



SUBJECT: Arts and Culture Strategy – approval of funding

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture

Report Number: RCC-15-24

Wards Affected: all

Date to Committee: July 8, 2024

Date to Council: July 16, 2024

Recommendation:

Authorize the Chief Financial Officer to transfer \$150,000 from the Cultural Initiatives Fund to be used to hire a consultant to lead the Arts and Culture Strategy as outlined in recreation, community and culture report RCC-15-24.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Designing and delivering complete communities
- Providing the best services and experiences
- Driving organizational performance

Executive Summary

The City of Burlington approved its first Cultural Action Plan in 2013. This Plan is due for an update and a new Arts and Culture Strategy is required to meet the needs of a growing and changing city. Working in collaboration with the Culture Boards and community stakeholders, the Arts and Culture Strategy will create a unified, city-wide vision for arts and culture in Burlington paired with a detailed action plan and funding strategy.

Background and Discussion:

The Arts and Culture team is developing a new Arts and Culture Strategy to guide the next decade of Burlington's arts and culture services, policy and programming. This Strategy will leverage the city's cultural assets, recommend specific ways that arts and culture can improve livability and prosperity in Burlington, and outline tangible steps to maintain and create cultural spaces and places through facilities, festivals and events, public art and placemaking, and arts and culture programming. The Arts and Culture Strategy will engage the Culture Boards and arts and culture-related joint ventures as valued partners in the delivery of arts and culture services across Burlington.

The Arts and Culture section develops, provides, and supports arts and cultural services, programs and events with the following goals:

- Increase Commitment to Arts and Culture
- Coordinate Strategic Directions with Cultural Boards
- Support the Arts and Culture Sector
- Maintain Event Quality and Support Community Festivals
- Offer Diverse Arts and Cultural Programs
- Develop and Implement Public Art Program

The work of the Arts and Culture section has been guided by the Cultural Action Plan, which was adopted by Council in 2013. This plan is now expired and there is a need for a new strategy to guide the next ten years of arts and culture policy, programming and sector development across Burlington. The need for a new Arts and Culture Strategy is driven by:

- **Population growth and change:** To best serve Burlington's growing and changing population, it is important to undertake detailed demographic analysis and public engagement to identify emerging trends, programming, and service priorities. This work will allow the Arts and Culture team to prioritize equity and ensure that residents in all corners of the city have meaningful opportunities to engage with arts and culture.
- **Alignment with current and upcoming planning processes:** The City of Burlington is developing a variety of capital projects, policies and plans that intersect with the Arts and Culture section. This includes, but it is not limited to, Live and Play Plan, Festivals & Events Policy, Robert Bateman Community Centre, All In – Community Centres for Community, Accountability Framework for Boards, Agencies and Joint Ventures, Framework for Recreation, etc. It is

important to look at these plans holistically to ensure that the Arts and Culture service can best support these projects and initiatives, leverage resources and prevent the duplication of services.

- **Support of the arts and culture sector:** The arts and culture sector contributes to the local economy by providing employment opportunities, driving tourism and culture spending and helping to create a livable city. To ensure that this sector can continue to grow and thrive in Burlington, it is important to undertake a service delivery review to ensure that the programs, services, and supports being offered align with current and future needs.

Strategy/process/risk

The purpose of the Arts and Culture Strategy is to create a unified, city-wide vision for arts and culture in Burlington. Working closely with the Culture Boards and community partners, this Strategy will include a robust public engagement process by gathering information, insights and feedback from the public, arts and culture sector workers and organizations. Once the overall vision for arts and culture is established, the Strategy will outline specific recommendations pertaining to a broad range of arts and culture initiatives including programming, cultural facilities, creative sector development, placemaking and public art, funding programs, and partnerships with the Culture Boards.

The Arts and Culture Strategy will contain the following key sections:

1. **Background and Current Context:** Internal Literature Review (City of Burlington and Culture Boards), Comparable Cities Review, City of Burlington Demographics Analysis, Arts and Culture Benchmarking Report.
2. **Service Delivery Review:** Scan of City of Burlington arts and culture programs and services (i.e., Burlington Arts and Culture Fund, Public Art, Film Permit Strategy, Student Theatre, Music Centre, arts and culture-related recreation programming) as well as Culture Boards and culture-related Joint Ventures programs and services. This scan will identify gaps, areas of duplication and opportunities for growth. Recommendations will be developed based on the service delivery review, demographics analysis and community and stakeholder engagement.
3. **Festivals and Events:** Provide strategic and operational recommendations to advance the new Festivals and Events Policy, including funding strategies, staff resourcing, and roles and responsibilities of the Festivals and Events office.

- 4. Arts and Culture Places and Spaces:** Evaluate Burlington's current arts and culture infrastructure assets and make recommendations to support future needs, aligned to the Live and Play Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, Robert Bateman Community Centre, multi-use spaces within existing facilities, exploration of a cultural hub in Central Park (replacing Student Theatre and Music Centre), as recommended in the Live and Play Plan, and animation of public spaces such as Civic Square and public parks.
- 5. Action Plan:** Provide a clear set of actionable and measurable recommendations with 3, 5, and 10-year benchmarks and detailed costing. The Strategy will articulate roles and responsibilities for the Arts and Culture section, Culture Boards and community organizations. An annual Arts and Culture Report will be provided to Council and the community to report back on the progress of the Strategy.

This project will begin in the fall of 2024 and is expected to conclude in late spring 2026 at which point a report will be brought to council for their endorsement of the strategy.

Options Considered

The following options were considered as a result of the information contained in this report:

- 1. Maintain status quo:** Continue with current Arts and Culture service in the absence of current demographic analysis and community input. Maintain existing City of Burlington programs and services.
 - 2. Develop a strategy limited to City-provided arts and culture services:** Develop a strategy that is limited in scope to City-provided programs and services. This would reduce the participation of the Culture Boards and limit the ability of the consultant and City staff to provide city-wide recommendations based on detailed data and analysis.
 - 3. Develop an inclusive, city-wide Arts and Culture Strategy:** Working in partnership with the Culture Boards and community partners, develop a city-wide vision for arts and culture in Burlington. Informed by in-depth research, demographics analysis and community engagement, the Arts and Culture Strategy will provide a holistic plan for the arts and culture sector in Burlington.
-

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

Total estimated financial impact to complete this work is \$150,000. A competitive RFP process will be undertaken to secure this work.

Source of Funding

Funding required for this project is available in the Culture Initiatives Reserve Fund (balance as of December 31, 2023 is \$192,239).

Other Resource Impacts

N/A

Climate Implications:

The Arts and Culture Strategy will follow best practices where applicable. All stakeholder and public engagement activities will be designed to minimize environmental impact. The consultant will be directed to ensure that all recommendations contained in the Strategy align with the Strategic Plan.

Engagement Matters:

The Arts and Culture Strategy will be informed by multiple engagements with the Culture Boards, arts and culture sector and broader community. It is anticipated that the following core groups will be engaged in the Arts and Culture Strategy:

- **Key Stakeholder Engagement:** Including, but not limited to, Mayor and Members of Council, key City of Burlington staff, Culture Boards leadership and community stakeholders (i.e., culture-related joint ventures, key cultural organizations, etc.).
- **Targeted User Groups:** Creative engagement of Culture Boards' user groups.
- **Individual Artists and Creative Sector** Artists, creative sector workers and small arts and culture organizations.
- **Broad Public Engagement:** Extensive public engagement will be the cornerstone of the Arts and Culture Strategy. This will include a mix of online

surveys via Get Involved and a variety of creative engagement opportunities built into existing festivals, busy community centres, etc.

Conclusion:

A new Arts and Culture Strategy is an important tool to guide the next decade of the City of Burlington's arts and culture services, policies, and programming. A collaborative and planned approach with the Culture Boards, community partners and residents will ensure that the cultural landscape in Burlington meets the needs of a growing and more culturally diverse population. Further, the Strategy will leverage resources, ensure that programs and services are not being duplicated, and create a clear action plan that will continue to make Burlington a place where culture and community can thrive.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Selman

Arts and Culture Planner

Angela Paparizo

Manager, Arts and Culture

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.