

Executive Summary



Downtown 9th & Rosser, Photo Credit to Photography by Sandy Black



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The City of Brandon Culture Plan provides a cultural vision and strategic directions to help guide the success of the cultural sector and its contribution to social and economic well-being in Brandon for years to come. The Plan incorporates the cultural needs and desires of residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, and municipal leaders in Brandon to create a plan that is inclusive, comprehensive, and encourages collaboration.

Work on the Brandon Culture Plan began in November 2015 and concluded in June 2016.

A Changing Canadian Economy

There is growing recognition across Canada of the importance of creativity, culture, and quality of place in growing local economies. Many communities now recognize that enhancements made to quality of place and the creation of attractive amenities can draw talented people, which in turn attract business investment in an expanding creative economy characterized by higher paying jobs. Cultural resources and experiences also attract visitors and help grow tourism revenues.

Within this changing economic landscape, cultural planning throughout the country is taking on an increasingly important role in creating new sources of wealth and economic development. Communities that can identify and support elements of their creative economies – starting with cultural resources – will be well-positioned to capitalize on the opportunities produced by changing local, national, and global economies.

CREATING THE CULTURE PLAN - PHASES



“Culture” is the expression and celebration of the values and aspirations of a community or social group. This is expressed through all manner of human activities that characterise a community and its people and shape its unique sense of place. It includes the sharing of ideas, learning through expression in the fine, visual, literary, media, material and performing arts, heritage, and the shared experiences of history.



Defining Culture in Brandon

Culture can mean many things to many people. In the broadest sense, culture is anything that defines the unique identity of a community or social group. While this broad definition informs the Culture Plan, a more specific set of categories of cultural resources is needed to identify and organize Brandon’s cultural resources. These are called the *Cultural Resource Framework*. These categories range from things like festivals and events, to natural heritage, to cultural facilities and spaces, all of which are important elements in understanding what is included in the word “culture”.

Taking the categories from the Cultural Resource Framework and applying them to the City of Brandon, a Cultural Mapping Inventory was created to provide a solid base of knowledge and information upon which to build the Culture Plan. This inventory found approximately 355 cultural resources in Brandon, with cultural facilities and cultural enterprises having the highest proportion of Brandon’s cultural resources (24% and 22% respectively).

The Voice of the Community

Community consultation revealed that there are important cultural resources in Brandon but that a variety of challenges have prevented these resources from playing a larger role in social and economic life of the city. These challenges include:

- A need to educate and change perceptions of the general population in Brandon as to the role of culture in the community and the economy
- The general lack of communications and collaboration between cultural organizations already working in Brandon
- A lack of funding support for the cultural sector
- A need for small and medium-size arts venues to serve as performance spaces and as cultural hubs or meeting places for individuals active in the cultural community.

CULTURAL RESOURCES FRAMEWORK



CULTURAL MAPPING INVENTORY RESULTS FOR BRANDON

| Main Framework Category | % of Brandon's Cultural Resources |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cultural Facilities | 24% |
| Cultural Enterprises | 22% |
| Community Cultural Organizations | 15% |
| Cultural Heritage | 14% |
| Cultural programs and services | 9% |
| Natural Heritage | 8% |
| Festivals and Events | 8% |



- 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

Based on all the results from the research and engagement processes, three *Strategic Objectives* were defined to guide cultural planning by the City of Brandon and its partners. These Strategic Objectives serve as anchors for a wide range of strategies and actions intended to advance cultural development in Brandon. The Strategic Objectives are:

- **Build a Strong and Vibrant Cultural Sector** – A renewed emphasis on strengthening collaboration and partnership among Brandon’s cultural organizations and between these organizations and public, private, and community partners is critical. Identifying and creating new platforms and opportunities for these groups to come together must be a priority, as well as continuing to build on the large base of cultural assets in Brandon (e.g. festivals and events in particular).
- **Enhance Access to Cultural Resources** – Difficulties in communication and accessing information on all the cultural happenings in the community is a large barrier to participation in cultural activities. Also, with a diverse range of cultural aspirations coming from an increasingly ethnically diverse community, ensuring these barriers are minimized must be a priority. Enhancing access for Brandon’s youth must also be a priority. Another aspect of enhanced access to culture in the community identified through consultations related to conserving and communicating more about local history and heritage.
- **Expand Culture’s Role in Economic Development** – Leveraging the cultural and heritage resources in the community should be considered a major driver in supporting downtown revitalization. This is achieved through strategies to grow creative cultural industries and cultural businesses in the area, and by establishing small-scale cultural spaces or venues for use as exhibition and performance venues and cultural hubs or meeting places for those working in the cultural sector in Brandon.



BRANDON CULTURE PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

