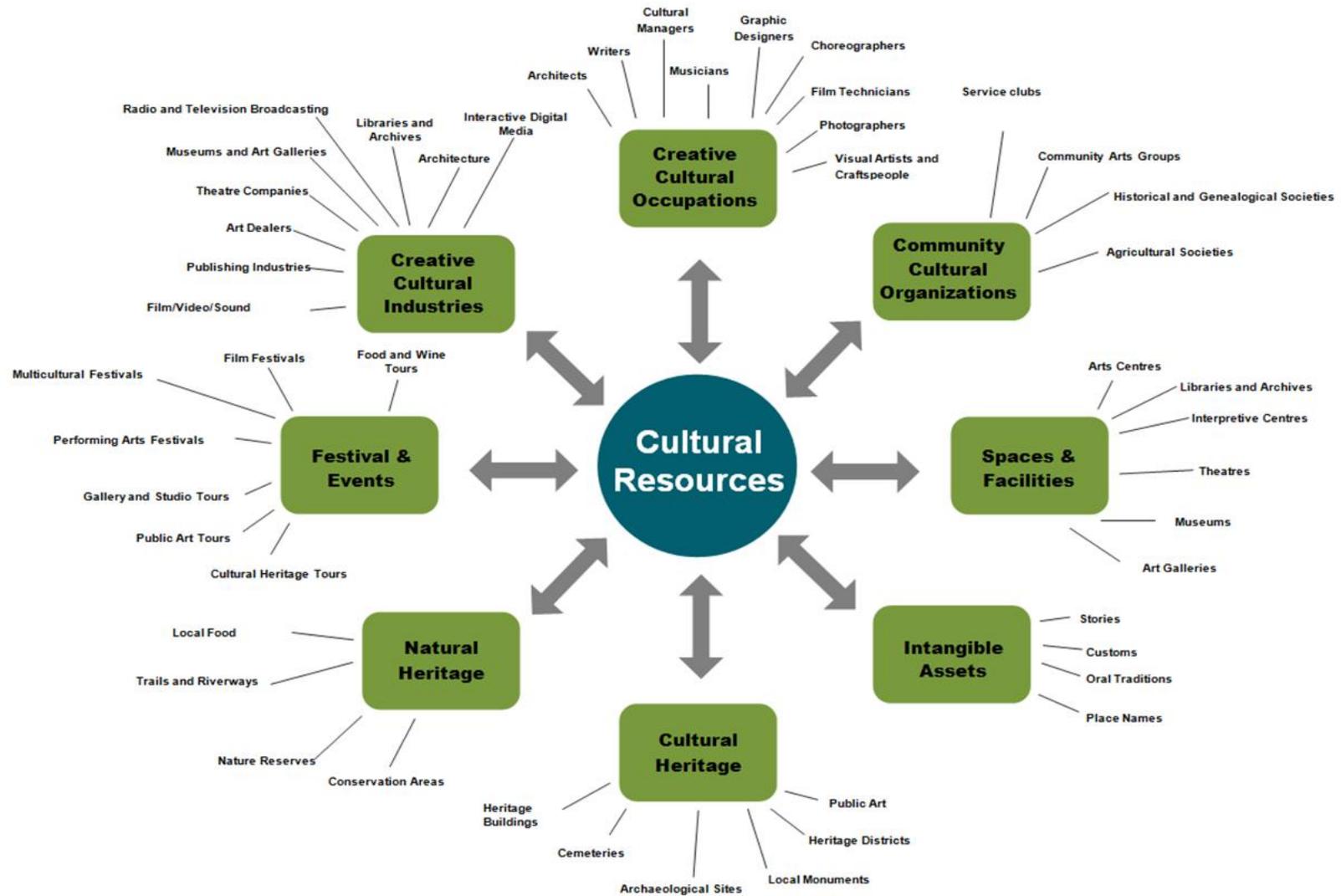
Figure 4 illustrates the Cultural Resource Framework that guided the project.

FIGURE 3: BASELINE CULTURAL MAPPING FINDINGS

Category	Cultural Assets
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	320
<b>Natural Heritage</b>	30
<b>Sports and Leisure</b>	33
<b>Festivals and Events</b>	33
<b>Creative Cultural Industries</b>	23
<b>Community Organizations</b>	15
<b>Spaces and Facilities</b>	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>472</b>



FIGURE 4: CULTURAL RESOURCE FRAMEWORK





## 2.2 The Planning Context

Part of the background research informing this Municipal Cultural Plan was an extensive review of a number of planning and policy documents, each with a direct bearing on the future of cultural development in East Gwillimbury. This section presents a summary of key findings from this review of the planning context for the Municipal Cultural Plan. A fuller description of this planning context is found in Appendix B.

The prevailing theme woven throughout the Town's policy and planning priorities is that of 'responsible growth'. This guiding planning perspective was explicitly embraced by the Town after the Government of Ontario's *Places to Grow Act* of 2005 designated East Gwillimbury as a future growth area. Associated forecasts predict the Town will grow to 86,500 people by 2031, from 23,000 in 2011. The Town's Official Plan adopted in 2010 focused on responsibly managing this growth guided by the following vision: *"to develop a complete, healthy and sustainable community that will provide opportunities for residents at all life stages to live, work, play and learn."* This vision was based on four objectives:

- Sustainable community development
- Cohesive, vibrant and connected urban neighbourhoods sensitive to the Town's cultural heritage
- To ensure a high quality of life for the present and future residents of the community with respect to security, health, safety, jobs, convenience and general economic welfare
- A vibrant rural and agricultural countryside, including secondary uses associated with agriculture and tourism

The Plan proposes the Central Growth Area of the Town – comprising about 30% of developable area – will be the destination for much of the Town's 'urban' growth, yet the remaining 70% will be preserved for rural and agricultural use. These objectives suggest both a specific and implicit role for culture in the Town's current planning efforts. While cultural heritage is given particular recognition, the focus on quality of life and sustainable, mixed-use community development also reflects the importance of culture to the Town's growth. The Official Plan requires that the Town of East Gwillimbury pursue efforts of creating and enhancing an environment that attracts talented people. The Official Plan includes policies that factor in considerations of attractive village core downtowns and gathering spaces, parks, cultural facilities and natural heritage, as well as the pedestrian experience. These policies enhance the quality of life by promoting a mix of uses and providing opportunities within the Town to live, work, play and learn.

These objectives underscore the Town's commitment to a balanced approach to community planning; one that incorporates the importance of cultural heritage preservation and advancement in the built environment and natural landscape. Moving forward, the Town is committed to directing future growth and development in a way that "connects its



rural character to emerging urban centres.”<sup>2</sup> The Town’s commitment to maintaining its rural identity as it grows into a thriving urban center is particularly relevant to the Municipal Cultural Plan.

These themes are echoed in the Town of East Gwillimbury’s 10-Year Economic Development Strategy, completed in 2011, which focuses on directing the Town’s future economic growth and development in a way that “connects its rural character to emerging urban centres.”<sup>3</sup> The Strategy also underscores the importance of positioning East Gwillimbury as a place that offers the natural and cultural amenities and lifestyle that talented, skilled, diverse and successful people want to live in. The Strategy reflects the Town’s guiding vision as it reinforces the importance of maintaining a vibrant rural and agricultural countryside with an abundance of cultural amenities to enhance the quality of life for all of the Town’s current and future residents. It is by offering a rich quality of life that East Gwillimbury will be set apart from its neighbouring communities and provide the pre-conditions for continued community prosperity. The Town’s commitment to maintaining its rural identity, as it grows into a thriving urban center, is particularly relevant to the Municipal Cultural Plan.

A review of the planning context for the Municipal Cultural Plan also addressed important issues of diversity and inclusion locally and regionally. As East Gwillimbury grows, its ethno-cultural make-up will evolve to reflect levels of diversity found in many communities in the Greater Toronto Area and within York Region. On July 10, 2006, the Town of East Gwillimbury declared, “This is an inclusive community where diversity is celebrated and inclusivity is embraced. East Gwillimbury commits itself to the process of creating an open and honest community that encourages its residents to reach their full potential. We will accomplish this by eliminating any cultural barriers and implementing changes so that everyone, regardless of race, colour, faith or origin can live, work and play in this Town and enjoy all services, opportunities and positions of leadership.”<sup>4</sup> Questions related to addressing issues of diversity must also be a priority in the Municipal Cultural Plan.

As a final point, the Municipal Cultural Plan will play a role in establishing an overarching vision and set of shared assumptions to help better align and integrate planning across departments.

## 2.3 Community Engagement

The development of the Municipal Cultural Plan was informed by a strong community engagement process that included a community survey, in-depth interviews with Council, staff and community representatives, two focus groups, and a community forum. Findings from all these engagement events are set out in Appendix C and have been summarized in the following chart setting out the community’s Needs, Values and Aspirations related to cultural development in East Gwillimbury.

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<sup>2</sup> Town of East Gwillimbury (2011). Economic Development Strategy.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.eastgwillimbury.ca/Council/Diversity\\_and\\_Inclusivity\\_in\\_East\\_Gwillimbury.htm](http://www.eastgwillimbury.ca/Council/Diversity_and_Inclusivity_in_East_Gwillimbury.htm)



FIGURE 5: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

### Needs

- A shared vision and clear direction for cultural development in the Town
- A stronger unified identity and brand for the Town as a whole
- Increasing community engagement and participation in cultural activities
- Stronger marketing and promotion of cultural opportunities and activities
- Stronger networking, partnerships and collaboration among cultural organizations
- A strong focus on the history and heritage of the community
- Stronger engagement with youth
- Engaging businesses to support and participate in cultural activities
- Specific cultural facilities such as a multi-purpose cultural facility and a heritage centre as a place for the storage of archival collections, artifacts, exhibition space, etc.
- Better leveraging the extraordinary asset of the Sharon Temple through collaborative programming, new branding, a broader story and joint events with the Town, among others
- Expanded cultural tourism – linked to other assets such as agri-tourism and culinary tourism
- Increased staff and funding support from the Town to support cultural development now and into the future

### Values

- Implementing a cultural lens in Town decision-making
- Respecting and valuing community spirit and volunteerism
- Respect for the Town's history and heritage
- Respecting diversity, inclusion and access to culture for all community members
- Valuing natural heritage, rural and agricultural landscapes in the municipality

### Aspirations

- A stronger shared identity for the Town
- Enhanced cultural and heritage facilities
- Development of more integrated cultural experiences for residents and visitors
- Greater understanding of the economic importance of culture in the community
- Increased attendance and participation in cultural activities by both residents and tourists in East Gwillimbury
- More people living, working and investing in East Gwillimbury
- Citizens proud and knowledgeable about East Gwillimbury's heritage
- Managing growth and change including the evolving character of our community



### **3 Town of East Gwillimbury Municipal Cultural Plan**



## 3.1 Vision and Guiding Principles

### Vision Statement

*Celebrating and leveraging the Town of East Gwillimbury's diverse cultural resources to build shared identity and future prosperity.*

### Guiding Principles

In pursuing this vision, the Council of the Town of East Gwillimbury embraces the following guiding principles.

- We see our cultural resources and amenities as major drivers in attracting people to live, work, play and invest in our community
- We see our evolving history, from past to present as the bedrock of our culture and source of shared identity
- We see our natural heritage and rural landscapes as defining characteristics of East Gwillimbury to be celebrated and preserved
- We see cultural resources and activities as essential to making downtown cores social, economic and cultural hubs across the Town
- We see our growing diversity as a source of strength and vitality
- We see a community in which cultural programs and activities are accessible to all community members throughout their lifetime
- We see a community that values and supports strong cultural organizations that work together toward common goals

## 3.2 Goals

The Municipal Cultural Plan is built on five high-level goals that anchor and set a context for a range of Recommended Actions. The Plan should not be considered finished but rather it should be viewed as a thoughtful starting point. It is based on an assessment of where the Town finds itself today together with the expressed needs and aspirations for the future. The Plan must also be dynamic and continue to respond to changing needs and opportunities. New actions will emerge throughout the lifespan of the Municipal Cultural Plan; accordingly, the Plan proposes mechanisms to respond to these new opportunities. A summary of Recommended Actions is set out in Appendix E.



The five anchor Goals are listed below. *Goal 1: Broadening the Town's Leadership Role* has been deliberately placed first as it contains a number of foundational initiatives that will build the Town's capacity to successfully implement many subsequent Actions.

- **Goal 1: Broaden the Town's Leadership Role**
- **Goal 2: Build a Strong and Collaborative Cultural Sector**
- **Goal 3: Grow Culture-Driven Economic Development**
- **Goal 4: Conserve and Promote History and Heritage**
- **Goal 5: Celebrate Diversity and Inclusivity**

### 3.3 Recommended Actions

A number of Actions are accompanied by leading practices from other municipalities. While it is recognized that many are drawn from municipalities much larger than East Gwillimbury, these practices can provide ideas and insights to support the implementation of those Actions.

#### GOAL 1: Broaden the Town's Leadership Role

Throughout the community engagement process, the Town was praised for its leadership in initiating the cultural mapping and municipal cultural planning projects. Also acknowledged were the many ways in which the Town currently supports cultural development through the delivery of community and cultural programs, through its support for heritage conservation, among other commitments. However, there was also a strong call for the Town to broaden its role in supporting and facilitating communications and networking among cultural groups, and strengthening collaboration with business and community partners.

#### Recommended Actions:

##### 1. Promote the Plan Widely Across the Town

A first priority should be for the Town to raise awareness of the vision and directions set out in the Municipal Cultural Plan. An important target audience should be those community members that participated in the community engagement process. In addition to utilizing its own communications channels, the Town should seek out cultural, business and community partners and secure their cooperation in communicating the plan through their networks and email distribution lists.

#### Recommendation 1

##### Action(s):

- Prepare a media release announcing completion of the Plan
- Secure support from cultural, business and community partners in distributing the release to their networks



## 2. Discuss Staff and Administrative Requirements to Implement the Plan

Currently the Town does not have in place an administrative structure or sufficient staff resources needed to implement the 10-year agenda of Actions set out in the Municipal Cultural Plan. One recommendation made during the community engagement process was that 'culture' be explicitly named in the administrative/organizational structure of the Town in order to give it a greater profile. Several possibilities could be considered here. One is locating responsibility for culture within the Economic Development area. Another possibility is the renaming of the Leisure Services Division to Recreation, Culture and Heritage. Locating culture in Economic Development would be the more transformational change helping to shift mindsets in the community about culture's important role in future prosperity. In many smaller municipalities, Economic Development Offices do combine responsibilities for economic development, culture and tourism.

There was also a strong call for a dedicated staff person(s) to play a leadership role in supporting and championing the implementation of the Municipal Cultural Plan and supporting ongoing cultural development. The responsibilities of this position would *not* be one of program delivery but a community (cultural) development role focused on facilitating networking and capacity building for the cultural sector in East Gwillimbury. The position would also play a key role in working to integrate culture into economic and broader community development agendas. Consistent with this vision, consideration could be given to naming the position Cultural Development Officer.

## 3. Create a Cultural Roundtable or Cultural Resources Committee

Throughout the community engagement process there was strong support expressed for a new leadership group or committee to mobilize the partnerships and resources needed to implement the Municipal Cultural Plan. There are several mechanisms used in other municipalities to address this need. Historically, some municipalities established arm's length local Arts Councils to play this role. In recent years, thinking has shifted away from local Arts Councils that in many municipalities did not address heritage, commercial cultural enterprises and a wider understanding of cultural groups and activities. The trend has been away from an Arts Council model to a broader, cross-sectoral leadership groups (sometimes called Cultural Roundtables) representing the full spectrum of cultural resources in addition to a mandate to foster government, business and community partnership. Not all municipalities have embraced the Cultural Roundtable model but have opted instead for new committees of Council (sometimes called Cultural Resources Committees). Opinions were divided during community engagement about which model was best suited to meet the needs and circumstances of East Gwillimbury.

Regardless of which structure is chosen, there are some characteristics or conditions for success that can be drawn from the experience in other municipalities. Representatives should be drawn from:

### Recommendation 2

#### Action(s):

- Council to consider administrative arrangements and staffing requirements needed to implement the Plan

### Recommendation 3

#### Action(s):

- Establishment of Terms of Reference
- Recruit first Roundtable/Cultural Resources Committee (hereafter referred to as Roundtable in this document)



- Council
- Municipal staff – drawn from a number of relevant departments
- Cultural sector representatives – across not-for-profit and for-profit sectors
- Business representatives – Chambers of Commerce, Business/Village Associations, etc.
- Service Clubs
- Youth

Whichever structure is chosen it is essential that the group’s mandate extend beyond an advisory body to one whose primary purpose and focus is *action-oriented*. The strategy is to strike task-driven Working Groups to address specific recommended Actions or initiatives. Working Groups will usually include municipal staff members to support their work but members can include other individuals or organizations in the community (beyond those represented on the Cultural Resource Committee or Roundtable) to mobilize additional expertise and resources.

The Heritage East Gwillimbury has a specific mandate related to the conservation of the Town’s heritage. The proposed Cultural Resources Committee or Roundtable has a much wider mandate, but strong consideration should be given to having representation from the Heritage Committee on the larger body.

As a point of reference for the Town, three leading practices are set out in Appendix D. The leadership group (whatever form it takes) also serves as an effective vehicle for strengthening networking and collaboration across the cultural sector.

#### **4. Convene a Staff Forum on the Municipal Cultural Plan**

Successfully implementing the Municipal Cultural Plan requires building shared understanding and collaboration among all municipal staff. An early priority after the adoption of the Municipal Cultural Plan should be convening a forum to present the Plan to staff and to familiarize staff with key municipal cultural planning tools and assumptions. The staff forum could give consideration to steps taken in other municipalities to establishing cross-departmental ‘culture teams’ to sustain ongoing conversations and effective integration of culture in planning and decision-making.

#### **5. Convene a Cultural Summit or Rally**

A Cultural Summit designed to bring together a wide range of stakeholders and community members is an effective means of continuing the community engagement and conversation begun through the development of the Municipal Cultural Plan. The event is an opportunity to report on progress made in implementing the Plan, and engage the community in ‘opportunity citing’ about new issues or opportunities. The event can have a fresh format each time – for example featuring local artists or performers or including sessions on different cultural issues (e.g., cultural tourism, youth programming, etc.). Some larger municipalities convene annual summits but the frequency should be determined by the Cultural Roundtable or Cultural Resources Committee. For example, the meeting could be convened every two years to

#### **Recommendation 4**

##### **Action(s):**

- Organize and convene a 2-hour staff forum

#### **Recommendation 5**

##### **Action(s):**

- Establish a Working Group of the Roundtable to develop plans for the initial Summit/Rally
- Convene Summit/Rally in Year2



reduce planning and organizational time. Whatever timing or format, the primary focus should be engaging as broad a cross-section of the community as possible.

## 6. Establish a Cultural Fund

There was a call in the community engagement process for the Town to establish a fund to support and expand cultural activities and opportunities in the community. The Town recently awarded its first grant to a community group and several individuals interviewed noted the need to establish a clear set of funding criteria and a transparent decision-making process for these grants. The suggestion was made that, once Council had approved funding criteria, responsibility for adjudicating grants could be assigned to the Cultural Roundtable or Cultural Resources Committee. Funding support could enable Town participation in Doors Open, Culture Days and other important programs for which it was felt a critical mass of activity did not yet exist.

## 7. Integrate Culture into Municipal Planning and Decision-Making

One of the most important outcomes of the Municipal Cultural Plan is to build the capacity of the Town of East Gwillimbury staff to incorporate culture into ongoing planning and decision-making. 'Adopting a cultural lens' or factoring culture into a range of other plans and policies was felt by one participant at the Community Forum to be potentially the most powerful outcome of the Municipal Cultural Plan. Adopting a cultural lens on Town plans means asking three questions:

- How can cultural resources contribute to addressing broader municipal goals and priorities (e.g. economic diversification, retaining youth, growing cultural tourism, etc.)?
- How do local planning decisions impact cultural resources (e.g. the impact of new developments on existing and valued natural or cultural heritage resources)?
- How can cultural resources enhance the quality of place, form and function of the built environment and the public realm (e.g., through commissioned public art, strong urban design guidelines, interpretive materials related to local history, cultural programming in public spaces, etc.)?

The Municipal Cultural Plan will help build the capacity of staff to integrate culture into ongoing planning by:

- Establishing a set of shared definitions and assumptions to support cross-departmental planning
- Supporting more informed planning through sustained cultural mapping of cultural resources

### Recommendation 6

#### Action(s):

- Council to consider the establishment of the fund
- Council to direct staff to prepare terms of reference and criteria for the fund

### Recommendation 7

#### Action(s):

- Sustain cross-department staff conversations following the staff forum to continue to build shared knowledge related to integrated planning
- Consider the possibility of an ongoing cross-departmental 'Culture Team'



## 8. Leverage Cultural Opportunities Presented by East Gwillimbury's Official Plan

The adoption of the new Official Plan has put in place a wide range of policies that can be leveraged to support cultural development in the Town. These range from establishing public art programs (see below), leveraging cultural heritage and built form policies and guidelines to preserve authenticity and attractive village cores, downtowns and public spaces (including parks). The vision for future development includes the premise that development, especially in key areas, should reflect the culture and history of the Town. Specific planned actions include the development of a Civic Precinct, trails development and enhancement of public spaces and activities along the Holland River. In addition, the Town has adopted a sustainability approach to planning its future including, but not limited to, creating vibrant and diverse settlement areas and historically distinct communities.

## 9. Invest in a Public Art Program

In June 2012, Council adopted a new Public Art Policy. The opportunity now is to move toward the implementation of this policy through investment in a public art program for the Town. Funding for such a program need not be the sole responsibility of the Town. The Cultural Roundtable provides a vehicle for seeking contributions to a public art fund from business and community groups in whose interest it is to help beautify and enhance public spaces in the community.

## 10. Investigate Rural-Based Public Art Opportunities

Rural landscapes in East Gwillimbury are among its most prized assets. Community consultations reiterated the Town's commitment to preserving these landscapes as well as building vibrant urban centres. The juxtaposition of rural and urban centres offers a diverse range of context in which public art projects and installations can be considered. One example of a successful rural-based art project is described below.

***Leading Practice:** The Ohio Quilt Barn project was launched in 2001 but has since become a national phenomenon and success story. A quilt barn is a barn with a large quilt square painted or hung on the side so that the pattern can be viewed as people drive past. The designs for these colorful, geometric paintings are taken from the patterns traditionally used by quilters. Quilt barn projects are homegrown and created through a grass roots process engaging the community. Perhaps what is most appealing about quilt barns is how the project uniquely blends the rural agricultural landscape and art form of quilting with a universal medium - paint. The Quilt Barn idea has merit across the Town, but as Highway 404 is extended north, there is an opportunity for the Town to present East Gwillimbury as an attractive and culturally vibrant community.*

### Recommendation 8

#### Action(s):

- Establish a staff team to identify opportunities based on final approval of the Municipal Cultural Plan

### Recommendation 9

#### Action(s):

- Examine leading practices in public art policies and programs in Ontario municipalities
- Seek partnerships in establishing a public art fund through the Cultural Roundtable

### Recommendation 10

#### Action(s):

- Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to examine the potential of a new rural based art program
- If deemed feasible, develop a plan to implement the program to suit the specific needs of East Gwillimbury



## GOAL 2: Build a Strong and Collaborative Cultural Sector

The cultural sector in East Gwillimbury is still an emerging one with much of the activity (outside of anchor institutions such as the Sharon Temple and National Historic Site and the East Gwillimbury Library) operating at a volunteer level. As the community grows, there will be a heightened demand for cultural programs, facilities and activities. It is important that from the outset of implementing the Municipal Cultural Plan, steps be taken to build and strengthen networks and collaboration among cultural groups. The existence of the East Gwillimbury Group of Artists and involvement with the Society of York Region Artists represents a solid beginning to stronger networking both locally and regionally. A number of initiatives could be undertaken to complement and extend these efforts.

### Recommended Actions:

#### 11. Strengthen Cultural Networks

Strengthening networking among cultural groups requires concrete networking activities or initiatives. Some simple, low-cost initiatives could include the following.

- **11 A. Hold regular networking sessions** – these short (60 minute), informal sessions have proven successful in other communities as a means of sustaining conversations and exchanging information among specific cultural organizations and activities. An analogy in East Gwillimbury might be breakfasts hosted by the Chamber of Commerce although with a wider range of municipal, business and community groups and interests. The networking sessions proposed specifically target individuals working directly in the cultural field in either full-time professional or volunteer roles. Session can address upcoming programs and events, opportunities for cross-promotion of events or activities, recruitment of volunteers, among others. Hosting sessions can rotate between organizations. In some communities they take place over breakfast on people’s way to work. Whatever the time or format, the key to success is a well-facilitated session that keeps the discussion moving and makes minimum demands on people’s time. In fact, this action is already being promoted owing to the focus group on *Strengthening the Cultural Sector* at which participants committed to participating in these types of sessions.
- **11 B. Create a Continuously Updated Community Calendar of Events** – A strong recommendation that emerged from the community engagement process was the establishment of a dynamic, comprehensive and continuously updated calendar of programs and events. The Peterborough Public Library worked with a local software developer to launch a community calendar that has subsequently been adopted by a considerable number of municipalities in the province. Establishing a calendar that enables cultural groups to post activities or programs months in advance has the added advantage of helping groups to avoid scheduling conflicts and competition for audiences/participants on the same date. This tool is one that invites individuals and cultural organizations to post content themselves.

#### Recommendation 11A

##### Action(s):

- Town staff to convene first networking session
- Recruit organizations to host and facilitate subsequent sessions

#### Recommendation 11B

##### Action(s):

- Examine leading practices in community-driven community calendars
- Determine calendar best suited to East Gwillimbury’s needs and establish calendar



- **11 C. Ensure Strong Collaboration in York Region** – Stronger local networking must be complemented by continuing to build regional collaboration. The York Region Arts Council has shown leadership over several years in supporting cultural development across York Region acting as a central information resource for cultural organizations and activity through marketing, communication, education, representation, consultation and networking facilitation and coordination. The launch of *Yorkscene* (<http://www.yorkscene.com>) supporting information and marketing for the Region-as-a-whole as well as individual municipalities such as East Gwillimbury is a powerful mechanism to support growth and development of the cultural sector in the Town into the future.

### 12. Expand Collaboration Programming and Cross-Promotion

Emerging from the *Strengthening the Cultural Sector* focus group were commitments from staff from the Town, the Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum, and the East Gwillimbury Public Library to work together in collaborative programming, cross-promotion and marketing, among others. Each of these institutions has a range of programs that could attract higher attendance through stronger collaboration.

### 13. Expand Cultural Marketing and Promotion

There was a strong call for enhanced cultural marketing and promotion aimed at increasing attendance at local events and activities, as well as growing tourism in the municipality. New and exciting programs such as Music at Civic Square events, the Multi-media Film Festival, the Farmers' Market and others would benefit from a cultural marketing and promotion strategy. The development of a unifying 'cultural brand' could be considered as part of this strategy. Consideration could be given to a cultural brand that complements the new economic development brand being developed for the Town. Building a visual connection between the two brands would also send a strong signal about the economic importance of culture.

#### Recommendation 11C

##### Action(s):

- Ensure representation on the Cultural Roundtable from the York Region Arts Council

#### Recommendation 12

##### Action(s):

- Working through regular networking sessions (above) identify opportunities for collaborative programming and cross-promotion/marketing

#### Recommendation 13

##### Action(s):

- Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to define elements of an overall strategy
- Ensure representation from the Business Development Committee on this Working Group



## 14. Address Cultural Facility Needs

There were a range of ideas raised during the community engagement process related to current and future cultural facility needs. The *Community Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan* adopted by Council in 2009 recommended that the Town not commit to dedicated cultural facilities but rather to address cultural needs through the integration or incorporation of cultural spaces in community facilities such as community centres, public libraries, etc. Future community facilities should be approached as flexible, multifunctional spaces able to address a range of community programming needs, including culture<sup>5</sup>.

Input received through the community engagement process did not reflect this vision of future facility development. Rather there was a call (particularly in the context of expected growth in the next decade) for dedicated exhibition and performance spaces built to professional standards, and improved heritage facilities. Finally, there was a strong call for the expansion of exhibition, collections storage and programming space for the Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum. Issues and recommended Actions related to the Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum are addressed in a separate recommended Action.

Establishing new cultural facilities are a major commitment on the part of any municipality. It is impossible in the context of the Municipal Cultural Plan to project timing or criteria (such as population growth) to guide such decisions and investments. These decisions will need to be taken in the context of other Town plans and priorities at any moment in time.

To address other cultural facility needs, the following actions are recommended.

- **14 A. Undertake a Comprehensive Inventory of Cultural Spaces and Facilities** – There are currently spaces in the municipality that can (and in many cases already do) provide venues/space for a wide range of cultural programs. These include the Civic Centre, churches, schools (including the large community space being planned for the new Phoebe Gilman Public School, community centres, among others. An inventory of these spaces (which was also recommended by the *Community Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan*) should be undertaken to create a central database or inventory accessible to the community to enable groups to locate spaces for their activities.

### Recommendation 14A

#### Action(s):

- Develop terms of reference and direction for undertaking the inventory
- Recruit a summer student, under the supervision of Town staff to undertake the inventory
- Once complete, make the inventory publicly accessible via the Town website

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<sup>5</sup> *Community Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan (2009), page 32*



**Leading Practice:** One leading practice related to the creation of a comprehensive inventory of cultural spaces and facilities can be found in Oakville. CommUnity Arts Space emerged in response to demands from Oakville's creative groups to increase public space(s) for arts and culture in their town. CommUnity Arts Space was able to advise the Town in detail of current space needs for creative local community groups and guilds and continues to act as a link between the Town of Oakville and local community groups to ensure that space planning takes a multitude of views and needs into account. In June 2011, CommUnity Arts Space merged with the Oakville Arts Council to pool resources and build capacity to meet the needs of the Town's arts and culture sector.

- **14 B. Investigate the Potential for Establishing a Multipurpose Cultural Facility** – A clear trend in cultural facility development in larger municipalities across Canada is the creation of multipurpose or multifunctional facilities intended to serve a range of cultural activities: exhibition and performance spaces; meeting rooms; studio spaces for individual artists/artisans. A multipurpose cultural facility could also serve as a shared administrative space for small cultural groups to meet basic needs such as meeting rooms, photocopier, small scale storage spaces, etc. The Town, working with its partners on the Cultural Roundtable/Cultural Resources Committee, should investigate the potential for establishing such a facility through the adaptive reuse of an existing building or facility.

**Leading Practice:** The Vancouver Roundhouse is one of the most admired and successful multi-purpose cultural facilities in the country. The Roundhouse is located in Vancouver's oldest heritage building and has a twofold mandate: to be a centre for community cultural development and a community source for recreational activities for all ages. Its features include a black box Performance Centre, an exhibition hall, woodworking, pottery and dance studios, a full size gymnasium, a cafe area, and various multi-purpose spaces. Obviously the facility's offering speaks to a much larger population base, but the flexible space and diverse users serve as an excellent example for East Gwillimbury. The Roundhouse most importantly acts as a Connection; it exists to serve the needs of widely divergent communities. It reaches out to the places and situations where those communities feel comfortable. This concept has been applied on a smaller scale in Ontario communities such as Barrie, Peterborough, Guelph and Picton.

- **14 C. Investigate the Feasibility of Establishing a Heritage Centre** – Several times during the community engagement process it was recommended that the Town work toward establishing a dedicated facility or Heritage

#### Recommendation 14B

##### Action(s):

- Review findings from facilities inventory to assess facility gaps
- Examine leading practices in multipurpose cultural facilities
- Define range of uses and space needs for multi-purpose facility
- Consider options for a facility (i.e., new facility or reuse of existing building)

#### Recommendation 14C

##### Action(s):

- Direct staff to examine the feasibility and potential for use of the 19040 Leslie Street (Doan House) as a future Heritage Centre



Centre to protect and promote the Town's rich history and heritage. The Centre could serve a range of purposes including heritage exhibitions, storage for important archival collections (currently dispersed in several location in the community), among others. Most important it was felt such a Centre would serve as a focal point for promoting heritage awareness in the community. A potential location for such a facility identified during community consultations was 19040 Leslie Street (the Doan House) that has been purchased by the Town.

***Leading Practice:** Richmond Hill Heritage Centre - The Mission of the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre is: "To highlight the rich history of the community. The Centre will contribute to the understanding of the cultural heritage of Richmond Hill by collecting, documenting, researching and preserving resources as represented by the past, present and future. The Centre will serve as an educational tool by exhibiting and interpreting the collection, and by presenting educational programs, special events and making its resources available to scholars, students and the general public." While constrained by space, the concept of a single facility to focus attention on the heritage of the Town has been successful. Another successful example of this type of facility can be found in the Aurora Cultural Centre.*

### **15. Support and Leverage the Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum**

The Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum is a historical treasure for the Town and the nation. Staff members from the Temple attending the focus group expressed strong interest in working toward a closer and more collaborative relationship with the Town, the East Gwillimbury Public Library, and other cultural groups and activities. To state the obvious, the Temple is a 'jewel' in the cultural life and identity of the Town and a great deal more can and must be done to leverage this extraordinary asset. A new Business Plan has been developed for the Temple calling for a range of actions to strengthen marketing, expand and diversify programming, grow attendance and, most important of all, drive increased revenue. A central premise of the Business Plan is that the historical mandate and story of the Temple must be broadened beyond the story of the Children of Peace to tell a wider story of the remarkable rich history of the Town. The Town should explore ways in which it could assist and support the implementation of the Business Plan for mutual benefit.

#### **Recommendation 15**

##### **Action(s):**

- Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable (including Council representation) to review the current Business Plan to identify opportunities for support and partnerships in its implementation



### GOAL 3: Expand Culture-Led Economic Development

Cultural resources and activities already make a significant contribution to the local economy, and have the potential to contribute much more. Another strong theme emerging from the community engagement process was the need to broaden awareness of the economic importance of culture in the municipality.

#### Recommended Actions:

##### 16. Develop Integrated Experience-Based Tourism Offerings

One theme emerging from the community engagement process was a call for more integrated experience-based vision of tourism and tourism development. This emerging perspective on tourism focuses less on individual assets or attractions and more on providing an overall cultural experience to both residents and visitors. One strategy for developing such tourism offerings is the use of the history and stories of a community as an organizing theme. A leader in Ontario in this area is the Niagara Region that has been building story-based cultural experiences and itineraries based on (among others) the story of Black History in that region.<sup>6</sup> East Gwillimbury has a rich history and powerful stories around which such integrated cultural experiences could be built. In any cultural tourism strategy, the Town must acknowledge the wider regional context for tourism offerings. For tourists and visitors, the experience of place and culture does not stop at municipal boundaries. Collaborative regional strategies (such as yorkscene) are essential particularly in light of provincial funding for tourism product development and marketing now being dispersed through Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO).

##### 17. Develop Integrated Cultural and Agri-Tourism Offerings and Experiences

The East Gwillimbury Economic Development Strategy drew attention to economic opportunities connected to agri-tourism, tied to the Town's strong equestrian facilities and opportunities. The promotion of local agricultural products and rural life activities available to locals and visitors through vehicles as Farmers' Markets, U-pick operations, increased roadside markets, etc. all represent economic opportunity but could be enriched by connecting these tours and offerings to profiling the heritage and culture of the Town.

<sup>6</sup> The Niagara Greenbelt website (<http://www.niagaragreenbelt.com/>) has developed a range of innovative programs and tourism packages using this model.

Recommendation 16
Action(s):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to consider stories/themes to guide development of tourism offerings/packages</li><li>■ Work closely with York Region Economic Development, Regional Tourism Organization 6 and the Northern 6 Municipalities of York Region</li><li>■ Develop tourism offerings/packages</li></ul>

Recommendation 17
Action(s):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Strike Working Group of the Roundtable to examine leading practices from other municipalities</li><li>■ Work with similar partners noted in recommendation 16</li><li>■ Seek funding for phased implementation of tourism products and experiences</li></ul>



### 18. Implement a Program to Support Start-Up Enterprises in Underutilized Downtown Spaces

Downtown revitalization is a priority for the Town of East Gwillimbury. Investigation is currently underway regarding a possible downtown revitalization project in Mount Albert. There is an opportunity to connect downtown revitalization goals while also expanding creative enterprises. One of the biggest challenges facing many individual artists or artisans or small creative enterprises is the availability of affordable space. Some municipalities have implemented programs to reclaim empty or underutilized buildings and spaces (often in downtown areas) for use as galleries, live-work spaces, artist studios or office space for small (often start-up) creative enterprises. In some cases, rent subsidies have been offered as a means of attracting new users and uses for these spaces. In others, artists and creative enterprises themselves have convinced building owners to make space available with arguments related to increasing property values. The experience is often that artists or small businesses will invest their own ‘sweat equity’ to improve and upgrade these spaces.

### 19. Support Youth Engagement and Retention

*Leading Practice: In Collingwood, Ontario the Tremont project involved the preservation, restoration and revitalization of an important designated building in the Collingwood Heritage District and its adaptive reuse to provide commercial opportunities and live/work space for the creative sector. The historic Tremont building underwent a 16-month restoration beginning in June 2009. The Tremont is now home to The Bay School of Art, The Tremont Cafe, The Elihu Book Room and nine artist studios.*

The needs and interests of youth in the community were raised through the community engagement process largely in the context of the need for accessible and relevant cultural programming – in particular visual arts and music - for youth. A second important issue related to youth that was raised less often, was that of making youth aware of employment opportunities in the creative cultural sector. The following actions are recommended;

- **19A Establish a Youth Apprenticeship and Mentoring Program** - The Town, working with the Cultural Roundtable/Cultural Resources Committee, should work toward establishing a program that connects local youth with individual artists, young entrepreneurs and creative professionals. These apprenticeship programs can provide real opportunities to expose youth to potential career and mentoring options and future employment possibilities, as well as fostering skills development.

### Recommendation 18

#### Action(s):

- Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to examine leading practices and develop plans for the program
- Work closely with York Region Economic Development and the Northern 6 Municipalities of York Region to explore collaborative opportunities
- Assess levels of interest and availability of resources
- Launch program

### Recommendation 19A

#### Action(s):

- Establish a Working Group of the Roundtable to assess interest in establishing the apprenticeship program
- Based on level of interest, design and launch program and recruit initial apprentices



- **19 B Strengthen Youth Programming** - Strengthening youth programming requires that youth be engaged and listened to in a meaningful way in defining their needs and interests. Ensuring youth representation on the Cultural Roundtable/Cultural Resource Committee would provide a forum for exploring opportunities to address these needs through current organizations and program providers. Such an action would build on the priority already given to youth programming by the Town's Parks & Leisure services branch. The East Gwillimbury Public Library also has strong programming for children and youth and could serve as an effective partner with the Town in strengthening cultural programming opportunities.

## 20. Strengthen Festivals

The Cultural Mapping Project identified a wide range of existing festivals and events with potential to be expanded. It is recommended a multi-prong festivals strategy be undertaken, elements of which may include the following.

- Promote stronger cross-promotion of events.
- Distinguishing different types of events in order to focus investment in festival development (i.e., *Tourism Events* – those that already attract sizeable numbers of attendees, a significant portion of which from outside the community; *Growing and Emerging Events* – those with the potential to grow into Tourism Events; and *Community-based Events* – those that are primarily community focused with limited tourism potential).
- Developing a proactive recruitment strategy for volunteers, particularly among new residents in the community as a means of engaging them in community life.
- Consider the possibility of establishing a new 'signature' festival to help brand East Gwillimbury itself as a culturally vibrant and diverse community. One suggestion was that such a signature event be built on the theme of the cultural traditions (food, music, dance, etc.) of different diverse communities.

**Best Practice:** *The growth of tourism is an economic development priority for the City of Burlington. To further this agenda, a Festivals and Events Strategy was developed. The Strategy established an overall guiding vision, recommended priorities for municipal investment and addressed capacity building issues and strategies for all events (including shared administrative facilities and/or services for festival groups). The Strategy also recommended that shared marketing and promotion campaigns be coordinated for all events. The overall goal of the Burlington Strategy was to grow attendance at events. There is clear evidence that the Strategy succeeded in achieving this objective.*

### Recommendation 19B

#### Action(s):

- Recruit a youth representative for the Cultural Roundtable
- Strike a Youth Working Group (supported and facilitated by the Parks & Recreation Division) to develop proposals to develop new collaborative programming addressing youth needs.

### Recommendation 20

#### Action(s):

- Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to identify key issues and challenges facing growth and expansion of festivals in the Town
- Determine need for consulting support or contract staff to develop proposals to address needs/challenges



## 21. Continue Cultural Mapping

As noted in the final Cultural Mapping Project report, the work completed through the project marked the beginning, not the end of cultural mapping in East Gwillimbury. There was a strong call from the community to build on this initial work by continuing to add information to the mapping database but in particular, exploring opportunities to use this database to supporting marketing and awareness of the community’s cultural life. Currently discussions are underway to upload information collected through the cultural mapping process to the York Region’s Geographic Information System (GIS) infrastructure in order to make this information available through interactive maps. The East Gwillimbury Historical Society should also be approached by the Town to further support the Cultural Mapping Project. This organization has a wealth of stories and archival material that have not yet been captured by the Cultural Mapping Project.

### GOAL 4: Conserve and Promote History and Heritage

One of the strongest themes in the community engagement process was the need to promote stronger awareness and understanding of the rich history of the area. The new Official Plan in Section 6: *Protecting Our Heritage* sets out a broad and comprehensive commitment to heritage conservation in the Town through the following vision and objectives.

*Vision: Heritage resources may include structures, sites, environments, artifacts and traditions which are of historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural and contextual value or significance.*

#### Objectives

1. Conserve the cultural heritage resources of the Town for the appreciation and enjoyment of existing and future generations
2. Preserve, restore and rehabilitate structures, buildings or sites deemed by Council to have *significant* historic, archaeological, architectural or cultural significance and preserve cultural heritage landscapes, including significant public views, where feasible
3. Promote public awareness and appreciation of East Gwillimbury’s heritage and involve the public, First Nations and Métis Nation communities in heritage resource decisions affecting the Town
4. Provide an electronic venue for the preservation of information and historic facts

These policies support the preservation of the Town’s cultural heritage resources – individual properties, heritage conservation districts, cultural landscapes, archaeological resources, among others. Effective implementation of these policies will be critical to preserving the cultural heritage of the Town – both tangible assets and the history and stories of the community – as the Town grows. A final and important point made by the community about history and heritage was that the Town not view heritage only in terms of the distant past, but to consider more recent stories and activities, some within the living memory of residents, also receive attention. The following initiatives are proposed under Goal 4.

#### Recommendation 21

##### Action(s):

- Town GIS staff to continue to work collaboratively with the Town of East Gwillimbury to sustain and extend cultural mapping
- Approach the local Historical Society to further support the Cultural Mapping Project

#### Recommendation 22

##### Action(s):

- Examine the potential for undertaking the Heritage District Study through enhanced staff skills and capacity or consider retaining a professional heritage consultant to undertake the work.
- Upon completion of the work in Sharon, assess needs and timing for similar studies in other communities



## Recommended Actions:

### 22. Undertake Heritage Conservation District Studies

The Cultural Mapping Project revealed a significant stock of heritage properties across the community. The new Official Plan has put in place strong cultural heritage policies that provide a framework for ensuring that cultural heritage resources are conserved as the community grows. The Town is committed to undertaking one or more Heritage Conservation District studies. The Cultural Mapping Project identified a significant concentration of heritage buildings in Sharon. The first study is likely to focus on Sharon with additional studies in other communities to be considered in the years ahead. The designation of Heritage Conservation Districts can be a powerful means of protecting and enhancing the small village character and quality of place that was identified as a priority throughout the community engagement process. A Heritage Conservation District study for Sharon can also address the desire for a cultural hub built around the Civic Centre and the Sharon Temple National Historic Site. The study could suggest new ways to better leverage these assets to build a 'destination downtown' that would attract people to visit and stay longer to shop, dine and participate in a range of cultural events.

### 23. Strengthen the Heritage East Gwillimbury Committee

A key to building capacity strengthening the Committee is to recruit committee members with solid professional expertise in heritage conservation. While the primary focus of municipal heritage advisory committees in many municipalities remains preservation of built heritage, the current Ontario Heritage Act does define a broader potential committee mandate. This can include a larger and more integrated vision of cultural heritage resources (including collections, intangible heritage resources and community stories). Some committees have taken on broader roles in heritage promotion and public programming (such as heritage walking tours) could be of particular interest to new residents. Given that a range of heritage issues were raised as priorities through the community engagement process, consideration could be given to assigning the Heritage Committee with a wider range of responsibilities than built heritage preservation.

### 24. Launch a Cultural Heritage Landscape Study

According to the Ontario Heritage Act, "a Cultural Heritage Landscape refers to a defined geographical area that has been modified or characterized by human activity. It usually involves a grouping of features that are both man-made and natural. Collectively, they create unique cultural heritage that is valued not only for its historical, architectural or contextual significance but also for its contribution to the understanding of the forces that have shaped and may continue to shape the community including social, economic, political and environmental." Examples of cultural heritage landscape include heritage conservation districts designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, villages, parks, gardens, cemeteries, main streets, neighbourhoods, valley and watercourses, lakes, woodlands, wetlands, hedgerows, scenic vistas.

#### Recommendation 23

##### Action(s):

- Examine current terms of reference for the Committee against leading practices in other municipalities
- Establish new (and potentially expanded) terms of reference and recruit members with strong heritage knowledge/expertise

#### Recommendation 24

##### Action(s):

- Direct staff to examine leading practices in other Ontario municipalities
- Examine the potential for undertaking the Cultural Heritage Landscape Study through enhanced staff skills and capacity or consider retaining a professional heritage consultant to undertake the work.



A Cultural Heritage Landscape Study for the Town of East Gwillimbury would be undertaken for the purposes of: developing specific cultural heritage landscape definitions tailored to the Town's specific range of resource types and historical land uses; identifying potential cultural heritage landscapes that may be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and/or integrated into the land use planning process; assessing the potential for mapping significant cultural heritage landscapes on a Geographic Information System platform; and developing implementation recommendations. Among the municipalities having undertaken Cultural Heritage Landscape Studies that could be examined for precedent and guidance are: Mississauga, Caledon, Town of Blue Mountain and Vaughan.

### 25. Launch a Community Storytelling Program

Stories have been called the 'DNA of culture'. Every community has a rich array of stories to tell that express its unique identity. A storytelling program could be initiated using a combination of new as well as existing channels:

- Inviting the community to contribute their own stories using simple tools such as Survey Monkey
- Assigning a lead role to the proposed Heritage Centre for facilitating such a program
- Add a storytelling component to one or more existing festivals or events
- Convening an annual storytelling festival

Seeking out and promoting stories with themes that span the municipality can also serve to build a stronger shared identity in the Town, a strong theme throughout the community engagement process. Support for professional storytellers and storytelling is being examined by funding bodies such as the Ontario Arts Council and there is a growing network of professional storytellers that could be engaged to participate in an annual festival or special event. A partnership with the East Gwillimbury Historical Society should be explored to move this program forward.

### 26. Launch a Regional Murmur Project

Consideration should be given to establishing a municipality-wide version of the highly successful [murmur] project in Toronto<sup>7</sup>. The project collects and records people's personal histories and anecdotes about specific places in neighbourhoods or communities. In each of these locations a small [murmur] sign with a telephone number is placed that enables anyone with a mobile phone to call and listen to that story while standing in that place, allowing the listener to engage directly in the physical experience of the place. The program relies on relatively straightforward and inexpensive software. In addition, because the program makes use of cell phones as its primary means of communication, it is highly accessible to residents as well as visitors. Consideration could be given to employing the murmur program as a means of increasing interpretation along trails networks across the Town. Many other increasingly sophisticated technologies are

<sup>7</sup> <http://murmurtoronto.ca>

#### Recommendation 25

##### Action(s):

- Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to identify current storytelling activity and initiatives already underway in the Town
- Approach the East Gwillimbury Historical Society as a potential partner
- Explore opportunities to expand existing festivals/events to include storytelling components, including programming at the Town's Public Library
- Explore opportunity for launching dedicated storytelling festival/event

#### Recommendation 26

##### Action(s):

- Strike Working Group of Roundtable to contact current murmur project in Toronto to research program costs and logistics
- Approach Gwillimbury Historical Society as a potential partner
- Secure funding to launch program



emerging that enable residents or tourists to listen to stories and interpretive information online at home or via wireless technology such as a tablet or smartphone.

While these tools could be considered for development over time, launching a murmur project could be a strong means of getting started on these powerful opportunities.

### **GOAL 5: Celebrate Diversity and Inclusivity**

The demographics of East Gwillimbury's projected population growth guarantee the arrival of a much more culturally diverse population. The Town must be proactive in its efforts to address future needs and to ensure that all newcomers feel welcomed and come to feel part of the community. York Region and several of its municipalities have already embraced specific policies to support the integration of newcomers from a range of backgrounds. The following initiatives build on these policies and offer the most tangible and immediate actions as they pertain to cultural programming and development.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

##### **27. Increase Public Awareness of the Positive Impact of Immigration and Diversity**

Immigration brings dynamism and vitality to communities and contributes directly to long term economic prosperity. Research has shown that the growth of knowledge-based creative economies is closely linked to levels of immigration and diversity. Accordingly, as the Town sustains communications and engagement efforts (see Action # 1) messages related to the benefits of diversity should be an important theme in this activity.

##### **28. Seek Out Multilingual Cultural Volunteers**

Once assembled, this group of volunteers could be mobilized to assist in delivering cultural programs to newcomers. York Region is already home to the Community Information and Volunteer Centre. This service is centered on a database of volunteer opportunities in the Region. This service could be leveraged to support volunteer recruitment for multilingual cultural programming.

<b>Recommendation 27</b>
<b>Action(s):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Strike Working Group of Roundtable to identify community partners to support awareness campaign</li><li>■ Work closely with York Region and examine leading practices in other municipalities in York Region undertaking similar programs</li><li>■ Define key messages and launch campaign leveraging partners' networks, traditional (print based) and new social media tools and strategies</li></ul>

<b>Recommendation 28</b>
<b>Action(s):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ As the community grows and demand warrants, reach out through community groups to identify and recruit potential volunteers</li><li>■ The Cultural Roundtable could be an ideal mechanism to recruit such volunteers</li><li>■ Draw on resources and experience of East Gwillimbury Public Library in launching program</li></ul>



### 29. Provide Cultural Sensitivity Training for Volunteers and Staff

As the Town's diversity increases over the 10-year lifespan of the Municipal Cultural Plan, there will be a need to equip volunteers and staff associated with cultural programs and activities with cultural sensitivity training to respond effectively and sensitively to the cultural traditions and needs of newcomers.

### 30. Leverage Current and Future Library Programs Addressing Diversity

Libraries are gathering places for newcomers. The East Gwillimbury Public Library is already offering programming addressing cultural diversity. The resources and expertise of the Library should be leveraged to support other cultural organizations and activities to respond to diversity needs and opportunities.

This could include cultural sensitivity training. Opportunities should be examined for each community library to build connections with local and regional libraries to share best practices, resources and tools to support newcomers.

Again, as the Town's diversity increases over the 10-year lifespan of the Municipal Cultural Plan, there is an opportunity to tap the resources of the federally funded Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP) program that currently operates in eleven communities across Ontario, including: the City of Vaughn, Town of Richmond Hill and Town of Markham. As it stands, Newcomer settlement workers are working in communities with high newcomer populations providing service in a variety of languages based on community needs. LSP services include one-on-one settlement information and referral, group information sessions, and community outreach.

## 3.4 Monitoring

Part of the effective implementation of any plan is putting in place mechanisms to track progress toward the Vision and Recommended Actions identified in the plan. One mechanism for monitoring progress is through the preparation of a "*Municipal Cultural Plan Report Card*." This Report Card could be prepared either annually or every several years. The creation of the Report would be the responsibility of the proposed Cultural Development Officer, with support from the Cultural Roundtable or Cultural Resources Committee. Distribution of the Report could be timed for release prior to the Cultural Summit to promote achievements over the past year in implementing the Municipal Cultural Plan and draw the broader community into a conversation about culture and cultural development in the Town.

#### Recommendation 29

##### Action(s):

- As the community grows and demand warrants, reach out to other municipalities in York Region undertaking similar work to define strategies and approaches

#### Recommendation 30

##### Action(s):

- Establish Working Group of Cultural Roundtable (potentially chaired by East Gwillimbury Public Library) to explore opportunities for cross-institutional collaborative programming addressing diversity needs



## Appendices



# Appendix A: Steering Committee Members

## **Town of East Gwillimbury Staff:**

- Michelle Alleyne, East Gwillimbury Public Library
- Aimee Artinian, Economic Development Assistant (project manager)
- Carolyn Kellington, Manager of Community Planning and Development
- Carolynne Saxton, IT/GIS Support Technician
- Gary Shropshire, Director, Parks and Leisure Services
- Marnie Wraith, Economic Development Officer
- Dan Stone, Manager of Economic Development & Sustainability

## **Community Representatives:**

- Nancy Bodi, York Region Arts Council
- John McIntyre, Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum
- Terry Russell, Business Development Committee, East Gwillimbury
- Carolyn Watt, Chamber of Commerce + Business Development Committee, Town of East Gwillimbury



## Appendix B: The Planning Context

This section presents a number of documents that have a direct bearing on cultural development within East Gwillimbury. Only one document in this review falls outside of the Town's exclusive jurisdiction, which is The Road to Inclusivity: An Action Plan for York Region completed in 2005.

### Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (2010)

The Town of East Gwillimbury's Official Plan, is a comprehensive document that outlines the Town's vision and sets forth specific provisions to achieve *"a complete, healthy and sustainable community that will provide opportunities for residents at all life stages to live, work, play and learn."* This vision incorporates several objectives and community principles, the most significant, in the context of cultural planning, include:

- Cohesive, vibrant and connected urban neighbourhoods sensitive to the Town's cultural heritage;
- A vibrant rural and agricultural countryside, including secondary uses associated with agriculture and tourism.

These objectives underscore the Town's commitment to a balanced approach to community planning; one that incorporates the importance of cultural preservation and advancement in the built environment and natural landscape. Moving forward, the Official Plan provides explicit protection to the town's cultural heritage and wealth of natural heritage features. Accordingly, the Official Plan includes provisions to develop an attractive village core, downtown, gathering spaces, parks, cultural facilities, all of which are designed to bolster the 'pedestrian experience'. These policies are aligned with the Town's vision of developing a 'complete community', which enhances the quality of life by promoting a mix of uses and providing opportunities within the Town to live, work, play and learn.

The Official Plan's deliberate language and explicit guidelines relating to the preservation of culture underscores the Town's commitment to maintaining its rural identity.

### Town of East Gwillimbury Strategic Plan (2011)

The Town of East Gwillimbury Strategic Plan establishes the framework for all projects and plans to be undertaken by the Town's departments from 2011-2014. The goals and objectives outlined by the Strategic Plan are shaped by the Town's community vision which is... "proud of our strong community values, culture and healthy mix of residential, employment, recreational, agricultural and natural areas." With respect to the Town's vision, cultural development factors most prominently into five of the Town's initiatives. These initiatives, together with explicit actions or initiatives are listed below.

- **Support the Town's agricultural and rural communities:** Farmers Market;



- **Maintain and enhance the Town's unique heritage and culture:** Cultural mapping and plan, identify Heritage Conservation District Study Areas;
- **Implement the Town's Community Park, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan:** Install splash pads; add new picnic shelter; expand existing picnic shelter; Nokiidaa Trail upgrades;
- **Leverage the spirit of volunteerism in the community:** Host a working session with committee chairpersons to establish solutions/ideas to common issues e.g. engaging new volunteers; Recognition celebration for Town volunteers;
- **Develop an enhanced internal and external communications strategy:** Web revitalization - Revise and update the Town's website with stakeholder input; Develop and implement an Internal Communications Strategy.

The Municipal Cultural Plan must recommend actions to support and reinforce these initiatives and commitments.

### **Community Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan (2009)**

Essential connections between culture, quality of life, sustainability and community vitality underpin much of the analysis and recommendations found in the Town's *Community Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan*. Broadly speaking, the Master Plan articulates the planning and developmental needs and priorities associated with recreation programs, facilities, culture, parks, trails and open space, until 2018. For the purposes of the Master Plan 'culture' was understood to include "local arts, cultural and heritage resources including, but not limited to, music, theatre, dance, visual arts and literature."

The majority of the Master Plan speaks to the projected need for recreational facilities needed to house sports, and other community uses. However, the Master Plan also includes direct recommendations concerned with advancing culture in the Town. The Master Plan states, "To receive the benefits that a vibrant arts and cultural community brings, the Town should work with such groups wherever possible to maximize their internal capacity through a community development approach. Many needs of the arts and culture sector can be addressed by designing multi-purpose spaces within facilities that consider the needs of these groups". Beyond culturally supportive facilities, the Master Plan states that "...outdoor civic space provides an opportunity to blend arts and culture with natural and urban surroundings for the enjoyment of all citizens."

### **Town of East Gwillimbury Economic Development Strategy (2011)**

The Town completed its Economic Development Strategy in 2011. The Strategy builds upon the Town's Official Plan, as described above and completed in 2010. The Strategy is primarily concerned with directing the Town's future growth and development in a way that "connects its rural character to emerging urban centres." Put another way, the Strategy



outlines the Town's opportunity to define a pattern of growth based on the principles of *quality of place and rural stewardship*.

This approach suggests that the Town can be successful by positioning itself as a place that offers the natural and cultural amenities and lifestyle that talented, skilled, diverse and successful *people* want to live in. The Strategy places an emphasis on first attracting *people* before targeting particular types of businesses. This Strategy reflects the Town's guiding vision as it reinforces the importance of maintaining a vibrant rural and agricultural countryside with an abundance of cultural amenities to enhance the quality of life for all of the Town's current and future residents. Providing a rich quality of life is what will set East Gwillimbury apart from its neighbouring communities and provide the pre-conditions for continued community prosperity.

The Strategy also highlights some of the Town's current and emerging economic strengths, which point to opportunities in several areas. Crucial to the development of this Municipal Cultural Plan is that a variety of these economic opportunities reflect the Town's identity and agricultural foundations. Two such examples include agri-tourism and the Town's strong equestrian assets, which could be used to direct tourism spending in the area.

### **Cultural Mapping Project (2011)**

As a precursor to this Municipal Cultural Plan the Town completed a Cultural Mapping Project in 2011. The mapping project utilized a combination of data gathering techniques along with community consultation to provide a profile of the Town's rich and diverse cultural resources. On the one hand, mapping revealed a somewhat limited number of creative cultural industries present in the Town. Steps to augment the town's cultural industries could include supporting lower cost studio spaces or live-work spaces and ensuring strong digital connectivity. On the other hand, mapping revealed the rich history of the Town as embodied by a formidable stock of cultural heritage properties in the village as well as its natural heritage and environmental areas. Aside from sites of cultural heritage the mapping project also highlighted an emerging festival and performance scene, which represent a tremendously valuable cultural asset to be further leveraged and promoted. The Mapping Project recommended:

- Strengthen coordinated marketing and promotion of events;
- Establish a comprehensive community calendar;
- Establishing a new signature festival;

Overall, the Cultural Mapping Project served to pin-point a variety of cultural assets that have yet to reach their full potential.



## The Road to Inclusivity: An Action Plan for York Region (2005)

The *Road to Inclusivity* is an on-going process that has been designed to mobilize York Region human service providers to work together to become an ethno-culturally inclusive community. This Action Plan emerged in response to the increased rates of ethno-cultural diversity within the Region's communities. The Region's demographic composition and population growth between 1986 and 2001 speak to the Region's transformation. In those years, York Region's population more than doubled and by 2001, the number of immigrants in York Region was 283,800 or 39% of the total population, up from 97,325 or 28% of the population in 1986.

The Region's rapid population growth and influx of immigrants has brought notable challenges to human service providers. A lack of service coordination between agencies has exacerbated the challenges faced by those needing services. The Action Plan outlined several immediate steps to improve human services, increasing ethno-cultural awareness and representation.

In 2006, the Town of East Gwillimbury declared "This is an inclusive community where diversity is celebrated and inclusivity is embraced. East Gwillimbury commits itself to the process of creating an open and honest community that encourages its residents to reach their full potential. We will accomplish this by eliminating any cultural barriers and implementing changes so that everyone, regardless of race, colour, faith or origin can live, work and play in this Town and to enjoy all services, opportunities and positions of leadership."

"Our commitment to becoming a fully inclusive community is grounded in the knowledge that York Region is made up of diverse communities which continue to evolve and develop over time. We understand that we are part of the larger community and agree to demonstrate leadership within York Region in a proactive and harmonious manner."

While certainly a difficult exercise to navigate and execute, many of the Town's regional partners have successfully managed similar demographic shifts and have successfully developed community programs that support the integration of newcomers from a range of backgrounds.<sup>8</sup> The Municipal Cultural Plan must address this challenge and provide specific recommendations in this area.

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<sup>8</sup> See for Example, The City of Markham (2008). Diversity Action Plan.



# Appendix C: Community Engagement Findings

## Interview Summary

Eleven stakeholder interviews were conducted with individuals representing a diversity of community interests including members of Council, municipal staff, and leaders from cultural, business and community organizations. Interview guides were distributed to each participant in before each interview. A considerable degree of agreement and consensus was observed across the interviews, and between the interviews and other elements of the community engagement process. Four questions guided the interview process.

### 1. What is working well within East Gwillimbury's Cultural Sector?

While there many success stories in East Gwillimbury, most interviewees commented that cultural development is still in its formative stages. From one perspective this could be seen as a disadvantage. From another, as one participant observed, 'we have a relatively blank slate that may enable us to build something new, unique and exciting in the community.'

The most frequently cited strengths included:

- Strong volunteerism
- The Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum
- Comprehensive library programming
- Heritage preservation
- The Farmers' Market
- The Society of York Region Artists
- East Gwillimbury Group of Artists
- The various musical events
- Film nights
- Multimedia film festival
- Local Trail Network

Some respondents also described East Gwillimbury as well positioned geographically to enjoy the natural and cultural amenities of larger urban centers while maintaining a small town feel.



## 2. What are we not doing or not doing well that should be a priority for the Municipal Cultural Plan?

The following themes emerged in response to this question.

- **Communication, coordination and forging partnerships:** There is very limited coordination. “The networks just aren’t there yet.” Accordingly, there is a need to better organize the many stakeholders to build collaboration and partnerships. It was also recognized that the Town offers a lot of programs and events that could have a higher profile in the community, potentially through cross-promotion with other events and activities. More awareness about all cultural activities. This could be facilitated by improvements to the Town’s website and by using new social media channels of communications
- **Community identity is a challenge:** East Gwillimbury has a challenge in terms of a unified community identity or ‘brand.’ One respondent said, “When you ask people where they are from they will reply with ‘Sharon, Mt. Albert, and Holland Landing etc.’” The community-as-a-whole has not adopted East Gwillimbury as their community. The Town needs to play a proactive role in bring these communities; it will not just happen organically
- **Cultural spaces and facilities:** East Gwillimbury is without a high school and a dedicated performance space (besides the Council Chamber that sometimes serves this purpose). Some respondents spoke to the need for a multi-use/multi-purpose community facility that could serve cultural needs as described in The Town of East Gwillimbury Community Park, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan. Others felt strongly that a dedicated multi-purpose cultural facility was needed, especially in light of the Town’s anticipated growth
- **Cultural funding:** There was a call for some form of funding from the Town to support the local cultural sector
- **Tourism:** There is potential to grow tourism with cultural assets and activities as a strong part of this growth strategy. There are sources of government support for strengthening local and regional tourism, including through agencies such as Regional Tourism Organization 6 that should be explored. East Gwillimbury is also well poised to capitalize on local food movements. As an example, the number of local U-pick operations could be increased
- **Celebrating and anticipating growing multiculturalism:** The demographics of projected population growth guarantee the arrival of a much more culturally diverse population. Cultural diversity is a community asset and needs to be addressed in the cultural plan. The Town must be proactive in its efforts to address future needs and to ensure that all new-comers feel welcomed and come to feel part of the community



### 3. What is the biggest opportunity the Plan presents for East Gwillimbury?

The most prominent responses to this question included the following (reflecting many of the needs or deficiencies noted above).

- **Cultural spaces and facilities:** Respondents emphasized the need for a dedicated cultural space that might also serve and support heritage resources. It was suggested that the Town-owned Doan House, once renovated, would be an ideal space that could serve a variety of cultural uses, including meeting space for cultural groups
- **A coordinating body:** This group would be tasked with fostering networks and supporting the implementation of the Municipal Cultural Plan. There were varying views as to what form this body should take. Some saw it as an action-oriented Cultural Advisory Committee (or Cultural Resources Committee) reporting to Council. Others felt that there were too many advisory committees already and that what was needed was a more arm's length, action-oriented group (that could still provide information and communicate regularly with Council)
- **Establish a cultural fund:** A new fund could support cultural initiatives in the community. The Town recently gave its first grant to a community group and there was a need for a funding policy to ensure consistency and transparency in future grants/funding. It was suggested that this fund might be administered by the coordinating body described above rather than directly by Council
- **Leverage opportunities provided by developers:** Some new developers have expressed interest in investing in public art as part of development activity or to make other contributions to make their own developments (and the Town as-a-whole) more attractive and appealing. The Town must find ways to tap into this potential source of investment
- **A community signature event:** The Town is in need of a focus point and a means of unifying and building shared identity across the entire community. Currently the Town has no event or program to welcome new-comers to East Gwillimbury. It was suggested that a new event or festival be devised that could potentially meet both needs

### Community Survey Findings

In order to engage a wide variety of individuals in the community (particularly those that might not be inclined to attend a focus group or the community forum) an online survey was developed. In total, 34 individuals completed the survey. While it is impossible to capture the breadth and richness of all responses, the following summary identifies recurring themes. Many issues identified in survey responses reiterated points made in other facets of the engagement process and have not been outlined in detail in this section.



## Respondent profile

The survey included questions related to gaining a profile of respondents. The majority of respondents were female (70%), live in East Gwillimbury (81%), and have lived in the community for more than 10 years (65%). The age cohort most strongly represented was 55-64, accounting for 40% of all responses. The remainder of the participants were evenly distributed from those under 18 years of age to those over 65.

## Question related to levels of cultural participation

One survey question asked people to rank their level of cultural participation on a continuum. Here respondents were evenly split between participating in arts, culture and heritage activities 'a lot', 'a few', or 'very few' activities. Respondents indicated that they were most likely to participate in cultural activities in the Village of Sharon (31%), East Gwillimbury (28%), Holland Landing (25%), Mount Albert (13%) and Queensville (4%). These responses are notable indicating a strong level of participation in individual communities/villages to a greater extent (collectively) than with the Town of East Gwillimbury as a whole. While issues of time and convenience are a factor, these results also relate to the frequently raised lack (to date) of a unified and shared community identity across the Town.

When asked, "list the cultural activities you participate in", respondents consistently highlighted the following:

- Musical events (Mount Albert Fall Music Festival, Music in the Park, Music Mania)
- The Sharon Temple and its events (Sharon Arts Show, Descendants Day, 175 Years of Hope)
- Trail system (Holland River Trail, Roger's Reservoir Trail, Simcoe Trail, etc.)
- The East Gwillimbury Farmers' Market
- East Gwillimbury library programs (author readings, knitting club, book discussion group, Kamishibai Dragon Adventure, etc.)
- Farm tours
- Art studio tours

## Question: What cultural programs or facilities are not currently available that you would like to see in your community?

Several areas of need were identified.

- **Affordable and accessible space/facilities:** The lack of affordable and appropriate community and artistic space was highlighted as a key concern for a number of respondents. A centralized space for organizations to utilize for performances/rehearsals could also serve administrative purposes by providing access to offices, computer equipment and office supplies. This type of facility could be shared by a wide range of organizations and be in a



central location within the town. Other respondents pointed to the lack of a dedicated concert hall venue and community swimming pool

- **Communications Planning:** Stronger promotion and communications was seen as essential to supporting cultural programs and activities across town. Many of the respondents noted that promotion was difficult and expensive but essential to promoting activity to both residents and tourists. A one-stop-shop approach, such as an online calendar/directory, could fill this need. Expanded use of cultural mapping tools and opportunities was also identified as holding great potential
- **Preserving and Utilizing the Natural Environment:** Throughout the consultation process a major theme has been the need to ensure the continued preservation of the community's natural environment while upgrading and better leveraging its current trail system
- **Other specific community needs:** These include: more tourist oriented activities, youth oriented arts and music programming at the community level, and outdoor movies (potentially in the civic square)

#### **Question: What words or ideas must form part of a vision statement for the Municipal Cultural Plan.**

The most prominent phrases include:

- Community spirit and volunteerism
- Respect for the community's history and heritage
- Natural heritage, rural and agricultural landscapes
- The contribution of cultural resources and activities to the local identity
- Fostering inclusivity by celebrating multiculturalism and ensuring access to cultural for all community members
- Logistical support for event/venue creation
- Community gathering places would be beneficial to provide focal points around which business and cultural hubs might develop

#### **Focus Groups**

Two focus groups were conducted. The first focus group entitled Strengthening the Cultural Sector invited individuals involved directly in cultural organizations and activities to come together to identify strengths within the sector and discuss approaches to advance the sector. The second focus group entitled Opportunities in Tourism and Economic Development invited individuals directly involved in the tourism and economic development agenda in the Town to discuss how cultural resources can support tourism and economic development, and vice versa. Many issues and themes were similar across the two focus groups and have been summarized collectively below.



- **Building relationships and collaborating to strengthen capacity:** Participants spoke highly of their friendly relationships with the Town and staff responsible for cultural programming, but felt relationships could be strengthened between all cultural organizations both locally and across York Region. Greater collaboration would enable organizations to develop joint programs, utilize each other's resources, and work together to promote each other's organizations and activities. Simple regular coffee sessions were discussed as a way for people in the cultural sector to come together to support networking
- **Improved marketing:** There is currently limited cross-marketing between cultural organizations and activities in the community and across the region
- **Direct Municipal support for new and existing cultural programming:** There was a call for funding support for existing organizations. Increased settlement in the area will bring greater cultural diversity and will open-up opportunities for more and diverse community programming. The library is already a place where new immigrants obtain resources, but programming needs to expand and improve to meet the growing needs of new-comers. Events for new-comers need to be created and marketed. As an example, Mt. Albert's Sports Day, which already one of East Gwillimbury's most well attended events could be positioned as more than just a sport day but as a cultural festival. This event already includes cultural programming
- **Better leveraging and promoting community assets:** Concerns were expressed about limited resources and the ability to grow events to reach a level of critical mass. Without adequate funding and a large enough population base, it is difficult for the Town and local organizations to get involved in programs such as Doors Open or the War of 1812. Until 'critical mass' is reached, participants envisioned strengthening local programming as well as focusing on programs connected to programs in other municipalities, such as the Multimedia Film Festival and promoting the Nokiidaa Trail. These events were a considerable success given that there was minimal marketing
- **The Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum:** The Sharon Temple is a historical treasure for the Town and the nation. Staff member from Sharon Temple who attended the focus group expressed interest in establishing a stronger relationship with the Town and collaborative programming given the proximity of the Civic Building. Currently the Temple is one of only a few 'independent' museums in the province (i.e., not directly connected or funded by a municipality in some form). The suggestion was made that for a \$5,000 grant, the museum could offer free admission to all visitors. Participants in both focus groups felt that the Sharon Temple could be further leveraged and promoted. It was also felt that there were a great many more stories to be told connected to the Temple than were currently being told. The site needed to be 'rebranded' in a way that communicates these larger stories and its historical importance beyond the story of the Children of Peace.



- **The Farmers' Market:** Now in its third year, the event was seen to be growing, and compared to start up Farmers' Markets in other communities, was doing well. However, additional promotion and business involvement are needed to grow attendance. The suggestion was made that the Farmers' Market could actually be held on the site of the Temple (at least periodically). Participants of the focus group also discussed more on-site programming at the Sharon Temple offering food and alcoholic beverages
- **East Gwillimbury's Unique History:** As the community expands there are concerns that the local history will be lost. Participants of both focus groups recommended an archive or museum be established to collect and display the municipality's history. Members of both focus groups talked about the Doan House, a vacant heritage building purchased by the Town and located near the Civic Centre as a possible location for the heritage museum or heritage centre. One focus group participant suggested a Heritage Plan for the Town. Participants of the focus groups shared many unique stories and histories connected with areas such as the history of agriculture, bootlegging in the community, and individual stories of community members, which they felt could be better promoted
- **Challenges of a Geographically Disconnected Municipality:** Echoing the sentiments captured by the stakeholder interviews, focus group participants spoke of the difficulty in branding East Gwillimbury from a tourism or cultural standpoint. East Gwillimbury as a collective entity is not well known or understood; people are more apt to identify with the four villages that constitute the Town
- **Villages are geographically disconnected:** It can be difficult to entice citizens to travel from one part of the Town to another even though the distances are relatively short. Without a central core, East Gwillimbury competes with nearby municipalities for cultural and recreational participation, shopping, and other activities. Nearby municipalities also have more developed cultural facilities and offerings. As population increases, Sharon, Queensville and Holland Landing will find themselves evolving into more of a consolidated urban core, while Mt. Albert will remain geographically isolated
- **Leveraging the East Gwillimbury Civic Center:** The Civic Center offers many cultural activities that attract many people but without restaurants and other amenities in the area, people are not encouraged to stay and spend money after attending the event
- **Misidentification of East Gwillimbury:** The collective identity of East Gwillimbury is undermined by it not being recognised by things such as directory assistance. From a social media standpoint, it is not recognized by Facebook although it is by Google. With population growth, future housing developments and the extension of Highway 404, community name recognition should increase



## Community Forum

As part of the Community Engagement process for the East Gwillimbury Municipal Cultural Plan, a Community Forum was held on June 5th, 2012 in the Council Chamber. The purpose of the Forum was for residents to share their vision of culture in East Gwillimbury and to discuss strategies to move that vision forward through the Municipal Cultural Plan. Discussion was guided by four questions.

### 1. What is the most important opportunity the Municipal Cultural Plan presents for East Gwillimbury?

All those attending the Forum were supportive of the Town undertaking the Municipal Cultural Plan, and complimented the Town for its leadership in launching the initiative. One participant commented that if the plan helped establish a ‘cultural lens’ through which all municipal decision-making took place, this would be an enormous achievement and step forward. The Plan will help articulate a shared cultural vision for the Town which, it was felt, would also contribute to the larger challenge of the lack of a coherent identity (or brand) for the community as a whole.

There was considerable discussion regarding the major growth projected for the Town over the next 20 years, and the increased ethno-cultural diversity that growth would bring with it. Most were supportive of these developments, but felt that proactive strategies were needed now to prepare for these changes; the Municipal Cultural Plan must make recommendations to address this need. There were also concerns expressed by several participants about threat to the community’s current way of life and identity that this growth would bring with it, and the need to manage this growth.

Forum participants want the Municipal Cultural Plan to assist in fostering a thriving rural economy that supports growth in cultural businesses and enterprises as well as growing tourism. One participant commented that the lack of broadband across the Town was a barrier to increasing the number of cultural enterprises.

### 2. What words describes your vision for a culturally rich East Gwillimbury?

The following words were the most frequently identified.

A word cloud of frequently identified words for a culturally rich East Gwillimbury. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape and include: Support, Link, Embrace, Open-minded, Promote, Inclusive, Value, Past, Creative, East Gwillimbury, and Opportunities, Enhance, Brand, Communicative, Share, Engagement, and Future. The words are in various colors including green, yellow, orange, and red.



### 3. What are some ‘big ideas’ or strategies needed to advance this vision? What would the top 5 priorities be?

Many suggestions were made about the strategies needed to advance this vision. The various strategies or actions can be grouped together under the following themes.

- **Preservation and promotion of heritage:** Participants felt strongly that as the community grew, it was important that strategies were in place to preserve and better promote the history and heritage of the community. The Town’s heritage should be understood not only in terms of the distant past (e.g., early settlement and events in the 19th century) but also the more recent past – activities or events that were still within the living memory of residents in the community. For example, one participant noted that a distinguishing feature in East Gwillimbury was the unusual number of school bus shelters. Participants felt strongly that the stories of the community were central to its history and heritage and strategies were needed to collect and better communicate these stories
- **Sustain cultural mapping:** It is important for all citizens of a community (both consumers and organizational staff) to be aware of the facilities, resources, and events that the community has to offer. Thorough, accessible, and current cultural maps allow this knowledge to be available to everyone and the resources to be used to their utmost potential
- **Investing in new cultural facilities:** There was considerable discussion about the need for new cultural facilities to address current and future needs. There are no performing arts spaces (except for the Council Chamber) to support professional performances (spaces in arenas are not adequately equipped) and the community needs one central repository and point of focus for the heritage of the community in terms of archival collections, artefacts and adequate space for exhibitions focusing on local history and heritage
- **Branding a unique identity:** The Town of East Gwillimbury encompasses a large geographic community with four distinct communities – Sharon, Holland Landing, Queensville and Mount Albert. Members of the community need to be enticed to live, work, play, and invest in the community. Many East Gwillimbury citizens commute to nearby municipalities to work, as well as for services, shopping, and entertainment. Branding and communicating a unique identity for East Gwillimbury would help promote people staying within the community for activities and entice tourists to visit. Unique branding must also be developed to interest tourists and perspective businesses in the area, and to help promote current businesses
- **Growing Experience-Based Tourism Products and Packaging:** Strong interest was expressed in an increased focus on a more integrated experience-based vision of tourism and tourism development. Experience-based tourism programs and offerings focus less on individual assets or attractions and more on providing an overall cultural experience to both residents and visitors. One approach to developing these more integrated cultural experiences is



to the development of story-based programs and itineraries. For example, in the Niagara Region story-based cultural experiences and itineraries have been built on the story of Black History in that region. East Gwillimbury has a rich history and powerful stories around which such integrated cultural experiences could be built

- **Municipal support:** Participants acknowledged the strong level of support already provided by the municipality, but felt additional staff resources to support residents and community groups to develop, deliver and sustain community programs was needed. There was the suggestion that a new dedicated staff position be established. However, several participants expressed concern that a new staff position could act to undermine community engagement in delivering these events. The responsibilities of any position would need to be supporting and facilitating rather than delivering these programs

#### **4. If we are successful in advancing culture in East Gwillimbury, what are some of the signs that we're moving in the right direction?**

The community's responses can be separated into short term and long term signs.

- In the short term community members stated an increase in tourism and the development of new businesses and cultural events would be ways of determining new growth.
- In the long term they would like citizens to stay within the municipality for cultural activities and have citizens from other municipalities visit East Gwillimbury for culture activities. Lastly, they would like their municipality's cultural resources to be identified, sustained, and interpreted.



# Appendix D: Cultural Roundtable or Committee Models

## **Creative City Committee – London, Ontario**

Many municipalities employ cultural advisory committees as a mechanism to support ongoing input from the community. One of the most successful of these advisory committee models can be found in London, Ontario. London adopted a cultural plan in 2004, and among its recommendations was the establishment of a Creative City Committee reporting to City Council. The Committee is composed of five members of Council plus the Mayor, and a dozen members-at-large comprised largely of representatives of various segments of the cultural sector, and representatives of directly related sectors (e.g., tourism). Duties include: supporting implementation of the cultural plan; administering a cultural funding program; encouraging innovative new community projects; and supporting various arts, heritage, community and cultural organizations. Only the Council members vote on financial matters, but all members have a voice at the committee. The advantage of this model is its direct reporting relationship to Council. The disadvantage is limited representation from the community and due to its Council committee status, and the group being subject to the various rules and restrictions of any public body.

Creative City Committee Terms of Reference:

[http://www.london.ca/Committees\\_and\\_Task\\_Forces/PDFs/ccr\\_terms\\_of\\_reference.pdf](http://www.london.ca/Committees_and_Task_Forces/PDFs/ccr_terms_of_reference.pdf)

Creative City Task Force Report:

[http://www.london.ca/Committees\\_and\\_Task\\_Forces/PDFs/creative\\_city\\_final.pdf](http://www.london.ca/Committees_and_Task_Forces/PDFs/creative_city_final.pdf)

## **Cultural Roundtable - Orillia, Ontario**

Orillia's cultural plan was led by a Steering Group with wide representation including Council members and staff, representatives of the cultural sector, the business community, First Nations and a range of other community leaders. Upon the adoption of the cultural plan in 2006, the Steering Group for the plan evolved into a Cultural Roundtable mandated with the task of supporting the implementation of the plan and ongoing cultural planning and development opportunities in the community. The purpose of the Cultural Roundtable is to "Build community capacity in cultural development by facilitating communication and supporting collaboration among community, business and municipal interests. The model proved highly successful in implementing the cultural plan but has been successful in sustaining



momentum and bringing forward a range of successful new programs and initiatives. City staff provides administrative support to the Roundtable but it does not itself receive financial or operating support.

### **Orillia Cultural Roundtable Terms of Reference**

#### **Purpose**

The Cultural Roundtable builds community capacity in cultural development by facilitating communication and supporting collaboration among community, business and municipal interests.

#### **Roles**

1. Building a shared vision and understanding of culture in Orillia.
2. Acting as a catalyst for leadership and innovation.
3. Serving as a sounding board for ideas and actions (including issues being brought forward to Council).

#### **Principles**

The role of an architect expresses the vision of the Cultural Roundtable. An architect must combine artistry and creativity on the one hand with skills in business and economics on the other. Success in cultural development similarly requires both perspectives to be acknowledged – and celebrated!

The following principles guide the work of the Roundtable.

- Inclusive engagement – engaging citizens in ways that cross boundaries and builds shared understanding and empathy.
- Valuing the grassroots – celebrating the energy and capacity of the community at the grassroots level.
- Emergence and purpose – balancing a commitment to open-ended dialogue that generates new understandings with advancing concrete plans and actions.
- “Hard and soft” skills – strengthening practical skills and knowledge as well as those devoted to conversation and imagining new forms of community.

#### **Administration**

Finances - The Cultural Roundtable will be responsible for generating the financial support needed to sustain its work. This may take the form of funding and sponsorships and/or earned revenue and memberships. A long term plan for financial sustainability will be developed.



Administrative Support - The Department of Culture and Heritage provides administrative support to the Roundtable including:

- Scheduling and meeting logistics
- Supporting communications with the community (e.g., maintaining a contact list, press releases, website updates, period newsletters)
- Serving as a contact point for referrals and networking ('who could I talk to?')

Leadership - Consistent with its purpose and guiding principles, the Cultural Roundtable will be governed using a shared leadership model. The role of the Chair will be to enable participation and facilitate dialogue among members of the Roundtable and the larger community.

A small steering group of 3 to 4 people will serve as a sounding board and coordinating body between meetings of the full Roundtable.

### **Cultural Roundtable – Prince Edward County, Ontario**

The establishment of the Cultural Roundtable was one of the anchor recommendations of the Cultural Strategic Plan adopted by Council in 2006. Beyond its role in supporting the implementation of the cultural plan, the group continues to play a vital role in the community in connecting resources and acting as a catalyst for action. The composition of the Roundtable includes at least one member of Council, municipal staff, representatives of the cultural sector, the business community, and a range of other community leaders. The group meets monthly with County staff providing administrative support, but receives no direct operating support. The Roundtable is not an official committee of Council but reports annually to Council as well as to the Annual Cultural Rally (Summit). A major recent achievement of the Roundtable has been acting as a catalyst for the formation of a Prince Edward County Community Foundation. The Cultural Strategic Plan made no mention of a Community Foundation but its formation speaks to the power of a mechanism that sustains conversations and collaboration across a wide range of community interests.

Terms of Reference for the Roundtable:

<http://culturalroundtable.ca/documents/TermsOfReference.pdf>

Policies and Procedures for the Roundtable:

<http://culturalroundtable.ca/documents/PolicyandProcedures.pdf>



# Appendix E: Summary of Recommended Actions

Recommendations		Actions
<b>Goal 1: Broaden the Town's Leadership Role</b>		
1	<b>Promote the Plan Widely Across the Municipality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prepare a media release announcing completion of the Plan</li> <li>■ Secure support from cultural, business and community partners in distributing the release to their networks</li> </ul>
2	<b>Discuss and Identify Staff and Administrative Requirements to Implement the Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Council to consider administrative arrangements and staffing requirements needed to implement the Plan</li> </ul>
3	<b>Create a Cultural Roundtable or Cultural Resources Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establishment of Terms of Reference</li> <li>■ Recruit first Roundtable/Cultural Resources Committee (hereafter referred to as Roundtable in this document)</li> </ul>
4	<b>Convene a Staff Forum on the Municipal Cultural Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organize and convene a 2-hour staff forum</li> </ul>
5	<b>Convene a Cultural Summit or Rally</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish a Working Group of the Roundtable to develop plans for the initial Summit/Rally</li> <li>■ Convene Summit/Rally in Year2</li> </ul>
6	<b>Establish a Cultural Fund</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Council to consider the establishment of the fund</li> <li>■ Council to direct staff to prepare terms of reference and funding criteria for the fund</li> </ul>



7	<b>Integrate Culture into Municipal Planning and Decision-Making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustain cross-department staff conversations following the staff forum to continue to build shared knowledge related to integrated planning</li> <li>Consider the possibility of an ongoing cross-departmental 'Culture Team'</li> </ul>
8	<b>Leverage Cultural Opportunities Presented by the Town's Official Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a staff team to identify opportunities based on final approval of the Municipal Cultural Plan</li> </ul>
9	<b>Invest in a Public Art Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine leading practices in public art programs and funding models in Ontario municipalities</li> <li>Seek partnerships in establishing a public art fund through the Cultural Roundtable</li> </ul>
10	<b>Investigate Rural-Based Art Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to investigate details of a program</li> <li>If deemed feasible, develop plan and resources to implement a program adapted to suit the specific needs of East Gwillimbury</li> </ul>

Recommendations		Actions
<b>Goal 2: Build a Strong and Collaborative Cultural Sector</b>		
11	<b>Strengthen Cultural Networks</b>	
11 A	<b>Regular Networking Sessions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town staff to convene first networking session</li> <li>Recruit organizations to host and facilitate subsequent sessions</li> </ul>
11 B	<b>Create a Community Wide Community Calendar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine leading practices in community-driven community calendars</li> <li>Determine calendar best suited to East Gwillimbury's needs and establish calendar</li> </ul>
11 C	<b>Ensure Strong Collaboration in York Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure representation on the Cultural Roundtable from the York Regional Arts Council</li> </ul>



12	<b>Expand Collaboration Programming and Cross-Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Working through regular networking sessions (above) identify opportunities for collaborative programming and cross-promotion/marketing</li> </ul>
13	<b>Expand Cultural Marketing and Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to define elements of an overall strategy</li> <li>■ Ensure representation from the Business Development Committee on this Working Group</li> </ul>
14	<b>Address Cultural Facility Needs</b>	
14 A	<b>Undertake a Comprehensive Inventory of Cultural Spaces and Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop terms of reference and direction for undertaking the inventory</li> <li>■ Recruit a summer student, under the supervision of Town staff to undertake the inventory</li> <li>■ Once complete, make the inventory publicly accessible via the Town website</li> </ul>
14 B	<b>Investigate the Potential for Establishing a Multipurpose Cultural Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Review findings from facilities inventory to assess facility gaps</li> <li>■ Examine leading practices in multipurpose cultural facilities</li> <li>■ Define range of uses and space needs for multi-purpose facility</li> <li>■ Consider options for a facility (i.e., new facility or adaptive reuse of an existing building)</li> </ul>
14 C	<b>Investigate the Feasibility of establishing a Heritage Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Direct staff to examine the feasibility and potential for use of the 19040 Leslie Street (Doan House) as a future Heritage Centre</li> </ul>
15	<b>Support and Leverage the Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable (including Council representation) to review the current Business Plan to identify opportunities for support and partnerships in its implementation</li> </ul>



Recommendations		Actions
<b>Goal 3: Expand Culture-Led Economic Development</b>		
16	<b>Develop More Integrated Experience-Based Tourism Offerings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to consider stories/themes to guide development of tourism offerings/packages</li> <li>Work closely with York Region Economic Development, Regional Tourism Organization 6 and the Northern 6 Municipalities of York Region</li> <li>Develop tourism offerings/packages</li> </ul>
17	<b>Develop Integrated Cultural and Agri-Tourism Offerings and Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strike Working Group of the Roundtable to examine leading practices from other municipalities</li> <li>Work with similar partners noted above</li> <li>Seek funding for phased implementation of tourism products and experiences</li> </ul>
18	<b>Implement A Program To Support Start-Up Enterprises In Underutilized Downtown Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to examine leading practices and develop plans for the program</li> <li>Work closely with York Region Economic Development and the Northern 6 Municipalities of York Region to explore collaborative opportunities</li> <li>Assess levels of interest and availability of resources</li> <li>Launch program</li> </ul>
19	<b>Support Youth Engagement And Retention</b>	
19 A	<b>Establish A Youth Apprenticeship And Mentoring Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Working Group of the Roundtable to assess interest in establishing the apprenticeship program</li> <li>Based on level of interest, design and launch program and recruit initial apprentices</li> </ul>
19 B	<b>Strengthen Youth Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit a youth representative for the Cultural Roundtable</li> <li>Strike a Youth Working Group (supported and facilitated by the Parks &amp; Recreation Division) to develop proposals to develop new collaborative programming addressing youth needs.</li> </ul>



20	<b>Strengthen Festivals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strike a Working Group of the Roundtable to identify key issues and challenges facing growth and expansion of festivals in the Town</li> <li>■ Determine need for consulting support or contract staff to develop proposals to address needs/challenges</li> </ul>
21	<b>Continue Cultural Mapping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Town GIS staff to continue to work collaboratively with York Region to sustain and extend cultural mapping</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendations</b>		<b>Actions</b>
<b>Goal 4: Conserve and Promote History and Heritage</b>		
22	<b>Undertake Heritage Conservation District Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Examine the potential for undertaking the Heritage District Study through enhanced staff skills and capacity or consider retaining a professional heritage consultant to undertake the work.</li> <li>■ Upon completion of the work in Sharon, assess needs and timing for similar studies in other communities</li> </ul>
23	<b>Re-Establish and Strengthen the Heritage East Gwillimbury Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Examine current terms of reference for the Committee against leading practices in other municipalities</li> <li>■ Establish new (and potentially expanded) terms of reference and recruit members with strong heritage knowledge/expertise</li> </ul>
24	<b>Launch a Cultural Heritage Landscape Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Direct staff to examine leading practices in other Ontario municipalities</li> <li>■ Examine the potential for undertaking the Cultural Heritage Landscape Study through enhanced staff skills and capacity or consider retaining a professional heritage consultant to undertake the work.</li> </ul>
25	<b>Launch Community Storytelling Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strike Working Group of Roundtable to identify current storytelling activity and initiatives already underway in the Town</li> <li>■ Explore opportunities to expand existing festivals/events to include storytelling components, including programming at the East Gwillimbury Public Library</li> <li>■ Approach the East Gwillimbury Historical Society as a potential partner in advancing this program</li> <li>■ Explore opportunity for launching dedicated storytelling festival/event</li> </ul>



Recommendations	Actions
<b>Goal 4: Conserve and Promote History and Heritage</b>	
<b>26</b> <b>Launch a Regional Murmur Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Strike Working Group of Roundtable to contact current murmur project in Toronto to research program costs and logistics</li><li>■ Approach the local Historical Society as a potential partner in advancing this program</li><li>■ Secure funding to launch program</li></ul>



Recommendations		Actions
<b>Goal 5: Celebrate Diversity and Inclusivity</b>		
27	<b>Increase Public Awareness of the Positive Impact of Immigration and Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strike Working Group of Roundtable to identify community partners to support awareness campaign</li> <li>Work closely with York Region and examine leading practices in other municipalities in York Region undertaking similar programs</li> <li>Define key messages and launch campaign leveraging partners' networks, traditional (print based) and new social media tools and strategies</li> </ul>
28	<b>Seek Out Multilingual Cultural Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the community grows and demand warrants, reach out through community groups to identify and recruit potential volunteers</li> <li>The Cultural Roundtable could be an ideal mechanism to recruit such volunteers</li> <li>Draw on resources and experience of East Gwillimbury Public Library in launching program</li> </ul>
29	<b>Provide Cultural Sensitivity Training for Volunteers and Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the community grows and demand warrants, reach out to other municipalities in York Region undertaking similar work to define strategies and approaches</li> </ul>
30	<b>Leverage Current and Future Library Programs Addressing Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Working Group of Cultural Roundtable (potentially chaired by East Gwillimbury Public Library) to explore opportunities for cross-institutional collaborative programming addressing diversity needs</li> </ul>