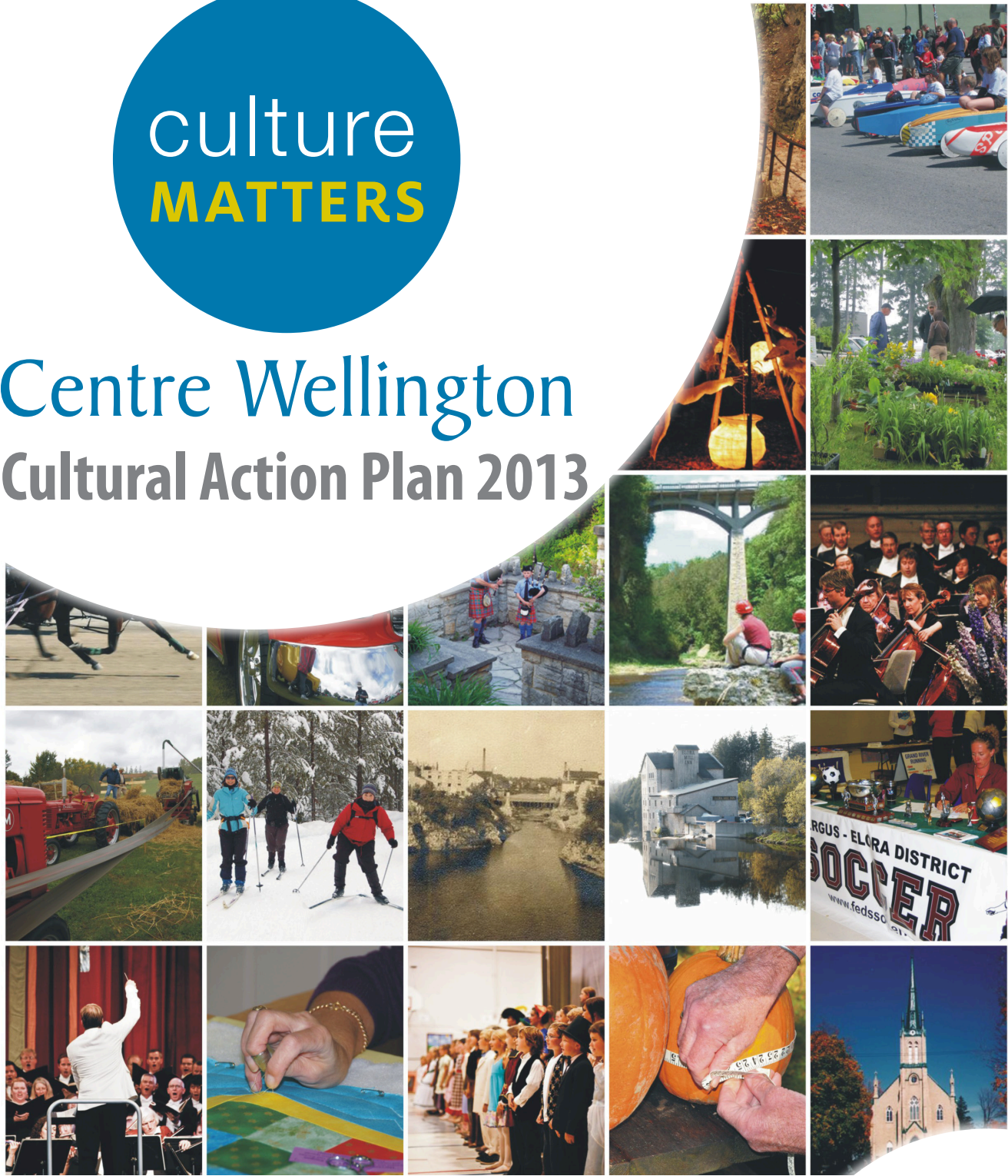
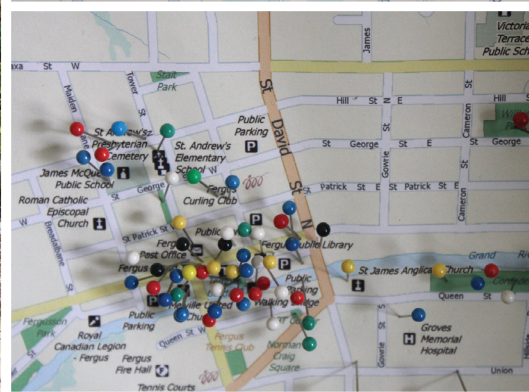




Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan 2013





The Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan was completed with funding provided by the Government of Ontario and the awesome contributions and support of the Cultural Partners Committee, Cultural Roundtable, Municipal staff and Council, Carrie Brooks-Joiner & Associates; and the amazing cultural and community groups, organizations, and passionate residents of Centre Wellington.



Our Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan

Some Background

Culture is an essential ingredient for a community that is vibrant, livable, and prosperous. The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport describes culture as having the power to transform and across the province, nation, and globe communities agree and are acknowledging and leveraging the contribution of culture to their community. Across Ontario, municipalities are working towards a common goal of harnessing the cultural energy of their unique communities as a way of celebrating and promoting who they are, at the same time, contributing to and planning for anticipated growth and development. Through the development of cultural plans, municipalities are taking a lead role 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. The result - the overall advancement of a vibrant, culturally rich community for current and future residents.

In the fall of 2011, The Township of Centre Wellington embarked on a cultural journey by initiating the creation of a Cultural Plan. It was the opportunity to engage the community and Municipality in meaningful conversations to explore what really makes Centre Wellington so *grand* as well as establish clear direction regarding our cultural future. The results were clear – CULTURE MATTERS! - and we heard overwhelmingly that people were pleased to be involved in planning for our cultural future.

As one of the region's most rapidly growing municipalities, it is critical for Centre Wellington to build upon its existing culturally rich foundations to become a premier destination of choice – the best place to live, work and play. It is important that Centre Wellington take deliberate action to sustain and build on this advantage in order to enrich our community, our programs, and our spaces while at the same time exploring new and innovative opportunities and partnerships.

“Our definition of culture in Centre Wellington is broad and all encompassing including everything from arts and agriculture to festivals and events, quaint downtowns, natural and cultural heritage to sport and recreation.”

Why is Culture Important?

Supports A Thriving Economy.

Culture strengthens the economy by revitalizing downtowns, attracting tourists and businesses and creating jobs.

Enhances Our Quality Of Life.

Culture gives meaning and context to people's lives. It engages our minds, improves our health and enriches the education of our children and lifelong learning.

Creates A Sense Of Pride In Our Communities.

Culture helps define the character of a community. Residents feel a sense of pride in their unique local landmarks and history. Culture attracts new residents and keeps current residents in the community.

Encourages Social Cohesion.

Culture engages citizens in activities that help build a sense of community. It celebrates different cultures and helps newcomers feel welcome.*

*Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport Municipal Cultural Planning Brochure – link to full brochure at http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/AMO_brochure.pdf

What does that mean for Centre Wellington?

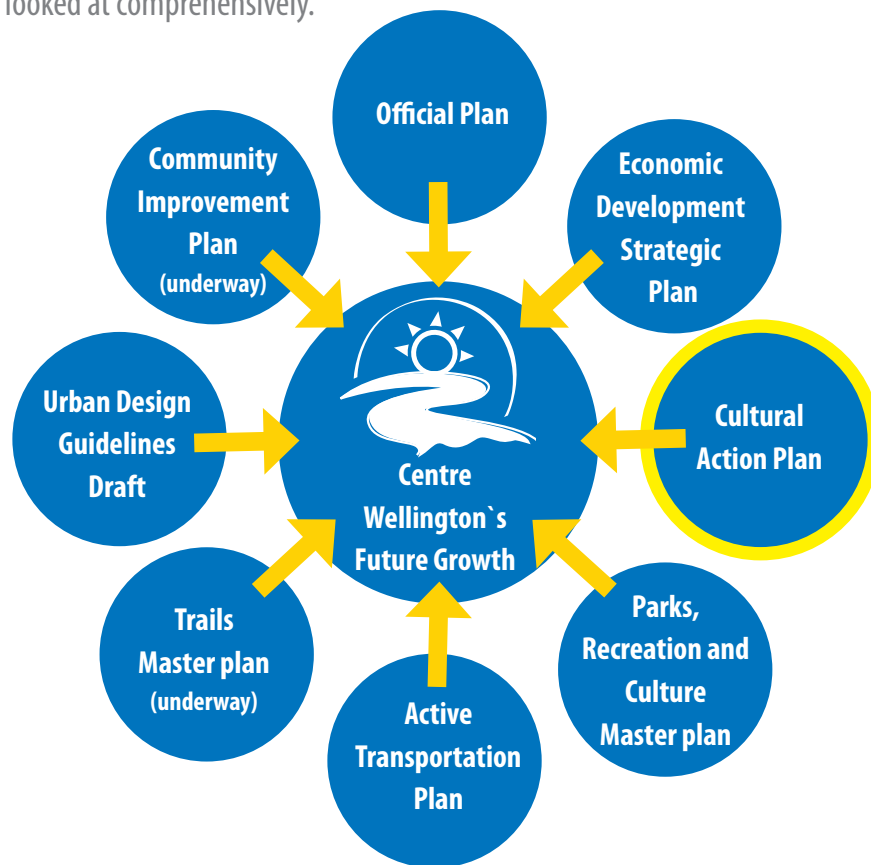
- supporting existing and attracting new businesses
- jobs
- engaging and retaining youth
- vibrant and active downtown cores
- drawing guests and visitors to the area
- identifying needs and contributing to overall economic development
- access to exceptional programming and activities for all age groups and abilities
- improved capacity for cultural and community groups
- beautiful public spaces
- preserving and celebrating our heritage
- enriching community spaces
- superior communication between the municipality and community
- world class festivals and events
- sharing our stories and building on our unique character
- partnership and collaboration amongst cultural and community groups
- increased community pride and sense of belonging

The Centre Wellington Cultural Planning Process

The Planning process involved the following:

Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
2011 Council go ahead	2012 Start up		Planning & Promoting				Engaging & Listening				Visioning & Mapping Culture Days Report to Council				2013 Reviewing & Revising				The Plan	

It is exciting to note that Centre Wellington is already ahead of the curve with respect to culture. Culture is noted in plans and policies throughout the Municipality; however the Cultural Planning Project is the first time that culture has been looked at comprehensively.



The Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan and other Municipal plans and documents complement each other and together will contribute to Centre Wellington's future growth. Copies of these documents can be found at www.centrewellington.ca

The Results

The Centre Wellington Cultural Planning process had three specific outcomes:

1. Engagement – Over 2000 people participated in dialogue about culture in our community and contributed to the development of the plan.
2. A Cultural Map - An inventory of cultural treasures presented as a comprehensive on line visual tool.
3. A Plan to Guide our Economic and Cultural Growth - By acknowledging, promoting and ultimately integrating a cultural mind-set into our municipal planning processes, culture can significantly impact the growth of a creative Centre Wellington community.

1. Engagement

The Cultural Planning Project was a highly collaborative project with widespread community engagement. Council and Municipal staff, cultural stakeholders, community groups and the public have been overwhelmingly generous in their sharing of thoughts and ideas. The input and feedback from this widespread participation has formed the basis of the Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan.



350+ people
involved in interviews,
presentations
workshops



760 surveys
completed



400 +
cultural treasures
pinned



400 + people
engaged at
community
events



125 + great
ideas



One Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan

2. The Cultural Map

Cultural Mapping is an organized and systematic way of gathering information about the cultural assets in our community in a database and presenting that data in a visual way. The visual “maps” of the different layers of information assist with planning and decision making by identifying cultural clusters and gaps – areas of opportunity - and, just like a road map, provides both residents and visitors with information about cultural activities and places.

Centre Wellington’s Cultural Map captures the categories as noted below. Information was compiled from existing Municipal data; the Chamber of Commerce Business Directory; and during community engagements. The Cultural Map will continue to be expanded and refined as more information becomes available.

Category & Description	Number of Cultural Assets to date
Cultural Heritage Establishments involved in the preservation and exhibition of objects and sites of historical, cultural, educational value (for example historic sites, heritage buildings, cemeteries, museums etc.)	650 +
Natural Heritage Natural wonders and areas of natural heritage and environmental significance (for example conservation areas, parks, trails, gardens, farms etc)	125+
Community Cultural Organizations Community organizations involved in arts and heritage- and for Centre Wellington, agriculture and sport (for example arts, heritage, sporting/recreational, multicultural etc)	50+
Creative Cultural Industries Categories of cultural industries outlined in the Statistics Canada Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics (for example design, publishing, broadcasting, art, architectural etc)	125+
Cultural Events and Festivals Events and festivals that recur on an annual or regularly predictable basis (for example art, music, sporting, culinary, agricultural, tours etc)	250+
Spaces and Facilities Places designed to host cultural activities including not for profit, public and private spaces (for example theatres, cinemas, community centres, churches etc)	100+
Grand Total	1300+

Check out the Cultural Map at maps.centrewellington.ca/culture

3. The Plan – A Prelude

Vision For Centre Wellington Is Also A Vision For Culture In Centre Wellington

The vision statement for the Township of Centre Wellington is, “Excellence in everything.”

The Mission statement for the Township of Centre Wellington is, “Working together today and tomorrow for a safe, livable and sustainable community.”

The Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan is designed to integrate culture as a consideration across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making as well as compliment and reinforce existing plans and policies. As such, this plan has not developed a new vision statement but incorporates itself as part of the Township statement as noted.

Values Guiding Our Cultural Action Plan

During the planning process several values were consistently mentioned as important. These values guide the Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan.

1. Culture is recognized for its continuous contribution to the positive growth and vitality/energy of our community
2. We value our built and natural heritage and are committed to celebrating and preserving it
3. We embrace our small town values and character and will endeavour to maintain this even in changing times
4. We appreciate and celebrate the unique stories and histories of each of our smaller communities as well as our rural areas, and recognize their unique contributions to Centre Wellington as a whole
5. We are community focused and results driven and want planning that is action oriented and ready for implementation
6. The Township has the potential to play a leadership role to encourage the self sufficiency and success of our cultural groups and organizations

“Authentic places bubbling with lively cultural and entertainment options are magnets that attract and retain creative people. This creative workforce in turn generates wealth in an expanding knowledge economy. The old assumption was that people follow business and investment. We now know the reverse is true. If we build communities where people want to live and work, business and investment follow people.” - [Ontario Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated](#)

Overview of Recommendations and Actions

The Centre Wellington Cultural Action Plan includes three theme areas – People, Places, and Potential. These themes speak to the current cultural climate and quality of life in Centre Wellington as well its future prosperity. Goals and actions have been identified for each theme area.

PEOPLE

Goal 1 Encourage and facilitate connections between the Municipality, cultural stakeholders, community groups and other partners

Goal 2 Promote and support cultural activities and events

PLACES

Goal 1 Preserve and celebrate our heritage through enhanced awareness and appreciation efforts

Goal 2 Build and enhance community cultural spaces

POTENTIAL

Goal 1 Integrate culture into municipal planning and decision making processes

Goal 2 Expand tourism opportunities

Goal 3 Optimize and leverage the contribution of culture to Centre Wellington's Economy

Cultural Kudos

From the information collected during the cultural planning process, it is clear that the Municipality has already been involved in support and promotion of culture within our community but that this has not always been broadly communicated. Cultural Kudos acknowledges the Municipalities involvement in the following areas:

- Parks and Recreation Department is systematically implementing the recommendations from its Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan such as:
 - Increasing cultural and sports programming for all ages and abilities;
 - Expanding spaces for Seniors and Youth (including a focus on youth-at-risk and youth with special needs);
 - Introducing community gathering spaces including a splash pad and a community garden;
 - Promoting accessibility of community spaces including parks;
 - Expanding Spring and Fall Leisure sign up sessions to include additional cultural/ community groups;
 - Completing improvements to the Fergus Grand Theatre and increasing its capacity based on the direction of the Fergus Grand Theatre Business Plan;
 - Development of a Centre Wellington Trails Master Plan; and
 - Bissel Park and Victoria Park (Elora) developments
- The Centre Wellington Official Plan recognizes culture in several areas including Cultural Heritage; Natural Heritage; Parks and Recreation; and Tourism (see Culture Page on Centre Wellington website for a copy of the Official Plan with culture highlights)
- More specifically the Official Plan refers to the following:
 - Downtown revitalization and riverfront development initiatives;
 - Urban Design guidelines;
 - Protection of heritage spaces and features; and
 - Support of mixed use building and residential live work situations
- The Economic Development Department is actively following up on recommendations from their Strategic Plan, including:
 - Signage to improve way finding for community spaces;
 - Updating existing marketing materials for “Creative Centre Wellington” including a community profile and brand using video, web and social media and print messaging to promote investing in/moving to Centre Wellington; and
 - Initiation of a Business Retention and Expansion Project with a goal of sustaining business and quality of life for business owners in Centre Wellington in 2013
- Promotion of festivals and events

- Support and promotion of agri-tourism initiatives (for example Taste Real)
- Collaboration on tourism initiatives with County, Regional, Grand River Country and Ontario Tourism Marketing partners
- Annual celebration of heritage with Doors Open events
- Approval for Heritage Centre Wellingtons recently revised Heritage Properties Registry and its promotion on the Heritage Centre Wellington webpage
- Support for the county wide Active Transportation Plan by Council
- Promotion of accessible and energy efficient cultural and community spaces
- Communication of cultural happenings and grant opportunities
- Culture page on the Municipal site with a focus on sharing information regarding the Cultural Plan
- Radio and television interviews and programs to keep residents informed of Municipal news and events
- Promotion of historic walking tours, self guided and guided, which share the stories of our heritage buildings and the history of our community
- Continuing to showcase Centre Wellington cultural assets and local products to outside markets and exploring new and unique ways of achieving such promotion
- Introduction of Culture Days celebrations to build awareness and encourage participation in local cultural activities
- Council participation at cultural activities and events
- Support for initiatives such as the KIPP Bread Oven, Lighting of the Falls in Fergus, Greenspace Elora, Elora Sculpture project among others

While this list is not complete, it demonstrates that Centre Wellington is well positioned to further the community's cultural vision. The Township's activities are in addition to the extensive cultural initiatives led by cultural and community groups, all of which are crucial to the cultural vitality of Centre Wellington.



Recommendations

Recognizing the need for the Plan to transition from conceptual findings to actions, the table below provides recommendations for action.

While exploring the recommended actions, it should be noted that the lead for the implementation of the Cultural Action Plan is the Community Services Department. In addition, budget implications have not been specified and are to be included as part of future annual budget processes, as each recommended action is reviewed and budgeted for.

For each of the three theme areas, a goal is highlighted followed by the following:

- **Action** – clearly worded recommendation for action consistent with project findings
- **Who to Engage** - recognizing Community Services as the lead department, this section proposes other Municipal or community partners to be considered to support each action
- **Timeframe to Implement** – recognition that recommended actions need to be phased in:
 - Quick win! (within 1 year)
 - Short term (1-3 years)
 - Mid term (3-7 years)
 - Long term (greater than 7 years)

Depending on opportunities that may arise, the recommended actions may move forward more quickly or more slowly.

- **Measure of Success** – the completed task/activity that will demonstrate successful completion of the action.

PEOPLE

Goal 1 Encourage and Facilitate Connections between the Municipality, Cultural Stakeholders, Community Groups and other Partners

Action	Who To Engage	Time Frame to Implement	Measure of Success
Host a launch of the Cultural Action Plan to engage and build momentum among Municipality, community leaders, cultural stakeholders, and business regarding implementation of the Plan	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders Community at large	Quick win!	Groups and community engaged in implementing plan
Refine Cultural Map and promote its use as a networking, communication and collaboration tool	Cultural Stakeholders Community at large	Quick win!	Map use optimized
Actively engage Parks, Recreation and Culture Advisory committee in dialogue regarding Cultural Action Plan implementation	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders Parks, Recreation & Culture Advisory Committee	Quick win!	Committee engaged in implementing plan
Offer professional development opportunities using in house and external resources to cultural and community groups (e.g. navigating municipal systems, bylaws etc)	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders Chamber of Commerce	Short term	Information/ professional development opportunities offered
Play a leadership role in researching and communicating new partnering and funding opportunities to increase the capacity and financial viability/ sustainability of cultural groups	Cultural Stakeholders	Short term	Information shared as found
Partner with cultural and community groups to provide special cultural programming (e.g. free concerts in the park) to facilitate interactions between Municipality, community groups and organizations	Cultural Stakeholders Community at large	Mid term	Partner on 1 event each year in addition to current events
Explore options for shared transportation services for cultural events/activities e.g. use of seniors bus to transport youth to arts activities	Wellington Transportation Services	Mid Term	Transportation options reviewed for potential opportunities
Strengthen relationship with Volunteer Centre and explore local service needs to increase number and capacity of community volunteers	Municipal Departments Volunteer Centre of Guelph Wellington	Mid Term	Needs identified Support received in recruiting volunteers

PEOPLE

Goal 2 Promote and Support Cultural Activities and Events

Action	Who To Engage	Time Frame to Implement	Measure of Success
Use Municipal Cultural webpage and Cultural Map as communication tool for cultural information in conjunction with Municipal and community tourism websites	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders Community at large	Quick win!	Information communicated
Examine arts and cultural granting processes - evaluate for impact in a fair and equitable way and promote broadly	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders	Short term	Policy reviewed and revised as necessary
Review sign bylaws for opportunities to improve support for and promotion of cultural activities and events	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders	Short term	Amendments made as necessary
Improve communication and information sharing between Municipality and community by identifying Municipal contact person and designing an easy to navigate resource (hard copy and web based) regarding delivery of cultural events and activities	Municipal Departments	Short term	Communication optimized and resource manual created
Develop and promote a cultural portal (or similar tool/technology) for sharing cultural information including a community wide calendar of events and directory of groups	Cultural Stakeholders Community at large	Long term	Portal up and running

PLACES

Goal 1 Preserve and Celebrate our Heritage through Enhanced Awareness & Appreciation Efforts

Action	Who To Engage	Time Frame to Implement	Measure of Success
Expand the Cultural Map to include story telling and photos	Municipal Departments Heritage Centre Wellington Wellington County Historical Society Community at large Older Voices Walking Tours	Short term	Stories and photos included on Cultural Map
Explore and provide awareness building opportunities regarding local heritage for Centre Wellington residents (youth in particular) and visitors, including using interpretive signage; QR codes and <i>murmur</i> oral history documentaries as well as presentations and workshops	Municipal Departments Heritage Centre Wellington Wellington County Historical Society Centre Wellington District Highschool	Short term	Increased awareness with new signs and presentations
Examine the potential of establishing an incentive program to protect, enhance and increase public awareness of heritage resources by initiating a reduction or refund of taxes for designated heritage buildings in accordance with Provincial legislation (Community Improvement Plan)	Municipal Departments Heritage Centre Wellington	Mid term	Incentive program(s) introduced

PLACES

Goal 2 Build and Enhance Community Cultural Spaces

Action	Who To Engage	Time Frame to Implement	Measure of Success
Promote downtown cores as destinations by initiating Community Improvement Plan, taking it to Council for approval and promoting broadly to encourage investment	Planning and Development Department Business Improvement Associations	Quick Win!	Plan approved and incentive program started
Facilitate discussion to support expanding public art throughout the municipality including rural areas and introducing the use of functional art (e.g. bike racks, benches, etc.)	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders Community at large	Short term	Increase in public and functional art
Promote the use of Municipal and other community spaces for cultural pursuits by creating an inventory and communicating availability	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders	Short term	Inventory created and communicated
Review existing Municipal facilities and spaces for ways to improve user experience (e.g. benches, washrooms, recycling, picnic tables, plantings etc.)	Municipal Departments	Mid term	Improvements made as necessary
Explore options for additional space for cost effective use by community/cultural groups with priority consideration given to the creation of a mixed use space containing meeting and administrative space, storage, rehearsal and event areas	Municipal Departments Cultural Stakeholders Community Groups	Long term	Mixed use community cultural space
Provide support in the development of existing non-Municipal cultural spaces/facilities to improve function and viability, including but not limited to capital investment, grant support, in kind support and partnership opportunities	Cultural Stakeholders Community Groups	Long term	Improved cultural spaces/facilities

POTENTIAL

Goal 1 Integrate Culture into Municipal Planning and Decision Making

Action	Who To Engage	Time Frame to Implement	Measure of Success
Present findings from Municipal Cultural Planning Project to Municipal Departments for consideration	Municipal Departments	Quick win!	Information shared
Share information, resources and best practises related to cultural planning on an ongoing basis	Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated Other Municipalities	Short term	Up to date on information and best practises
Provide ongoing updates on Cultural Action Plan on Municipal website and develop a Cultural Action Plan ``report card`` to deliver to Council and community on annual basis including Cultural Kudos	Municipal Departments	Short term	Reporting in place and actions being completed
Integrate cultural objectives into the Official Plan and other planning initiatives as part of Plan reviews and updates	Municipal Departments	Mid term	Culture integrated into planning initiatives

“The only way Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP) works is if it becomes the responsibility of everyone – from planners, to economic development and tourism officers, to staff from parks and recreation, public works, and so on. All these people must be familiar with MCP principles and tools and learn from leading practise in other municipalities.” - [AuthentiCity](#)

POTENTIAL

Goal 2 Expand Tourism Opportunities

Action	Who To Engage	Time Frame to Implement	Measure of Success
Develop programs to engage the Centre Wellington resident tourist market as a priority market ("hometown tourists" and visiting friends and relatives)	Municipal Departments Tourism Stakeholders	Short term	Increased local tourism
Expand cultural and heritage tourism initiatives as a priority experience	Municipal Departments Heritage and Historical Groups	Short term	Increased tourism
Develop and promote shoulder season programming to encourage year-round attraction of visitors as well as ongoing local participation and engagement	Municipal Departments Tourism Stakeholders Regional Tourism Partners	Mid term	Increased tourism

POTENTIAL

Goal 3 Optimize & Leverage the Contribution of Culture to Centre Wellingtons Economy

Action	Who To Engage	Time Frame to Implement	Measure of Success
Use Cultural Map as an economic development tool to guide planning and marketing efforts	Municipal Departments Geographic Information Systems	Short term	Cultural Map used effectively
Identify funding opportunities to support cultural initiatives (for example grants, private investment etc)	Cultural Stakeholders	Short term	Funding support
Examine opportunities to align Centre Wellington's Cultural Action Plan with neighbouring communities and Wellington County to enhance opportunities for funding and implement cross-border initiatives	County of Wellington Neighbouring communities	Mid term	Development of partnerships and cross border initiatives
Encourage Wellington County to enhance investment in culture on a regional basis	County of Wellington	Mid term	County investment

Key Priorities Necessary For Cultural Action Plan Success

Leadership & Collaboration – The Municipality must play a leadership role and explore opportunities to collaborate and partner with community groups for the success and sustainability of the cultural community and the community in general. This does not necessarily mean funding. This does not mean do it for the community. It is the opportunity to innovate and share responsibility for culture while developing a supportive environment in which culture thrives.

Communication – Consistently raised during the planning process was the feeling of “disconnect” between the Municipality, cultural groups and community. It will be essential in moving the plan forward that actions, successes, and general information be communicated broadly in a clear and concise manner.

Commitment versus Complacency - Centre Wellington is great but it could be fantastic. Communities all around us are capitalizing on and investing in their cultural assets. To be progressive the community of Centre Wellington must do the same.

Dedicated Resources for Implementation - Instrumental to the success of the Cultural Action Plan are Municipal resources dedicated to its implementation. During the engagement process, it was noted repeatedly that without committed resources to move the plan forward it would “sit on a shelf.”

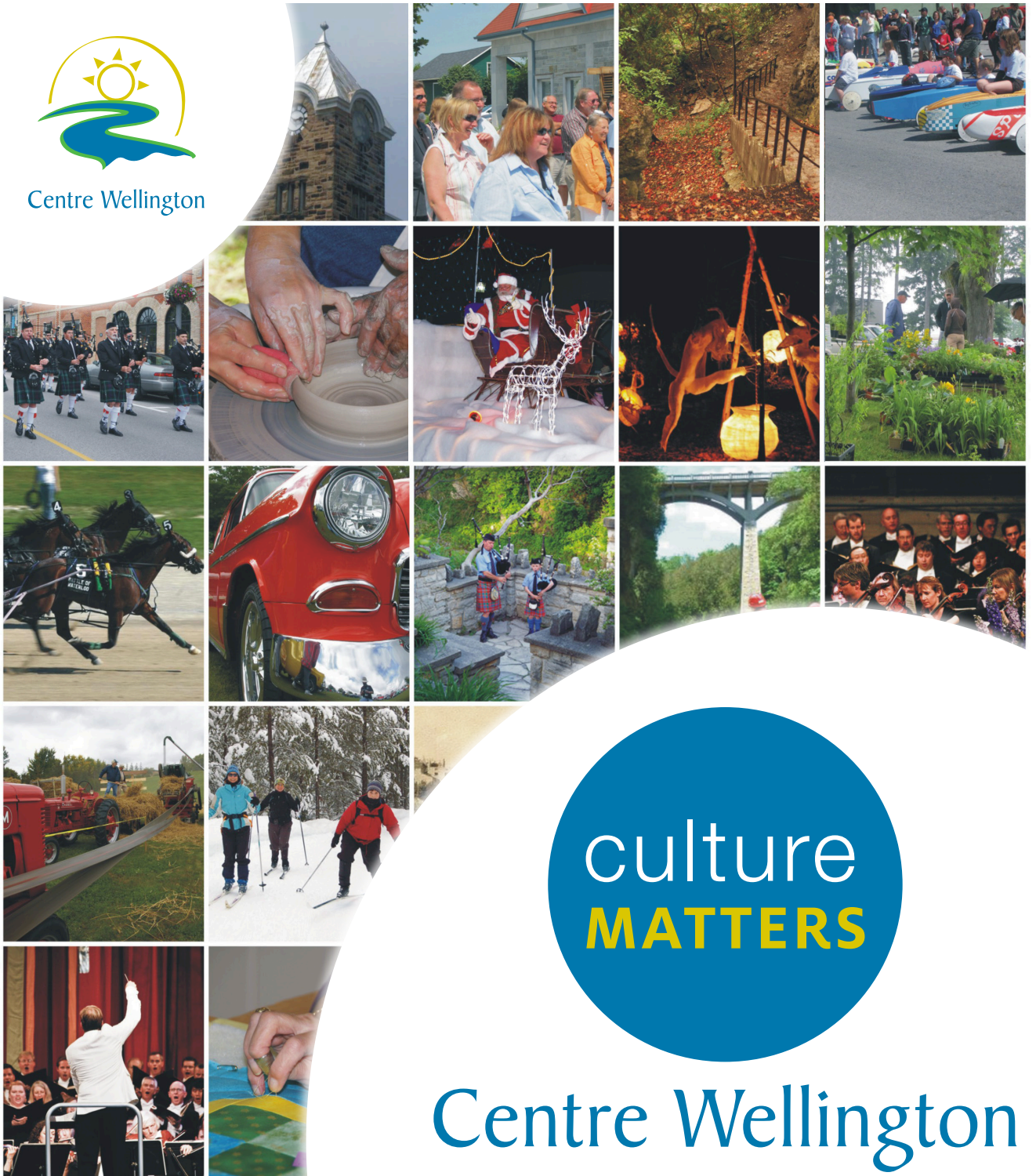
At the start of the Cultural Planning process, the Economic Development Department was responsible for the implementation of the plan. Since that time, the Township has undergone an Organizational Restructuring. Culture has a broad reach and is significant for both community quality of life and economic prosperity. With the new organizational structure, culture will be situated within the Community Services Department. New or existing staff should be designated to advance the recommended actions noted in the plan.

Nurturing Community Pride – When the community is happy, visitors take note and want to be a part of that. By moving forward on actions related to our current community we directly impact future economic growth.

Accountability - An annual cultural report must be submitted to Council and the community to demonstrate movement and accountability with respect to the Cultural Action Plan.



Centre Wellington



culture
MATTERS

Centre Wellington

