



A Culture Plan for Brandon



Music in the Parks 2, Photo Credit to Photography by Sandy Black



5 A Culture Plan for Brandon

5.1 Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision Statement

The following vision statement shall be used as the guide post for all current and future culture planning and development in the city of Brandon:

The City of Brandon and its partners support culture as a resource to build a diverse, inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant community.

It is recognized that this support for culture will lead to increased economic vitality and a high quality of life for current and future generations in Brandon.

Guiding Principles

In pursuing this vision, the following guiding principles should always be incorporated into cultural planning initiatives:

- Brandon's unique history and culture are sources of civic pride and shared identity that connects the community

- Culture is a major driver in creating the quality of life that attracts a talented workforce and new investment opportunities
- Cultural resources and activities are essential in building and sustaining a vibrant downtown that is a social, economic, and cultural hub for the community
- Cultural opportunities, resources, and activities are accessible to residents of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, and economic circumstances across all parts of the community
- Brandon is a community that values and supports strong cultural organizations working together in partnership and collaboration with sustained communication to achieve common goals
- Cultural development in Brandon continually strives to be innovative in its planning and implementation and will involve all members of the community in those processes
- Cultural resources and opportunities are considered in all areas of planning and decision-making by the Municipality of Brandon

5.2 Strategic Objectives

Based on the planning process, three strategic objectives are outlined to guide cultural planning in the City of Brandon. These strategic directions are intended to be anchors to set the context for a range of continued culture planning and mapping activities.

The three strategic objectives are (as seen in Figure 8):

- **Build a Strong and Vibrant Cultural Sector**
- **Enhance Access to Cultural Resources**
- **Expand Culture's Role in Economic Development**



FIGURE 8: BRANDON CULTURE PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Strategic Objective #1: Build a Strong and Vibrant Cultural Community

Building a strong and vibrant cultural community in Brandon must happen through a renewed emphasis on strengthening collaboration and partnership among Brandon's cultural groups and between these groups and public, private, and community partners. Identifying and creating new platforms and opportunities for these groups to come together must be a priority. One critical result of this collaboration could be the increased awareness of the breadth of Brandon's cultural resources within the cultural sector as well as with the public at large. Continuing to build on the large base of cultural resources in Brandon (e.g. festivals and events in particular) is one immediate way to help increase awareness and encourage new partnerships to be created.

Strategic Objective #2: Enhance Access to Cultural Resources

Enhancing access to Brandon's cultural resources for all residents and visitors is a priority. Difficulties in communication and collaboration related to accessing and learning about all the cultural happenings in the community is a large barrier that is affecting participation in cultural activities. Institutional silos among groups, organizations, the municipality and its departments reduce or discourage collaboration and information sharing. Also, with a diverse range of cultural aspirations coming from an increasingly ethnically diverse community, ensuring these barriers are minimized must be a priority. Addressing the needs of distinct populations within Brandon such as youth groups and conserving and promoting more local history and heritage buildings also play prominent roles in enhancing access to cultural resources in Brandon.

Strategic Objective #3: Expand Culture's Role in Economic Development

Cultural development in Brandon has a large role to play in increasing economic development opportunities in the community. Leveraging the cultural and heritage resources in the community should be considered one of the drivers to support downtown revitalization through supporting the growth of new creative cultural industries and culture related businesses in the area, and by establishing small cultural venues such as performance spaces or gathering places in the downtown. A renewed focus on the cultural resource in Brandon should also be seen as a way to expand the community's tourism sector, drawing more visitor-spending and resulting spin-off employment to Brandon. In these ways, Brandon's cultural resources will help enrich the quality of life that will attract more investment and a talented workforce to the city.



5.3 The City's Role

Governments at all levels throughout Canada are moving to play stronger roles as facilitators and convenors, building stronger partnerships and collaborations internally across department, externally with stakeholder groups, and between stakeholder groups and business and community leaders. In implementing cultural plans and supporting ongoing cultural planning, aligning different municipal departments will take a lead depending on the nature of the issue.

Economic Development will have a role to play in growing creative cultural industries and expanding cultural tourism. Planning plays an important role in preserving built heritage resources and also to agendas related to placemaking and building vibrant public spaces in the community. Community Services will continue to play a role supporting the delivery of cultural programs and activities and working to support and strengthen cultural organizations in Brandon.

From the perspective of the City as a whole the following roles can be identified.

Planner and Policy Maker – Integrating and considering how culture can add value to plans and policies across departments

Partner – Establishing and sustaining relationships with external partners, organizations within the cultural sector, and with community and business partners

Facilitator and Convenor – Building connections and strengthening collaboration

Promoter and Champion – Acting as an advocate for cultural development within the City and beyond

Funder and Provider – Investing in cultural development including support for cultural programs and facilities

5.4 Action and Implementation Plans

Interpreting the Action Plans

Each of the three *Strategic Objectives* is supported by a series of *Goals* which in turn provide a framework for proposed *Actions*. For each action a level of priority has been identified. The level of priority has been based on several criteria, including:

- The level of immediacy and relevance based on the City's objectives
- The resources required
- The logical sequence of actions (i.e. some early actions are intended to build the capacity to undertake later actions, while some actions rely on earlier actions being addressed)

The priority level assigned to each action also corresponds to a specific timeframe. The time frame for each priority level is:

- **Immediate term (I)** – first year
- **Short term (S)** – within 2-3 years
- **Medium term (M)** – within 4- 5 years
- **Long term (L)** – beyond 5 years



Strategic Objective #1: Build a Strong and Vibrant Cultural Community

#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
		I	S	M	L	
1	Strengthen Collaboration Among Culture Groups In Brandon					
1.1	Develop a Cultural Leadership Group that brings cultural leaders throughout Brandon together, including, representatives of the City (Council and staff), along with leaders drawn from business, community interests, post-secondary and youth, among others. The Council will have a mandate to mobilize cross-sectoral partnership and collaboration necessary to implement the Culture Plan and support ongoing cultural planning and development.					Council, City staff, culture, community, business, and post-secondary leaders, youth, Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council
1.2	Create a mentorship program that allows for small and large culture organizations to meet regularly and learn from each other					City staff, cultural, community, business and post-secondary leaders, youth
1.3	Establish a regional Cultural Managers Network for managers of cultural assets in Brandon to meet regularly (quarterly) to serve as peer-to-peer learning opportunities and a platform for broader strategic collaboration					City staff, cultural leaders
1.4	Support the development of an Arts, Culture, and Heritage hub (online or in person) where cultural groups can coordinate activities, share information, and communicate with each other regularly. The hub should also act as a “one-stop-shop” for people to learn about resources and contacts available to help them enter into cultural and creative initiatives.					City staff, cultural leaders
1.5	Convene an annual or biennial Brandon Culture Summit to bring culture groups together to dialogue, collaborate, and grow the sector. The purpose is also to celebrate progress made in implementing the Culture Plan over the past year (or period), celebrating other cultural achievements and undertaking “opportunity citing” to identify new cultural initiatives or opportunities.					City staff, cultural, community, business leaders
2	Build On The Current Base Of Cultural Resources In Brandon					
2.1	Develop a proactive recruitment strategy for the next generation of volunteers. Consider creating a centralized online portal to help coordinate volunteers among many different cultural groups.					City staff, Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, Tourism



#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
		I	S	M	L	
						leaders
2.2	Create a modest individual or group cultural resources grant that is available every year to support cultural development in the community					City staff, cultural, community, business and post-secondary leaders, youth
2.3	Develop and adopt a Public Art Policy and related programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult with the public and stakeholder groups about developing related programming to encourage public art ■ Study best practices in public art programming and funding ■ Develop the policy and programming 					City staff, cultural leaders, business leaders, development community
2.4	Maintain a roster of heritage properties and an associated walking tour map and/or programming to help residents and visitors interpret the heritage properties					City staff, external partners, e.g. Manitoba Arts Council
2.5	Partner to develop an “Artists as Entrepreneurs” training to build the business skills of Brandon’s artists					Brandon Chamber of Commerce, Entrepreneurship Manitoba
2.6	Explore the feasibility of creating a Brandon cultural incubator to support new and existing cultural enterprises					City staff, cultural and business leaders, Assiniboine Community College
3	Enhance Cultural Awareness And Leadership Of The City Of Brandon Municipal Staff					
3.1	Deepen linkages between the City and culture groups throughout the city					City staff, cultural, community, business and post-secondary leaders, youth
3.2	Convene a meeting with Senior Administrative Staff to introduce and review the new Culture Plan and to develop a shared understanding of cultural planning and cultural development opportunities					City staff
3.3	Design and implement a communications and social media strategy to promote the Culture Plan with the public and within the City					City staff
3.4	Create a Cultural Advisory Committee reporting directly to Council, composed of representatives of					City staff, culture, community,



#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
		I	S	M	L	
	the cultural sector and other community leaders. Alternatively, assign the advisory function to the Cultural Leadership Group.					business, and post-secondary leaders, youth
3.5	<p>Integrate a “cultural lens” into City planning and decision-making. Three important questions should always be considered to help with this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How can Brandon’s cultural resources contribute to addressing broader City goals and priorities (e.g. economic diversification, retaining youth, growing cultural tourism, etc.)? ■ How do local planning decisions impact Brandon’s cultural resources (e.g. the impact of new developments on existing and valued natural or cultural heritage resources)? ■ How can Brandon’s cultural resources enhance the quality of place, form, and function of the built environment and the public realm (e.g. public art installations, urban design guidelines, public art commissions for new buildings, etc.)? 					City staff, Council, development community, business community, proposed, cultural leaders
3.6	Enhance supports for cultural organizers in Brandon. Many local culture groups face similar operational needs and challenges that could benefit from a more centralized support structure (such as access to insurance for events, accessing affordable performance space, promotions and marketing, training and workshops, fundraising, etc.)					City staff, cultural leaders



Strategic Objective #2: Enhance Access to Cultural Resources

#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
		I	S	M	L	
4	Enhance The Profile Of Culture In Brandon					
4.1	Advocate and lobby for an enhanced local presence of provincial bodies that can support cultural resources in Brandon					City staff, Manitoba Music, Manitoba Arts Council, cultural leaders
4.2	<p>Enhance the recognition and celebration of cultural resources in Brandon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to celebrate local accomplishments or successes (profile success stories) in arts, culture, and heritage developments via social media channels to the general public Consider establishing a program such as “First Fridays” in Brandon. This program has worked effectively in many other communities, designating one consistent day per month where there will be a concerted effort to program a specific site with music or other types of cultural performance Promote street closures to create “third spaces” for cultural and other community events 					City staff, cultural leaders, Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, business leaders, , cultural leaders
4.3	Incorporate culture as part of Brandon’s larger brand identity					City staff, business leaders, cultural leaders
4.4	<p>Improve signage related to cultural assets such as museums, heritage areas, and special attractions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a long-term plan for identifying and addressing signage needs for local areas/locations of significance Ensure built form guidelines promote quality signage for area businesses associated with culture 					City staff, cultural leaders, cultural leaders



#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
		I	S	M	L	
4.5	Support cultural groups in the City to develop communications strategies					
5	Increase Access To Brandon's Cultural Resources					
5.1	<p>Improve access to information on cultural activities in the city using a calendar of events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine existing City calendars to assess if they are meeting the needs of the cultural sector. Examine best practices in cultural calendars of events in other Canadian municipalities. Accompanying this calendar should also be a centralized repository of information on potential cultural sponsors and funding agencies. 					City staff, cultural leaders, tourism leaders
5.2	<p>Maintain Brandon's Cultural Asset Inventory and make the results accessible to the general public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a committee to review and update the asset inventory annually Consider establishing an interactive cultural map or cultural portal as a "one-window" tool for access to information on cultural activities and experiences in Brandon 					City staff, cultural leaders
5.3	Enhance the amount of visual arts display space in City owned facilities by optimizing the use of existing City facilities for the display of visual arts and identifying spaces in new facilities that would be appropriate for the installation of visual art					City staff, cultural leaders
5.4	Encourage the creation of sponsorships and scholarships for those in need to attend and be involved in more cultural programming in the City					City staff, cultural leaders business leaders
5.5	Develop an "Arts Exchange Program" that encourages cultural elements to be a part of community planning in the city (such as having rotating artist displays throughout businesses in town, purchasing museum display cases that can be placed at key places in the community to tell of Brandon's history and culture, and having culture play a more prominent role in Business Improvement Association programming)					City staff, cultural leaders Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee



#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
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5.6	Explore the potential of using new technologies that can help consolidate and distribute information on Brandon’s cultural assets, such as developing a mobile or web based app for culture in the city.					City staff, Institutional leaders e.g. ACC/BU, business leaders
5.7	Investigate the feasibility for a new mid-sized performance/multi-purpose arts and culture facility located in Brandon’s downtown core. The new facility could include such things as exhibition and performance space, studio and live/work spaces for lease, and fee-for-service administration resources (photocopy/printing, meeting rooms, small-scale storage, etc.) to accommodate demand from artists and creative enterprises.					Proposed Cultural Advisory Committee or Leadership Council, city staff, provincial leadership, Council, cultural, business and institutional leaders
6	Strengthen Youth Participation In Brandon’s Cultural Activities					
6.1	Engage youth in advising on current culture program offerings and generating new ideas for programs and activities					City staff, cultural leaders, business leaders
6.2	Establish a youth mentoring program to connect aspiring young people that have interests in the culture sector with mentors in the sector					City staff, cultural leaders, business leaders, cultural leaders
6.3	Encourage youth enrollment in cultural programming through a city-wide awareness campaign					City staff, cultural leaders
6.4	Encourage the recruitment and engagement of youth on the Board of Directors for cultural organizations					City staff, cultural leaders
6.5	Explore opportunities to build relationships between Brandon’s cultural organizations and secondary schools in order to connect students to volunteer and employment opportunities					City staff, cultural leaders Brandon School Division, Brandon University, ACC
6.6	Consider the integration in existing cultural facilities of “Maker Spaces” equipped with 3D printers and sound and video recording technologies. These tools make it possible for youth to become cultural producers and creators in addition to their consumption patterns of cultural experiences through web and digital media.					Cultural leaders, business leaders



Strategic Objective #3: Expand Culture's Role in Economic Development

#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
		I	S	M	L	
7	Incorporate Findings From The Culture Plan Into Current And Future Economic Development Planning					
7.1	Continue to foster a collaborative relationship between Brandon's Community Services department and the Economic Development department					City staff
7.2	Explore opportunities to attract more creative enterprises and cultural resources to Brandon					City staff, business leaders, external partners e.g. Creative Cities Network of Canada
7.3	Position Brandon's downtown as a vibrant commercial hub that can support more cultural assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage more public gathering spaces ■ Consider levying a 1% development surcharge on future capital projects undertaken by the City or Province in order to fund more public art ■ Incentivize investment to revitalize historic buildings 					City staff, Renaissance Brandon
7.4	Complete an economic impact assessment of culture on Brandon's economy and use the results to support further funding for the sector					City staff, business leaders, provincial partners
8	Leverage Cultural Resources For Tourism Development					
8.1	Strengthen cultural tourism by developing a stronger and broader range of cultural tourism products and packages					City staff, tourism leaders
8.2	Develop an awareness campaign designed to get local residents interested in exploring Brandon's many cultural enterprises					Tourism leaders, Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, cultural leaders
8.3	Develop a culture brand for Brandon to support marketing and cross-promotion of programs and events as well as stimulating a stronger sense of community within the cultural sector. The brand should be available to any organization for use in print or web-based marketing					City staff, cultural leaders, economic leaders, cultural leaders, tourism leaders,



#	Actions	Timeline				Partners
		I	S	M	L	
	materials, event banners, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acts as a “meta story” to help communicate a consistent message about the city as a cultural destination ■ Should include considerations of a cultural tourism strategy ■ Should also include consideration of a festivals and events strategy that distinguishes between different types of events in order to focus investment in festival development (i.e. those events that already attract sizeable numbers of attendees vs. those with the potential to grow into larger tourism events vs. those that are primarily community focused with limited tourism potential). 					provincial partners

5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance measures and indicators are gaining greater attention in Canadian municipalities. One source of insight is the *Municipal Cultural Planning Indicators & Performance Measures Guidebook* prepared in 2011 by the Canadian Urban Institute. The report sets out a wide range of indicators and performance measures as well as a process to identify and implement effective monitoring and evaluation system. Five categories of indicators are provided addressing a range of community benefits or outcomes:

- Fostering Creativity
- Creating Wealth
- Creating Quality Places
- Strengthening Social Cohesion
- Organizational Change

For the purposes of the Brandon Culture Plan, some performance measures worth considering connected with the Strategic Objectives and Actions include:

- Total expenditures culture by the municipality (includes operating, grants, and capital expenditures)
- The number of cultural organizations and artists from Aboriginal or diverse ethno-cultural communities



- Number of creative cultural industries as a percentage of total businesses
- Number of people working in the creative cultural industries
- Number and distribution of cultural facilities and spaces
- Number of listed cultural heritage properties
- Number of annual or recurring cultural events
- Funds leveraged by municipal investment in culture grants (i.e. the increase in operating budgets of community cultural organizations that received grants from the municipality)
- Number of times cultural resources appear in plans and policies across municipal departments
- Success and number of attendees in convening the first Cultural Summit
- Number of new collaborative programs
- Completion of a Public Art Policy
- Number of temporary displays in empty storefronts
- Total number of volunteers and number of new volunteers recruited
- Number of new festivals or events launched
- Number of new collaborative programs
- Completion of a Public Art Policy
- Number of temporary displays in empty storefronts
- Total number of volunteers and number of new volunteers recruited
- Number of new festivals or events launched
- Number of cultural tourism packages developed
- Number of tour operators adopting cultural tourism packages
- Number of business sponsorships secured
- Number of collaborative programs or initiatives launched

The Guidebook suggests that the first step to be taken in developing a set of indicators is to decide what “story” the municipality wants to tell through its monitoring and evaluation. Generally this “story” is tied to municipal plans and priorities. Once adopted, an early priority in the implementation of the Culture Plan should be convening a meeting of the City staff to determine the suite of indicators best suited to the City’s needs.

Once a suite of indicators has been selected, it is recommended the City work collaboratively with cultural leaders to monitor progress in implementing the Culture Plan through a regular Report Card. The Report Card provides a means of updating Council, the cultural sector, and



the wider community on progress in implementing the Culture Plan as well as in profiling new cultural initiatives not profiled in the Plan. The frequency of the Report Card should then be determined, with some municipalities producing annual reports and others reporting on a less frequent basis (perhaps every two years) to reduce the time and resources required.