



Shaping Barrie's Cultural Future

Culture Plan Update &
Public Art Strategy



Land Acknowledgement

The City of Barrie acknowledges the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg people, which include the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Pottawatomi Nations collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. We also acknowledge the Wendat Nation (Huron) who occupied these lands prior to the middle of the 17th century.

We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture and recognize the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples on this land. We are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit People.

Thank You

This project was made possible with support from Barrie’s Economic & Creative Development and Recreation & Culture Services departments, the Barrie Arts Advisory Committee, the Barrie Public Art Committee, and the dedicated creatives, cultural leaders, and organizations whose passion and vision are driving Barrie’s cultural future forward.

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Executive Summary

The City of Barrie’s *Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy* outlines a transformative 10-year vision (2025–2035) designed to strengthen and build resilience in the city’s cultural sector while integrating arts and culture into various aspects of city-building. Building on the foundations of Barrie’s first culture plan, *Building a Creative Future (2006)*, the Culture Plan Update aims to address current challenges in the culture sector while responding to shifting dynamics in population, culture, tourism, and reconciliation to support a thriving and resilient cultural landscape.

Developed over a year with extensive community engagement and research, the plan reaffirms the City’s commitment to inclusivity, creativity, and sustainability, ensuring Barrie remains a vibrant cultural hub as it continues to grow and diversify. With insights gathered from over 725 participants, community engagement highlighted the urgent need for more cultural venues, improved financial stability for creatives, enhanced public awareness of cultural opportunities, and expanding public art opportunities across the city. Moreover, background research and benchmarking identified key trends and opportunities to leverage, including capitalizing on unique cultural offerings to support tourism and economic development, building resilience within the sector through creative collaborations, advancing reconciliation with Indigenous communities, and reflecting shifting demographics and digital innovation.

To address community feedback and align the City of Barrie with current best practices and cultural trends, the plan consists of two interconnected parts: a new **Culture Plan** which provides a framework for sustainable cultural development over the next 10 years, and a **Public Art Strategy**, which builds on this foundation to advance public art across the city.

PART 1

Culture Plan

The updated Culture Plan is anchored by an aspirational vision and guiding principles that articulate Barrie’s cultural identity and values:

Vision

“Barrie will be a celebrated beacon of cultural richness and a year-round destination. Rooted in diversity and inclusivity, culture will reflect and welcome everyone in Barrie’s growing population, flourishing throughout the city.”

Guiding Principles:

Accessibility and Awareness:

Ensuring physical, financial, and social access to cultural opportunities while raising awareness.

Championing Local Talent:

Elevating Barrie’s creatives and cultural leaders.

Collaboration and Community:

Fostering partnerships to strengthen the cultural ecosystem.

Diversity and Representation:

Reflecting the voices of Barrie’s diverse population.

Innovation and Creativity:

Embracing forward-thinking approaches to cultural development.

Indigenous Reconciliation and Futures:

Strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities and celebrating their cultural practices.

Sustainability and Resilience:

Building capacity for long-term cultural stability and growth.

A Closer Look at Barrie’s Cultural Priorities

The City of Barrie is guided by six strategic priorities to achieve its vision for a vibrant cultural future. These priorities are supported by specific goals and actionable recommendations to address current challenges and foster growth in Barrie’s arts and culture sector. All actions under the six strategic priorities are categorized into:

Ongoing Actions:

Initiatives the City is currently working on and can expand.

Immediate Actions:

Short-term, high-impact initiatives to undertake over the next 1–3 years.

Future Initiatives:

Longer-term strategies to be pursued once a strong foundation and momentum are established.

An **Arts and Culture Action Plan** outlines roles and resources required for each action.

**Priority 1:
Fostering a Resilient
and Thriving Creative
Community**

Strengthens cultural resilience by supporting the individuals and organizations driving Barrie’s creative sector. It focuses on nurturing local talent, fostering collaboration, and building a sustainable creative ecosystem. Actions include capacity building, celebrating Barrie’s cultural strengths, and providing financial and strategic support to creatives and organizations to ensure long-term growth and self-sufficiency.

**Priority 2:
Supporting Spaces
for Culture to Thrive**

Enhances access to affordable, appropriate, and functional cultural spaces and infrastructure. By revitalizing public spaces, establishing a downtown Cultural District, and improving citywide venue access, it strengthens the physical and social environments needed for culture to prosper and grow across Barrie.

**Priority 3:
Making Culture
Accessible to All**

Ensures that cultural opportunities in Barrie are inclusive, affordable, and physically accessible. Actions focus on centralizing information about cultural events and opportunities, improving mobility options, and expanding affordable programming, particularly for equity-deserving groups.

**Priority 4:
Celebrating Barrie’s
Cultural Diversity**

Ensures that culture reflects Barrie’s growing and evolving communities by amplifying diverse voices, traditions, and heritage. It supports events, festivals, and cultural programs that highlight multicultural and underrepresented groups to foster cross-cultural understanding and community pride.

**Priority 5:
Furthering Reconciliation
and Supporting Indigenous
Futures**

Aligns with the objectives of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* by fostering collaboration and relationships with Indigenous communities to authentically represent their cultures, heritage, and traditions across Barrie. It promotes Indigenous art, events, and educational initiatives while strengthening relationships through reconciliation-focused actions.

**Priority 6:
Becoming a
Culture-Friendly
Municipality**

Embeds arts and culture into city operations by leveraging municipal resources, aligning cultural initiatives with city-building efforts, and fostering collaboration across departments to position Barrie as a champion of culture.

Integrating a Public Art Strategy

Building on Barrie's recent achievements in public art, including an expanding public art presence and the addition of a part-time public art coordinator, the Public Art Strategy defines a 10-year and guiding principles to shape new public art projects, while recommending an updated governance model that aligns municipal roles, funding, and acquisition processes with best practices. This strategy serves as a roadmap for City staff, enabling Barrie to maximize the economic and social benefits of public art by strengthening the city's identity, fostering a sense of place, activating public spaces year-round, and contributing to positive economic outcomes.

The strategy proposes a new vision for public art in Barrie:

“Public art will become a defining feature of Barrie's identity and its communities, celebrating local talent while positioning Barrie as a cultural destination that attracts national and international artists.”

Guiding principles for public art include:

- Public Art in Every Ward
- Create a Diverse Public Art Program
- Support Local Artists
- Collaborate with Indigenous Peoples
- Attract National and International Talent
- Promote Equity and Inclusion
- Engage the Community
- Promote Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

Supporting Barrie's public art vision and guiding principles, the Public Art Strategy includes a Curatorial Framework that provides direction for commissioning and acquiring new works. It outlines key themes, public art typologies, and priority locations. Additionally, an Implementation Guide further details artist selection processes, community engagement, municipal roles, funding strategies, and updates to the Barrie Public Art Policy (2012). In parallel with the Culture Plan, a Public Art Action Plan identifies immediate and long-term initiatives to advance public art across the city.

A Closer Look at Public Art Location Typologies

Four key location typologies were identified to guide future permanent and temporary public art programming:



Community and Cultural Facilities: Barrie's public facilities, such as community centres and cultural venues, serve as essential gathering spaces within the city. Integrating public art into these locations can strengthen community bonds, celebrate diversity, and enrich the cultural experiences available to residents and visitors. Additionally, opportunities also exist for public spaces like Meridian Place and City Hall, which serve as central community gathering spaces for all of Barrie.



The Waterfront: The waterfront is a prime location for public art, with its existing collection of monumental pieces, multi-use trails, and year-round attractions. Opportunities for art include developing art trails, seasonal installations, and new landmarks that highlight Barrie's unique character and enhance the waterfront experience.



Parks and Natural Spaces: Barrie has 300 hectares of scenic park space, which is beloved by community members for its passive uses, playgrounds, community gardens, trails, beaches, and sports fields. In these spaces, artwork can serve to engage new audiences (i.e., those who are typically involved in recreational activities), further community connection and highlight unique natural features in Barrie.



Corridors and Gateways: Engaging people while in motion—whether through bike networks, pedestrian pathways, or key access points into the city or neighbourhoods. Art in these areas can create a sense of welcome and orientation, transforming transit routes and entry points to enhance the journey for commuters and visitors alike.

Introduction



Art & Culture:
Barrie's Heartbeat

How this Plan
was Developed

Art & Culture: Barrie’s Heartbeat

Located on the picturesque shores of Kempenfelt Bay, with its beautiful trails, beaches, and natural heritage systems, the city of Barrie prides itself as a great place to live and raise a family, with a strong sense of community, quality of life, and a rich cultural heritage and history. As Ontario’s largest city north of the Greenbelt, it serves as a regional hub with 159,521 residents, with this population projected to reach 298,000 by 2051.



The Horn and the Heart, by John McEwen, 2020. Photo Credit: Andre Beneteau.

At the core of Barrie is its downtown – the city’s cultural and economic heart. With its historic architecture, shops, cafés, and restaurants, downtown Barrie also boasts key cultural institutions like the MacLaren Art Centre and Five Points Theatre, and popular gathering spaces such as Meridian Place. It is also the main access point to the city’s celebrated waterfront and trail system, where public art and year-round events bring the community together.

Cultural assets such as those in Barrie’s downtown not only yield important economic benefits, but they also give a city its creative pulse — **a cultural ‘heartbeat’** that connects communities, gives a sense of identity, and turns spaces into places.

As Barrie grows and evolves, its arts and culture sector will require careful care and support to stay healthy, and ensure that this ‘heartbeat’ continues to be felt downtown, and radiate outward to every other neighbourhood.

The Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy aims to guide and support the City of Barrie in this mission, by outlining key priorities and actions to shape Barrie’s cultural future over the next 10 years.

How this Plan was Developed

Objectives

Barrie’s *Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy* are the culmination of a year-long process undertaken by the City of Barrie to develop a 10-year vision (2025-2035) and action plan to guide future City decisions, policies, programs, and investment. This process aimed to strengthen local culture connections and the creative sector across the city, and was guided by the following objectives:

- ✓ Build upon and update the 2006 *Culture Plan* to reflect new realities.
- ✓ Understand and assess current and past initiatives to support the arts and cultural sector in Barrie.
- ✓ Involve members of the public from all areas of Barrie, as well as contributors to the city’s arts and culture sector, including Indigenous artists, to understand the current state of art and culture and inform future recommendations.
- ✓ Develop a 10-year vision and action plan to identify programs and policies that align with best practices while addressing retention, sustainability, and capacity building.
- ✓ Incorporate a public art strategy that includes a 10-year vision, prioritized locations, governance and funding models, and an action plan.

Process

This initiative was carried out with the support of MASSIVart, a creative placemaking and public art strategy firm, as well as invaluable input from various Municipal stakeholders, members of the public and Barrie’s cultural sector. This Plan is the result of an iterative year-long process comprising four phases between January and December 2024.

Phase 1: Context Analysis (January – April 2024)	Background review of policies, plans, programs, and existing frameworks, discussions with City staff and advisory groups, and benchmarking amongst comparable municipalities to establish an initial foundation of knowledge of the current culture and public art landscape in Barrie.
Phase 2: Community Engagement (April – July 2024)	Community and Cultural Collaborator engagement to ensure that City-wide strategies and policies reflect and respond to the needs and desires of those who live, work, play, learn, and visit Barrie. In total, the project team engaged with over 725 people across pop-up events, online surveys, focus groups, and interviews.
Phase 3: Draft Findings (August – October 2024)	An initial draft of the <i>Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy</i> was developed for review by City staff, with report-back opportunities with those engaged in previous phases to ensure alignment.
Phase 4: Final Report (November 2024 – February 2025)	Refinement and integration of City staff feedback, as well as any preparations required to present recommendations to Council.

Engagement Strategy

Community engagement is essential to ensuring that City-wide strategies and policies in Barrie reflect and respond to the needs and aspirations of those who live, work, play, learn, and visit the city. For Barrie’s *Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy*, engagement took place throughout the development of this report:

Phase 1 – Context Analysis Engagement in this phase involved discussions with Municipal staff and advisory groups, including the Barrie Arts Advisory Committee and the Barrie Public Art Committee. The goal was to assess the City’s current role in the cultural sector and identify key challenges and opportunities in cultural development, public art, and cultural facility management. These conversations led to initial findings which helped to inform the engagement strategy for the next phase.	Phase 3 – Draft Report To re-engage community members and cultural collaborators, while reaching potential new audiences, the City of Barrie staff shared the preliminary Vision, Goals, and Priorities of the <i>Culture Plan Update</i> in an open-house to obtain feedback and guide the final recommended actions. Key insights gathered from the engagement process are summarized in both the <i>Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy</i> sections of this document.
Phase 2 – Community Engagement Building on the preliminary insights from Phase 1, this phase focused on engaging Barrie’s community members and the broader cultural sector while continuing to collaborate with municipal staff.	

The Engagement Process

Engagement tactics were designed to gather a broad spectrum of input and feedback by centering diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility through multiple barrier-free engagement opportunities, travelling across the city to engage different audiences, and utilizing both digital and in-person techniques. The goal of the engagement process was to gather diverse perspectives on the current successes and challenges within Barrie’s arts and culture sector, and to identify a future vision and recommended actions to support its realization. Feedback from this process, combined with research and best practices, informs the <i>Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy</i> .	Target audiences were categorized into the following groups: Municipal Stakeholders: City staff and City advisory groups. Community Members: Barrie residents who live, work, learn, and play in the city, including youth, older adults, newcomers, 2SLGBTQIA+, etc. Cultural Collaborators: Key individuals and groups who have experience with or who are actively involved in art and culture in Barrie.
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In total, 725+ people were engaged

370 community pop-up participants

Seven community engagement “drop-in” events were held at various community spaces and events across Barrie in May and June 2024. These locations and events were strategically selected to ensure a diversity in geographies and demographics of potential participants.



Culture Night Out, 2024. Photo credit: Tanja-Tiziana

181 community survey respondents*

An online survey was shared with the Barrie community via the BuildingBarrie.ca website.

29 cultural collaborator interview participants

Small group interviews (typically consisting of 5 interviewees per group) were held with established and emerging artists and creatives, past and recent recipients of Barrie’s Cultural Development Programs, and various cultural organizations.

74 cultural collaborator survey respondents

A separate survey was specifically developed for and shared with members of Barrie’s arts and culture community.

11 City staff focus group participants

Building off interviews with City staff and advisory groups in Phase 1, MASSIVart hosted a facilitated workshop with City staff to discuss how City departments can take a collaborative approach to supporting art, culture, public art, and events.



Culture Night Out, 2024. Photo credit: Tanja-Tiziana

60+ cultural collaborators attended Culture Night Out

MASSIVart, with the support of the City of Barrie and the MacLaren Art Centre, organized a special edition of Culture Night Out event at the MacLaren on May 28th, 2024 with a focus on gathering feedback to inform the *Culture Plan Update and Public Art Strategy*.

Additionally, the City of Barrie held a drop-in open house on November 7, 2024 that engaged 24 participants, including community members and cultural collaborators. The event gathered feedback to guide the final vision, goals, priorities, and recommended actions, ensuring alignment with community input and helping identify potential gaps. Feedback from the open house was positive, indicating that the Plan aligns with community goals.

*181 community survey responses indicated a relatively low response rate compared to other City of Barrie surveys. However, engagement was successful in reaching diverse audiences through the seven community pop-ups and Culture Night Out saw one of the largest attendances along with new organizations participating.

Culture Plan

The Importance of
Cultural Planning

Policy & Planning Context

Research & Engagement
Insights

Aligning with Sector-Wide
Cultural Trends

The Importance of Cultural Planning

Setting the Stage: Defining “Culture”

While culture typically refers to the collective experiences and traditions of communities, for the purposes of Barrie’s Culture Plan, it is defined as creative activities that support the local economy and community. This encompasses various forms of artistic expression, including visual art, performance art, literary art, film and new media, culinary art, as well as physical spaces like galleries, museums, studios, theatres, restaurants, and other intangible sources of culture such as artists, creatives, and community organizations.

The Impact of Culture¹

The culture sector is a vital component of the Canadian economy, and major source of wellbeing for Canadians.

As a whole, the sector contributes \$60 billion towards Canada’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In Ontario, the culture sector contributes \$27 billion to the provincial GDP and supports 254,985 jobs. Culture is also a major driver of tourism, with arts and culture trips generating nearly three times the economic impact of non-arts and culture trips. Cultural tourists not only spend more but also stay longer with 40% of their trips lasting three days or more, compared to just 13% for other visitors.

Arts and culture also shape a city’s identity, making it distinct and attractive to residents and business. 80% of Ontarians agree that a local arts scene helps communities attract businesses, and 65% of skilled workers agree that a thriving arts and culture scene is something they look for when moving to a new community.

Beyond economic benefits, the arts enrich quality of life, improve health and wellbeing, create a greater sense of belonging and stronger communities, boost civic engagement, and support the livelihoods of our youth and older adults. Notably, over 90% of Ontarians believe that arts activities enrich their lives, and active local art scenes help make a community a better place to live.

Given these outcomes, municipalities that prioritize culture as a core element of city-building lay the foundation for lively, inclusive, and prosperous communities that are set apart by distinct identities and a strong sense of place.

The Role of Culture Plans

Cultural plans are essential tools for municipalities to help identify cultural assets, and strategically align municipal resources to support broader community goals and visions around art and culture.

Barrie’s municipal cultural plan supports:

Growing a Sustainable Creative Sector: Strengthens cross-sector partnerships, enhances support for cultural spaces and organizations, expands audiences and access to culture, and raises the visibility of arts and culture. A thriving creative sector attracts and retains local talent while generating local jobs and career growth opportunities.

Bolstering Cultural Tourism and Economic Development: Aligns City resources to support arts and culture, positioning Barrie as a recognized regional and national cultural destination. This attracts visitors, stimulates the local economy, supports local artists, entrepreneurs, and small businesses, while creating jobs in cultural and adjacent industries such as hospitality, technology, and manufacturing.

Fostering Local Pride: Strengthens communities by reducing social exclusion, empowering residents, and cultivating pride in place.

Promoting Social Well-Being: Inspires local leadership and grassroots cultural activity, fosters social cohesion, and improves mental wellness by building strong community connections.

Cultural Equity: Ensures cultural initiatives reflect and celebrate Barrie’s diversity, providing equity-deserving groups with access to culturally relevant experiences and promoting inclusivity and cross-cultural connections.

Informed Policy-Making: Helps base decisions on research and community input to align policies with best practices, community needs, and aspirations while supporting municipal strategic priorities and planning objectives.

¹Read more on the impact of culture in Ontario and beyond:

Ontario Arts Council. Impact of the Arts in Ontario: <https://www.arts.on.ca/research-impact/impact-of-the-arts-in-ontario>
Ontario Arts council. (2023). Tourism Profile: <https://www.arts.on.ca/news-resources/news/2023/new-report-arts-and-culture-tourism-in-ontario-has-triple-the-economic-impact>
Thornton, K. (2025). How Can Cities Scale Up Creative Approaches to Health. World Cities Culture Forum: <https://worldcitiescultureforum.com/2025/01/15/how-can-cities-scale-up-creative-approaches-to-health/>
Ontario Arts Council. (2022). Economic Contribution of Arts and Culture in Ontario: <https://www.arts.on.ca/research-impact/research-publications/economic-contribution-of-arts-and-culture-in-ontario-en>
Vital Signs. Arts & Belonging: https://communityfoundations.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Vital_Signs_Arts_and_Belonging.pdf
B.C Alliance for Arts + Culture. The Arts and Culture in Canada: <https://www.allianceforarts.com/quick-arts-facts>
Hill Strategies. (2021). Canada’s Arts Participation, Health, and Wellbeing: <https://hillstrategies.com/resource/canadians-arts-participation-health-and-well-being/>

Policy & Planning Context

Cultural Planning

Barrie's First Culture Plan (2006)

Published in 2006, Barrie's first culture plan, *Building a Creative Future*, laid the groundwork for the City's cultural development by establishing the Municipality as an advocate for the arts and creating a Culture Department. The Plan outlined objectives that provided a ten-year direction for the sector, emphasizing the importance of fostering a dynamic arts scene, revitalizing downtown, leveraging culture for economic growth, and enhancing cultural infrastructure.

To ensure sustainable cultural growth, the Plan recommended strategies for capacity building, facility development, and business planning. Notably, it envisioned Barrie's downtown as a cultural hub, projecting over \$1 billion in economic value from cultural activities in the decade following its implementation.

Key successes of the *Building a Creative Future* plan include the completion of 54% of its recommendations, with 41% ongoing and only 5% remaining incomplete. While some critical objectives, particularly in acquiring spaces for cultural activities, are still in progress, these efforts demonstrate the potential to sustain momentum and achieve continued progress in enhancing Barrie's cultural landscape.



The 2006 plan led to several significant achievements, including:

- The establishment of a Department of Culture to support cultural program development and capacity building.
- The creation of the Arts and Culture Investment Fund, which has since expanded to include two streams: Operational; and Project and Capacity Building.
- Establishment of the Barrie Cultural Advisory Committee, which has evolved into the City of Barrie Arts Advisory Committee.
- The development of the Barrie Cultural Recognition Awards, now known as the Barrie Arts Awards.
- The construction of Five Points Theatre, with a seating capacity of 120-200.
- The relocation of Georgian College's Design and Visual arts programs downtown with the construction of The Arch and Helen Brown Design and Digital Arts Centre.

The momentum from the 2006 Culture Plan also fuelled several additional achievements that expanded upon its initial directions, including:

- The development of various programs aimed at supporting emerging artists and musicians in Barrie.
- The creation of a public art policy in 2012, alongside the establishment of the Barrie Public Art Committee (BPAC).
- The hiring of a part-time Public Art Coordinator.
- The integration of the Small Business Centre of Barrie, Simcoe County, and Orillia into the Economic and Creative Development Department, along with the co-location of their offices within the Sandbox Centre, streamlines support for businesses, including creative organizations.

Since 2006, the Department of Culture has evolved. In 2019, cultural oversight was divided between two departments:

- Economic and Creative Development, which oversees cultural business development, Barrie's Cultural Development Programs, and Public Art Program.
- Recreation and Culture Services, which oversees the programming and management of Barrie's cultural facilities and venues, including Five Points Theatre and Georgian Theatre, and community events such as Winterfest, Downtown Countdown, the Barrie Airshow, and Game On!

Shaping Culture in a Growing City

As the 2006 Plan term concludes and Barrie enters a period of significant growth, updating the plan is essential to ensure the city remains an attractive, inclusive, and prosperous community for all. Alongside Barrie's increasingly diverse population, a new plan must ensure that everyone has access to local cultural experiences that make them feel reflected, connected, and inspired.

Updating Barrie's culture plan, with a new vision, goals, priorities, and actions, will address current challenges faced by creatives and cultural organizations, while responding to shifting population dynamics, and broader trends in cultural tourism and sustainable development, digital innovation, and Indigenous reconciliation. It provides a framework to help Barrie's cultural landscape thrive and remain resilient amid ongoing growth and global transformations. Over the next decade, this plan will help ensure that culture remains at the heart of Barrie, and its growth.

Policy & Planning Context

City-Wide Plans

The Culture Plan is also shaped by existing City of Barrie plans and policies. Aligning with these frameworks ensures that Barrie’s cultural development is integrated within broader City initiatives, fostering a cohesive approach to growth, and ensuring that culture continues to be a vital part of Barrie’s strategic vision.

City of Barrie Official Plan 2051 (2023)

Barrie’s *Official Plan* sets a community vision, statement of principles, and guidelines for supporting development in the City of Barrie over the next 30 years. Key themes related to culture include:

- Creating a complete and urban city that positively affects social cohesion, the economy, and the built and natural environment. As such, the approach to growth will intensify existing communities where infrastructure and services already exist.
- Prioritizing design excellence leads to a high standard of urban design. This involves animating public streets, which can be utilized to showcase public art and culture in the public realm.
- Supporting arts and culture as a means of creating an attractive city and contributing to economic prosperity.
- Enhancing city pride through public art, cultural programming, and the design and enjoyment of public spaces while celebrating the city’s past.

City of Barrie Strategic Plan 2022–2026

The *Culture Plan Update* Priorities align with City Council’s five goals:

- Affordable Place to Live: The *Culture Plan Update* will support financial accessibility to culture by reducing barriers to participation and encouraging free and low-cost cultural programming.
- Community Safety: Public art is documented to increase community safety and pedestrian safety.
- Thriving Community: The *Culture Plan Update* will champion equity, diversity, and inclusion, support community wellness, foster growth in arts and culture, and contribute to a vibrant downtown.
- Infrastructure Investment: Public art is documented to support active transportation and public transit use.
- Responsible Governance: The *Culture Plan Update* will foster accountability and transparency, find efficiencies, and champion innovation.

City of Barrie Tourism Master Plan (2020)

In alignment with the 10-year framework to support tourism development in Barrie, opportunities for culture includes Prioritizing the waterfront for year-round events; Leveraging live entertainment, music, and arts and culture in Barrie; Celebrating local Indigenous cultural and arts activities; Leveraging culture to support off-season tourism.

Barrie Waterfront Strategic Plan Update (2023)

The *Barrie Waterfront Strategic Plan* provides a clear vision and road map for Barrie’s waterfront, including opportunities for cultural development and public art, which the Culture Plan Update builds on:

- The waterfront should offer year-round programming and contribute to economic and tourism development objectives by promoting cultural activities, programs, and public art.
- Vibrant and flexible public spaces along the waterfront can support arts and culture events at a variety of scales, including opportunities to celebrate Indigenous culture
- The waterfront should embody inclusivity by being accessible, safe, and accommodating diverse cultural uses such as arts, culture, and food, while also facilitating cultural representation, including the celebration and education of Indigenous living history.
- Public art contributes to the creation of an inclusive waterfront that is diverse of cultural uses, experiences, and representation. It is recommended that artwork for the waterfront be reflective of the diversity that is unique to Barrie.

Simcoe County: A Natural Playground for Music Strategy (2018)

While this plan has not been presented to Barrie City Council or officially adopted by the City, the recommendations provide valuable insights and guidance for addressing challenges and identifying opportunities related to Barrie’s music sector. For example: Recommendation 2.2: Develop an Online Hub; 2.3 Strengthen Industry Networks, and 3.1 Streamline regulatory pathways for festivals, events, and venues.

Research & Engagement Insights

To plan for Barrie’s cultural future, it was essential to first understand its current cultural landscape and the challenges, advantages, and opportunities it presents. Through in-depth of research of Barrie’s culture and economic sectors in Phase 1, and engagement with multidisciplinary organizations, creatives, and community members in Phase 2, several key insights emerged to inform the Culture Plan Update.



Artwork by Leandra Almeida, inspired by participant responses to the question “What makes Barrie unique?” collected during Culture Night Out 2024.

INSIGHT 1

What Makes Barrie’s Culture Unique

Barrie’s cultural advantages, when fully leveraged, have the potential to become defining features that foster community building, tourism, and economic development. While some participants initially identified Barrie as a “sports town,” further engagement revealed distinct characteristics of the city’s cultural landscape:

The Waterfront: Barrie’s waterfront is an iconic feature that serves as the heart of the community, with its extensive trails, landmark public artworks, temporary exhibitions, and is a central location for festivals and events.

A City of Festivals: During engagement, community members affectionately referred to Barrie as a “city of festivals.” Events like Kempenfest and City-led events like Winterfest and the Barrie Airshow were recognized as key drivers of cultural tourism and community connection.

Alive with Music and Performances: Barrie’s performing arts scene emerged as a dominant cultural subsector, with over 60 related assets, including organizations, collectives, businesses, venues, and studios. Music, theatre, and dance were frequently mentioned when community members were asked about Barrie’s cultural identity.

A Standout – The MacLaren Art Centre: The MacLaren Art Centre is a landmark in Barrie’s cultural scene, widely regarded as a key destination for experiencing art and culture in the city. Revered by the community, it stands as a vital institution that enriches the local cultural landscape.

Blossoming Public Art: For years, Ron Baird’s waterfront sculptures have symbolized Barrie. Recently, the city’s public art landscape has expanded and been redefined through investments that have invigorated downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods. These enhancements include temporary exhibitions and vibrant murals, with permanent artwork installed in Meridian Place and planned for Barrie’s Allandale Transit Terminal.

Evolving Populations: Barrie’s population is becoming increasingly culturally diverse, a feature that is both recognized and celebrated. As the city continues to diversify, there is a growing call for more visible celebrations of this diversity.

INSIGHT 2

Barrie’s Appeal Beyond Culture

Barrie’s attractiveness to residents and creatives stems from its other unique assets.

The city is a college town, thanks to the growing presence of Georgian College and the coming arrival of Lakehead University’s STEM hub in the downtown. Its healthcare sector, particularly the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre and the Family Medicine Residency Program, adds to its appeal. Barrie is also more affordable than other major urban centres like Toronto, Ottawa, or Mississauga and improved GO Transit service, along with its connection to Highway 400, provides easy access to other cultural hubs such as Toronto and Hamilton.

With strategic investment and support to build a prosperous, culture-friendly city, Barrie is ideally positioned for creatives to establish their practice while benefiting from access to a broader cultural ecosystem.

INSIGHT 3

Culture at the Crossroads

Canada’s cultural sector is currently facing serious challenges, with financial instability affecting artists, organizations, and small businesses from coast to coast.

The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have left creatives and arts organizations grappling with debt, unpredictable audience behaviours, fewer venues, rehearsal and studio space. Moreover, rising competition for resources and funding, the dwindling of pandemic recovery programs, and the cost of living crisis have compounded these challenges, leaving many in a state of precarity.³ Though, not all have been affected equally, with some organizations and individuals facing significant struggles, while others have found opportunities for growth and success.

These pressures are reflected in Barrie’s cultural sector. For example, the performing arts sector, one of Barrie’s largest cultural industries, was among the hardest-hit industries during the pandemic. As the first sector to close and the last to reopen due to social gathering restrictions, artists and organizations were left particularly vulnerable.

To stabilize and grow Barrie’s cultural sector, the City is planning for a performing arts centre/cultural hub, which could provide long-term sustainability by addressing space needs and propelling economic growth in Barrie.

As City Council proceeds with the performing arts centre/cultural hub, this Culture Plan serves as an essential step towards responding to immediate challenges and supporting long-term resilience.

Despite this positive step, solving this industry-wide challenge will require a collaborative effort across all levels of government to remove systemic barriers, enhance and stabilize resources, and develop creative solutions and models to build a strong foundation for the future.

³Read more on the current state of culture in Canada:

Hill Strategies. (2021). On Precarity in the arts: <https://hillstrategies.com/2021/10/13/on-precarity-in-the-arts/>

Langgard, K. (2024). How to Save Canada’s Arts Organizations. MacLean’s: <https://macleans.ca/the-year-ahead/how-to-save-canadas-arts-organizations/>

Chawla, M. (2024). It’s Time to Change the Story About the Arts: An open letter to the arts community from the Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts. Canada Council for the Arts: <https://canadacouncil.ca/spotlight/2024/10/changing-the-story-about-the-arts>

O’Kane, J. (2024). State of the Arts: Canada’s cultural industry is feeling the squeeze. The Globe and Mail: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/article-state-of-the-arts-canadas-cultural-industry-is-feeling-the-squeeze/>

INSIGHT 4

Barrie’s Cultural Challenges

Echoing some of the national challenges facing the cultural sector, community engagement in Barrie revealed the following key challenges:

Lack of Appropriate Venues and Spaces: The top issue identified relates to the lack of suitable spaces for performances, rehearsals, studios, galleries, and film screenings. There is a need for venues that are affordable, accessible, and properly equipped to support various sizes and forms of cultural activities.

Financial Challenges for Artists and Organizations: With many artists and organizations struggling financially, concerns were raised about inconsistent and inequitable funding from the City, making it difficult for cultural entities to sustain themselves, let alone grow. Additionally, many artists, multicultural groups, and for-profit cultural organizations are ineligible for current funding opportunities, restricting the ability for those groups to benefit from additional funding opportunities and support a diversity of cultural offerings.

Accessibility and Inclusivity: Limited access to cultural opportunities, whether due to physical inaccessibility, limited public transport, parking costs, or ticket prices, can affect attendance and engagement. There is also a need for greater representation of the diverse cultures of Barrie.

Lack of Awareness: A common topic was the lack of awareness about cultural events and opportunities in Barrie, with a call to create a centralized platform for promoting art and culture.

INSIGHT 5

Expanding Barrie’s Heartbeat

Building a resilient cultural future in Barrie requires addressing current challenges and capitalizing on opportunities to enrich the city’s cultural landscape.

We can look to the feedback from the engagement process to understand values and aspirations for Barrie’s future, including:

More Cultural Venues and Performance Spaces: Affordable, purpose-built spaces for hosting, showcasing, and creating cultural experiences are urgently needed. Whether through a multipurpose performing arts centre or adapting existing spaces for artists and community groups, more appropriate venues will allow Barrie’s creative sector to flourish.

Expand and Stabilize Funding: Consistent, multi-year financial support is critical to the survival of Barrie’s cultural organizations, artists, and community groups. Expanded funding opportunities for operations and programs will foster a wider range of cultural activities.

Fostering Collaboration in the Creative Community: Strengthening connections across cultural sectors through collaboration, networking, and idea-sharing will help to support resource sharing, audience development, and cultural tourism.

Increasing visibility of Indigenous Peoples: Celebrate Indigenous Peoples, cultures, art, and heritage while also providing educational opportunities for non-Indigenous community members.

Celebrating Multiculturalism and Diversity: There is a strong desire for greater visibility and celebration of Barrie’s diverse population, including underrepresented groups such as ethnic communities, people with disabilities, newcomers, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Year-Round Events and Festivals: Continuing to expand and support cultural programming throughout all seasons will increase vibrancy, with events like weekly programs at Meridian Place, food festivals, and global cultural celebrations.

Supporting Local Talent: Offering capacity-building, showcasing opportunities, and financial support at all career stages will help Barrie retain and attract local talent, fostering a growing creative community.

Expanding Culture Across the City: Cultural activities, particularly public art and festivals, should extend beyond downtown to create cultural experiences across Barrie’s neighbourhoods.



Aligning with Sector-Wide Cultural Trends

In addition to engaging with Barrie’s community and researching Barrie’s current cultural sector, the Culture Plan Update is also underpinned and informed by sector-wide trends that the City of Barrie should be prepared to respond to and capitalize on.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is rapidly growing in Ontario, and Barrie has the opportunity to capitalize on an industry that creates three times the economic impact than other types of tourism. In 2024, 1 in 5 culture-goers planned to increase spending on arts and cultural events, seeking new experiences and education through cultural engagement⁴. Food tourism is also a significant draw, with 40% of travellers reporting that they visit destinations because of their culinary offerings⁵. Barrie is well-positioned to benefit from this, offering rich opportunities for cultural tourists who enjoy performances, art galleries, public art, and food-related experiences.

Collaboration

The cultural sector thrives through collaboration, with an increasing number of partnerships forming between cultural organizations and other industries such as technology, sustainability, and science. These cross-sectoral partnerships promote resilience and foster innovation within both industries. Encouraging such collaborations through networking and incentivizing partnerships will strengthen the sector’s growth and adaptability.

Governing Culture

Many cultural organizations are exploring new and sustainable ways to govern themselves. This includes exploring co-leadership models and more lateral, as opposed to hierarchical, structures. These explorations also question the role that Boards of Directors play as some organizations embrace less colonial-based governance approaches. Initiatives such as “Balancing Act” also support organizations who take childcare, eldercare and the other societal roles artists play into consideration when planning for creation and operations.

Prioritizing Reconciliation

Since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report in 2015, governments and organizations across Canada have been called to actively pursue reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. While progress has been made, there remains a significant journey ahead for municipalities and communities to fully support reconciliation and decolonization efforts. Culture plays a critical role in this process by ensuring that Indigenous voices, traditions, and heritage are not only preserved but also prominently represented in public life. By prioritizing Indigenous culture in Barrie’s cultural landscape, the City can support healing, promote understanding, and aid in relationship building within Indigenous communities.

Diversity

Cultural diversity is essential to fuelling Barrie’s creative economy. As Ontario’s population continues to grow and diversify, particularly with increasing numbers of visible minorities, youth, and older adults, Barrie has a unique opportunity to reflect this demographic shift through its cultural offerings. By embracing and celebrating this diversity, the City can create a vibrant, inclusive environment that attracts talent, stimulates innovation, and enhances its reputation as a culturally dynamic and forward-thinking community.

Digital Technologies & Transformation

Digital technologies have been transforming the cultural sector for years, but the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated this shift. Cultural institutions, from theatres to individual artists, turned to digital platforms to engage audiences and mitigate economic losses caused by reduced in-person attendance. The digital transformation has opened new avenues for the creation, production, and distribution of cultural content, which will continue to grow. However, barriers like digital illiteracy need to be addressed, and measures should be implemented to protect cultural expressions in the digital space, especially with emerging artificial intelligence software programs.

⁴Arts Response Tracking Study by Nanos for Business / Arts and the National Arts Centre: <https://www.businessandarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024-2647-BAA-July-Populated-report-Updated.pdf>
⁵Trends and Best Practices in Food Tourism by Culinary Tourism Alliance
https://oemc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/FoodStory_Trend-and-Best-Practices_reducedsize.pdf
Read more here about cultural trends below:
Mass Culture’s Research on the Arts Sector: <https://massculture.ca/current-research/>
UNESCO’s Culture in Times of COVID-19: Resilience, Recovery and Revival: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381524>
Province of Ontario’s Forces Shaping the Future of Ontario’s Culture Sector (archived): <https://www.ontario.ca/document/environmental-scan-culture-sector-ontario-culture-strategy-background-document/forces-shaping-future-ontarios-culture-sector>

A Vision for Arts and Culture

1.2



Shak's World Mural, by Olandestinos Art, 2023. Photo credit: City of Barrie.

Barrie's Vision for a Cultural
Future

Guiding Principles

The City Of Barrie's Role

Barrie’s Vision for a Cultural Future

The following vision statement emerged from the engagement process and reflects community desires for culture to define and shape Barrie. It aims to be aspirational yet achievable, outlining a future goal and serving as a beacon for everyone in Barrie to strive towards.

Barrie will be a celebrated beacon of cultural richness and a year-round destination. Rooted in diversity and inclusivity, culture will reflect and welcome everyone in Barrie’s growing population, flourishing throughout the city.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles outline the core values of Barrie’s Culture Plan Update, providing a framework to shape decisions, actions, and initiatives. They should be used as a reference point for City departments while also inspiring community partners and creatives to align their efforts and work collaboratively towards a vibrant, resilient, and culturally rich Barrie.

Accessibility & Awareness

Champion cultural opportunities in Barrie that are both physically and financially accessible, with broad communication to ensure that everyone is aware of and able to participate in the city’s cultural offerings.

Championing Local Talent

The work of Barrie’s local artists, creators, and cultural leaders is supported and elevated, in recognition of their essential role in shaping the city’s cultural identity.

Collaboration & Community

Collaboration across City departments and within the community is actively encouraged, recognizing that a unified approach strengthens Barrie’s cultural landscape.

Diversity & Representation

Diversity and representation are championed, ensuring that Barrie’s cultural initiatives reflect the voices and contributions of its diverse populations, creating a welcoming and inclusive cultural environment.

Innovation & Creativity

Change is embraced through innovative thinking and creative solutions that encourage experimentation, positioning Barrie as a forward-thinking and dynamic community.

Indigenous Reconciliation & Futures

Relationships with Indigenous First Nations and communities are strengthened by respecting Indigenous protocols, celebrating their cultural practices, and honouring their rich histories.

Sustainability & Resilience

Sustainability and resilience in Barrie’s cultural sector are enhanced by cultivating social networks that facilitate resource sharing, and building capacity at all career levels to create social safety nets.

The City of Barrie’s Role

As the City of Barrie works toward achieving the Culture Plan’s vision, it is important to define the strategic role it will play, ensuring that it aligns with both community needs and available resources. During the engagement process, the question was raised, “What should the City of Barrie’s role be in supporting this vision?” The top responses showed a strong desire for the City to act as a funder of culture (60% of respondents) and to provide space for cultural activities (52% of respondents). This feedback highlights the significant challenges faced by the cultural sector and emphasizes the need for City support in addressing these issues.

However, given the City’s capacity and available resources, acting as the primary funder or space provider for arts and culture does not fully address the sector’s complex challenges and would not enhance its long-term sustainability.

To ensure the cultural sector not only survives but thrives, the City of Barrie’s role moving forward will focus on creating pathways for a self-sustaining cultural community while working towards the overall vision of culture.



Primary Roles

Champion

Actively celebrate, promote, and showcase Barrie’s creatives and arts and cultural opportunities to strengthen Barrie’s identity as a cultural city, attract and retain talent, and fuel cultural tourism. This involves utilizing platforms such as social media, newsletters, and community event calendars.

Connector

Facilitate networking and collaboration among artists, cultural organizations, businesses, community members, and other sectors to foster partnerships, broaden audiences, and support resource-sharing.

Capacity Builder

Deliver programming that develops the skills and capacities of local creatives, cultural professionals, and organizations—boosting career opportunities and driving economic growth within the culture sector.

Secondary Roles

Access Enhancer

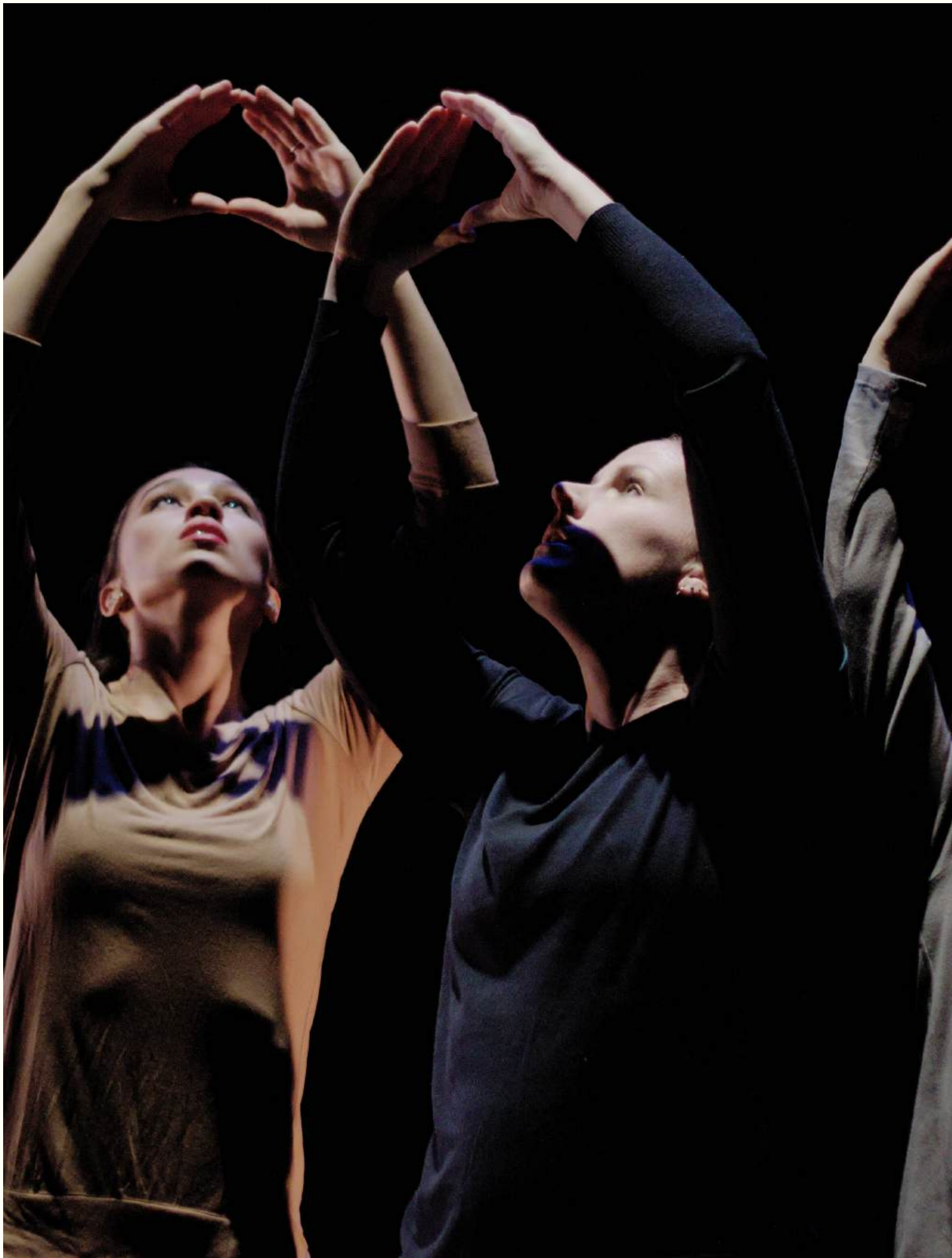
Improve accessibility by addressing barriers and educating cultural providers to ensure opportunities are accessible—physically, financially, and socially.

Funder

Offer financial assistance through grants and funding programs, such as the Arts & Culture Investment Program, to support both operational and project-based cultural initiatives, driving innovation.

Space Provider

Provide affordable, accessible venues and spaces for creatives to create, perform, and showcase their work.



Six Priorities for a Cultural Future 1.3

Priority 1: Fostering a Resilient and Thriving Creative Community

Priority 2: Supporting Spaces for Culture to Thrive

Priority 3: Making Culture Accessible to All

Priority 4: Celebrating Barrie's Cultural Diversity

Priority 5: Furthering Reconciliation and Supporting Indigenous Futures

Priority 6: Becoming a Culture-Friendly Municipality

In order to achieve Barrie’s vision for culture, **six key strategic priorities** have been developed to guide the City’s efforts over the next 10 years. This section provides an overview of each priority, providing background context (“Why This Is Important”), recent achievements or initiatives that the City has implemented related to each priority (“What’s Been Achieved”), and relevant insights gathered during community engagement (“What We Heard”).

Each priority is also supported by a set goals and recommended actions, which are categorized into the following:

Ongoing Actions: Include key steps or initiatives the City is already taking, which should be maintained or expanded upon.	Immediate Actions: New initiatives to be implemented within 1-3 years. They are expected to have a short-term impact on Barrie’s culture sector, helping build momentum.	Future Initiatives: Recommended actions for when more foundational, short-term actions have been completed. These may also require more planning and resources.
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Examples of similar actions taken by other municipalities (in Ontario, nationally, and internationally) are also included throughout this section to highlight best practices, serve as “proof of concept”, and illustrate how different cities are addressing their communities’ needs and uplifting their cultural sectors.

Implementation recommendations for these priorities are summarized in the Action Plan that follows this section.

Recommended KPIs to track progress on advancing each of the six priorities can be found in the Appendix.

Priority 1: Fostering a Resilient and Thriving Creative Community	By cultivating a dynamic creative sector, Barrie positions itself as an attractive destination for cultural organizations, businesses, and artists, enhancing Barrie’s identity as a cultural hub and attracting visitors.
Priority 2: Supporting Spaces for Culture to Thrive	Commitment to enhancing physical and social environments—including venues, public spaces, and creative infrastructure—enables arts and culture to flourish throughout Barrie.
Priority 3: Making Culture Accessible to All	Prioritizing accessibility, the City of Barrie strives to ensure that arts and culture are inclusive and available to all residents and visitors, regardless of age, background, or ability.
Priority 4: Celebrating Barrie’s Cultural Diversity	Promoting a community that is welcoming, inclusive, and representative of all members, Barrie fosters a rich cultural environment that honours and showcases the diverse cultures and heritage that shape the city’s identity.
Priority 5: Furthering Reconciliation and Supporting Indigenous Futures	In response to the <i>Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action</i> , Barrie is committed to building authentic and reciprocal relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, collaboratively supporting Indigenous culture and heritage.
Priority 6: Becoming a Culture-Friendly Municipality	Building a foundation for success, the City of Barrie champions culture across all municipal departments, to support and leverage opportunities that enable culture to thrive.

Fostering a Resilient and Thriving Creative Community

Cultivating a dynamic creative sector, Barrie positions itself as an attractive destination for cultural organizations, businesses, and artists, enhancing Barrie’s identity as a cultural hub and attracting more visitors.



Why This is Important

Culture is a key ingredient of an attractive, livable, and economically vibrant city. While cultural development often emerges organically from social and environmental influences, strategic municipal efforts can play a vital role in cultivating and amplifying its impact.

As previously mentioned, the cultural sector is facing a complex crisis. Challenges such as the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising cost of living have deepened its vulnerabilities, emphasizing the urgency for focused action to ensure sustainability.

Priority 1 ensures that Barrie’s creative sector not only survives but flourishes, while positioning it for future growth, which includes the development of a Performing Arts Centre/Culture Hub.

Strengthening the sector and building resilience will provide the following benefits:

Economic Growth: The creative sector drives economic development by creating jobs, attracting tourism, and supporting industries like hospitality and retail.

Cultural Identity and Pride: Supporting local artists and cultural organizations strengthens Barrie’s unique identity, building community pride and fostering civic engagement.

Talent Attraction and Retention: A thriving cultural scene helps retain local talent and attract new creatives.

Skill Development: Equipping creatives with the tools and skills to grow their practice at all career stages strengthens the growth and adaptability of Barrie’s cultural sector.

Innovation and Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration across sectors fuels innovation and overall sustainability of the city’s cultural ecosystem.

Social Inclusion: A diverse cultural sector bridges divides, promotes inclusivity, supports cross-cultural understanding and enhances residents’ quality of life.

What’s Been Achieved

Aligning Cultural Development with Economic Growth: Cultural development and public art are integrated within the Economic Development portfolio (Invest Barrie), with positions reporting to the Manager of Small Business and Creative Sector to support economic growth, talent attraction and retention, and innovation and collaboration.

Building Skills and Capacity: The Economic and Creative Development Department offers workshops which provide skill development opportunities for creatives, alongside partnerships such as the Emerging Artist Program with the Canadian Musicians Cooperative.

Investing in Arts and Culture: The Arts and Culture Investment Program provides funding for not-for-profit arts and culture organizations, supporting their sustainability and growth.

Showcasing and Promoting Culture: Three cultural campaign videos launched in 2024 highlight visual art, music, festivals, and live performance, reaching city-wide audiences and targeted visitor segments on social media.

Fostering Connections in the Creative Sector: The Economic and Creative Development Department organizes 2–3 networking events per year to unite the creative sector and facilitate relationship building.

Expanding Cultural Engagement: The City of Barrie supports Culture Days programming through hosting, promoting, and funding opportunities annually, including offering micro-grants available to artists, businesses, and organizations for independent activities.

Providing Support for Artists and Creatives: The Culture Development Officer consults with artists, creatives, organizations, and event planners to explore opportunities, solutions, and ideas for success.

Supporting Creative Businesses: By integrating Economic and Creative Development staff with the Small Business Centre of Barrie, Simcoe County, and Orillia, and co-locating offices within the Sandbox Centre, the City is better able to support cultural and creative small businesses.

What We Heard

Support Cultural Growth: Barrie’s cultural sector is driven by passionate individuals, organizations, and artists eager to grow and contribute to the city’s cultural landscape. While engagement highlighted current challenges of limited resources, there was an overall sentiment that with investment and support, Barrie’s cultural sector can not only sustain itself but also prosper into the future.

Increase Cultural Awareness: There is a clear call for increased visibility of Barrie’s cultural offerings, both within the community and for tourists. Greater awareness is seen as key to fostering civic pride, boosting participation in culture, and establishing Barrie as a celebrated regional destination.

Foster Collaboration and Innovation: Participants called for increased networking, idea-sharing, and collaborative events to build a more cohesive creative community. By encouraging these collaborations, Barrie can enhance resource-sharing, expand audience development, and boost cultural tourism.

Champion Local Talent: Barrie can position itself as an attractive hub for creatives by offering support and opportunities at all career stages. This includes capacity-building opportunities, creating a platform to showcase and promote creatives, and increased funding to retain and attract local talent.



GOAL 1

Barrie’s local talent and unique cultural advantages are celebrated and showcased, solidifying Barrie’s cultural identity and attracting visitors.

Ongoing Actions

Showcase Barrie’s Culture & Creatives
Continue to promote local creatives, organizations, and events across municipal communication channels and services. For example, featuring local musicians on phone hold lines, incorporating local artwork into marketing materials, and promoting upcoming cultural events through municipal mail-outs and digital displays at community centres.

Support Programming That Highlights Barrie’s Cultural Advantages
Encourage and support programming that highlights Barrie’s diversity and unique cultural advantages in music, theatre, public art, and culinary arts.

Example: The City of Brampton’s Food City Guide is an annual publication featuring a local perspective of where to eat based on feedback from hundreds of residents. The Guide also features food tours from influential residents, including food and drink writers, chefs, and artists.

Immediate Actions

Strengthen Partnerships with Tourism Organizations to Increase Cultural Tourism
Enhance collaborations with Tourism Barrie and regional tourism boards and cultural alliances to promote Barrie’s cultural offerings beyond city limits, attracting cultural tourists and supporting the local economy.

Launch a City-Wide Cultural Campaign
Develop a promotional campaign to position Barrie as a vibrant hub for music, theatre, public art, and culinary arts, highlighting the city’s diverse creative landscape to engage residents and attract visitors.

Example: The Town of Hanover partnered with Driftscape to create interactive maps, curated tours, and event updates to support cultural tourism during the City’s Culture Days programming.

Future Initiatives

Create a Directory of Local Creatives for Hire
Create a directory or another type of resource that promotes and facilitates the hiring of local creatives for City events and festivals, while also promoting their services to the broader community.

Example: Mississauga Arts Council’s Arts for Business Directory is a roster of professional performers, musicians, visual artists, instructors, photographers available for hire by local businesses and corporations.

GOAL 2

A unified and collaborative creative sector in Barrie drives the sustained growth and vitality of the city’s cultural landscape.

Ongoing Actions

Support a Connected Cultural Ecosystem
Continue to organize regular networking events that unite the creative sector and facilitate relationship building. Emphasize cross-disciplinary connections to inspire collaboration and innovation across various sectors.

For example, host monthly networking events at the Small Business Centre designed to connect diverse disciplines—such as technology and theatre, or newcomer organizations and visual arts. Invite industry leaders to share insights and best practices, enhancing knowledge exchange and fostering cutting-edge collaboration.

Immediate Actions

Strengthen Collaboration and Resource Sharing Amongst City Partners
Expand collaborations between the City of Barrie and its cultural partners (e.g., Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre, Georgian College, the Small Business Centre, Downtown Barrie BIA, and Tourism Barrie) by organizing annual or bi-annual meetings to discuss upcoming plans and current challenges, and explore opportunities for joint programming, sharing resources, and broadening audiences.

For example, build on the successful collaborations for Culture Days programming, and apply a similar approach to other City-led or partner cultural events and programs.

Promote Cross-Sector Collaboration
Support partnerships between the private sector and creative sector through networking events and educational campaigns that speak to the value of culture in supporting attractive, livable and economically vibrant places.

For example, partner with Business/Arts to host a networking event to connect local artists and businesses building partnerships to address sector challenges.

Cultural career incubation provides opportunities for creatives and organizations to develop and thrive.

Ongoing Actions

Expand Capacity Building for All Career Stages

Continue to build on and expand Barrie’s Cultural Development Programs through ongoing skill development, mentorship, and showcases for all career stages. Regularly conduct outreach activities, events, and surveys to identify and address topics relevant to the community’s current needs.

Example: To support skill-development for emerging public artists, the City of Mississauga has partnered with SOFTlab, a New York City-based design studio, to offer a unique paid public art mentorship opportunity. The selected artist will gain hands-on experience in public art creation by working alongside SOFTlab’s team on a public art project in New York City. With travel expenses included, the opportunity aims to enhance the artist’s public art skills and expand their network both locally and internationally.

Immediate Actions

Develop a “One-Stop Shop” Approach to Centralizing Information and Resources for Creatives, Cultural Organizations, and Community Members

Appoint a current City staff member as a “Cultural Liaison” to serve as an advocate for the creative community and act as a primary point of contact for all cultural inquiries, including cultural development programs, cultural events, and renting City-owned facilities.

The goal of this role is to provide advice and assist with municipal forms and processes. The Liaison should also be well versed on external opportunities that support culture, including serving as a link between local organizations, providing advice on provincial and federal funding opportunities. The Cultural Liaison and their role should be widely known and promoted.

Provide Customized Support for Creatives and Creative Enterprises

Offer bespoke support to cultural businesses, organizations, and individual creatives through the Small Business Centre, including specialized advice, training, and resources designed to foster growth and success.

Leverage Resources Amongst City Cultural Providers

Connect with City partners like the MacLaren Art Centre, the Small Business Centre, Barrie Public Library, and other community partners to support capacity-building initiatives by pooling resources and reaching broader audiences.

Example: The New York Public Library provides Performing Arts’ Tech Kits, which contain materials that allow performing artists to document their work and publish them online.

Strategic investment in the creative sector supports the growth and sustainability of cultural initiatives.

Ongoing Actions

Support Continuous Improvement and Transparency of the Arts & Culture Investment Program (ACIP)

Review funding allocations annually with a focus on equity and transparency. This includes:

- Reviewing funding allocation percentages to ensure that funds can be accessed by multiple organizations, both new and established.
- Reviewing assessor notes in detail to identify areas amongst applicants where additional education or support can be developed and offered to address challenges and/or barriers.
- Review funding thresholds in the Project and Capacity Building Streams of the ACIP to account for inflation and increased costs in the sector to ensure the effectiveness of these streams.
- Review financial criteria for the Operational Streams (currently \$75,000) to ensure that like organizations continue to be assessed in an equitable comparative context.

Immediate Actions

Diversify Revenue Sources to Fund the Arts & Culture Investment Program

Explore additional funding sources for ACIP, for example, adding an surcharge or allocating a percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, film permit fees, and/or ticket fees.

Example: The City of St. Catharines includes a \$3.00 surcharge on all tickets sold at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre towards the City’s Cultural Investment Fund.

Future Initiatives

Expand ACIP Funding Categories

As ACIP revenue streams become more diversified, expand the program’s funding categories to include individual artists/collectives and multi-year funding.

Example: The City of Hamilton provides opportunities for artists to create new artistic works, and to build and strengthen their careers through the Creation and Presentation stream of the City Enrichment Fund.

Example: The City of Hamilton is also piloting a Multi-Year Funding program that provides a 3-year funding commitment, and applies to any of the Program Areas or Streams in the City Enrichment Fund.

Establish Partnerships with Private and Philanthropic Sectors

Explore partnerships and sponsorships with private and/or philanthropic organizations to create pilot or temporary funding programs to encourage creativity and innovation.

Example: The City of Hamilton Placemaking Grant Pilot Program was funded through a \$100,000 donation. The project resulted in thirteen community-led placemaking projects, including art installations, a children’s garden, pollinator garden, and sidewalk games.

Supporting Spaces for Culture to Thrive

A commitment to enhancing physical and social environments, including venues, public spaces, and creative infrastructure, enables arts and culture to flourish throughout Barrie.



Why This is Important

Cultural spaces, whether theatres, studios, workshops, or public venues, are vital for fostering connection, innovation, and creativity. A diverse and well-supported ecosystem of cultural spaces strengthens the variety of cultural offerings and helps establish Barrie as an attractive cultural destination. Barrie already boasts numerous cultural venues, theatres, galleries, and studios in the downtown, along with events and festivals year-round.

Priority 2 focuses on enhancing these existing spaces, addressing infrastructure gaps, and defining downtown as a cultural district and year-round destination.

Prioritizing cultural spaces supports:

Economic Development: Well-developed cultural spaces stimulate tourism, create jobs, and boost local businesses, driving economic growth, and enabling Barrie to capitalize on growing cultural tourism trends.

Community Engagement: Participation in the arts strengthens community interaction, social inclusion, and fosters a greater sense of belonging.

Sustainability: Expanding and improving accessible, functional venues and creative infrastructure provide artists and organizations with the resources to create, collaborate, and showcase their work. This supports a diverse range of cultural expressions, attracting and retaining local talent and ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of arts and culture in Barrie.

Place-Making and Identity: Well-maintained and accessible cultural spaces reaffirm Barrie as a cultural city, informing a strong sense of place amongst community members.

Safety and Inclusion: Increased activations in public spaces and downtown draw in people and support more “eyes on the street” throughout the day and night, leading to a greater sense of security and safety.

Designating Downtown Barrie as a Cultural District:

Projected to reach 150 residents and jobs per hectare by 2031, and home to a concentration of cultural institutions, organizations, and events, downtown Barrie is central to the city’s creative and economic vitality. With a growing student population coming from Georgian College’s Digital Design Campus and the future Lakehead University STEM Hub, downtown is expected to continue being a prime area of investment and cultural activity.

The City of Barrie can capitalize on this momentum by designating its downtown as a Cultural District, supporting and attracting cultural spaces, creatives, and economic growth in the downtown.

Cities around the world, from Mississauga, to Dallas, and Melbourne, have demonstrated the powerful impact of cultural district designations in driving economic growth, fostering vibrant communities, and enhancing tourism. Formally designating and branding Downtown Barrie as a Cultural District — which would encompass key anchors like the MacLaren Art Centre, Five Points Theatre, Meridian Place, and the future Performing Arts Centre / Culture Hub — could formalize the area’s distinct identity as a vibrant, year-round cultural destination, and further attract investment, creatives, residents, visitors, and businesses.



What’s Been Achieved

Cultural Venues and Infrastructure: The City operates two theatres: a large leased venue and a smaller City-owned theatre in the downtown. Additionally, the City owns and operates the Sadlon Arena, which hosts touring artists, and several community centres that accommodate cultural programming.

Collaborative Programming and Partnerships: Partnerships between the City and Barrie’s Public Library and the MacLaren Art Centre support cultural programming in their spaces.

Integrating Culture into Public Spaces: Culture City staff consulted with Parks Planning to ensure retrofitting at Heritage Park supports cultural programming.

Growing Public Art Opportunities: The part-time Public Art Coordinator position was established to facilitate and expand the public art program, with annual public art opportunities available to local and regional artists.

Community-Engaged Public Art: The Barrie Public Art Committee (BPAC) organizes community-engaged public art projects in support of ward specific and Council-led initiatives.

Enhancing Seasonal Cultural Experiences: Economic and Creative Development and Recreation & Culture Services have previously partnered for Hello Winter, bringing art installations to downtown and parks.

What We Heard

Plan and Invest in Cultural Spaces: Engagement emphasized an urgent need for more affordable, suitable, and versatile spaces for rehearsing, showcasing, and creating culture. This includes a multipurpose performing arts centre, along with the expansion or better use of existing spaces to meet immediate needs for performances, rehearsals, workshops, exhibitions, and equipment/production storage. Engagement also demonstrated a strong desire to continue Barrie’s momentum as a performing arts destination, which will require improved spaces to support its growth.

Champion Culture in Public Spaces: Barrie’s unique waterfront was noted as a cherished asset to the community. There is a desire to maintain its role as a vibrant venue for public art, events, and festivals, with a preference for preserving its natural elements and community use. Beyond the waterfront, activating public spaces through cultural programming and public art can support year-round experiences that extend across all wards. One call to action focused on increasing programming of Meridian Place by supporting community-led initiatives and City-led programming.

Prioritize Downtown as the Cultural Heart of the City: There is strong support for continuing to enhance downtown’s role as a cultural focal point. By leveraging existing institutions like the MacLaren Art Centre, Five Points Theatre, and Meridian Place as anchors and encouraging cultural businesses and activations, Barrie can strengthen its cultural identity and foster greater engagement in the downtown area.

GOAL 1

Appropriate, accessible, and affordable cultural spaces attract and retain artists, businesses, and community members in Barrie.

Ongoing Actions

➤ **Leverage City-owned Spaces to Accommodate Cultural Uses**

Continue to explore opportunities for City-owned spaces to accommodate various cultural needs (e.g., rehearsal, performance, exhibition, workshop, maker spaces, and space to store materials and equipment). This can include the Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre, community and recreation centres, or other City-owned spaces.

Example: Consider spaces within the Barrie Public Library or MacLaren Art Centre that could be used as rehearsal spaces after hours.

Immediate Actions

➤ **Improve Access to City-Owned Facilities and Public Spaces by Establishing a Community Group Registry**

Create a Community Group Registry that supports cultural organizations, volunteer groups, clubs, and creatives in Barrie by providing benefits such as discounted space rentals and liability insurance coverage through the City's insurance affiliates, making it easier for community groups to access the resources they need for cultural events and programming.

Example: City of Mississauga's Community Group Registry Program is designed to support not-for-profit, volunteer-based community groups, organizations, and clubs.

➤ **Encourage Non-City-Owned Spaces to Support Cultural Uses**

Educate the private sector on the needs of the cultural sector, encourage them to offer non-traditional spaces for cultural use, and share information publicly to ensure these spaces are accessible.

➤ **Create a Multipurpose, Multidisciplinary Performing Arts Centre or Cultural Hub that is Accessible to the Barrie Community**

Develop a multipurpose, multidisciplinary performing arts or cultural hub to host medium-to large-scale events, exhibitions, film screenings, performances, celebrations, and festivals organized by residents, community groups, arts organizations, and the City. To maintain accessibility for local groups, the City should develop a business plan that explores a diversified revenue model that minimizes reliance on user fees and enhances affordable access. Potential revenue streams could include hosting conferences, integrating culinary spaces, and offering arts incubation programs to access external funding. Transparent communication of operating and user fee costs should be maintained throughout the decision-making process.

Future Initiatives

➤ **Incentivize the Repurposing of Vacant Spaces or Underdeveloped Land for Cultural Uses**

Explore incentives to encourage partnerships between property owners and cultural organizations, such as subsidies, fee matching, and property tax reductions.

Example: Strathroy-Caradoc, ON, Development Services offers financial incentives for property owners to activate vacant or underdeveloped downtown spaces, addressing gaps or "dead zones" through price-matching and professional fee matching.

Example: The SPACEPILOT Initiative by cSPACE Projects in Calgary, AB, connects artists and creative entrepreneurs with vacant commercial spaces, creating affordable opportunities for creatives while offsetting property owner costs and supporting downtown revitalization efforts.

GOAL 2

Public spaces and the waterfront serve as active venues for public art and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.

Ongoing Actions

➤ **Design Public Spaces to Support Cultural Programming**

Partner with Parks Planning to design or retrofit parks and public spaces for cultural activities. Cross-departmental collaboration should consider essential amenities such as power, potable water access, Wi-Fi, shelter, restrooms, accessibility features, barbecues, and fire pits to support community events.

➤ **Expand Public Art Across the City**

Encourage public art initiatives led by residents, community groups, and the private sector, while also continuing to expand the Municipal public art program by diversifying revenue resources and increasing staffing capacity.

➤ **Advance Winter Cultural Activities**

Develop a Winter Placemaking Strategy that identifies arts, culture, and tourism opportunities during the winter months. Promote these activities in coordination with Tourism Barrie's Winter Fun Barrie campaign to strengthen connections between recreational and cultural experiences.

Example: The City of Edmonton's Winter City Strategy identified how the public realm can be enhanced through art, design, and infrastructure to support winter life.

Immediate Actions

➤ **Increase Opportunities for Outdoor Live Performances**

Review and streamline policies that affect events and performances in public spaces. This includes noise by-laws, insurance requirements, and permits for stages, tents, and other structures, to encourage community-led performances throughout the city.

Additionally, explore opportunities for the City to have a more active role in programming Meridian Place (e.g., weekly concerts).

Example: The City of Toronto has pre-approved various parks for arts, music, and movie nights to streamline permitting of small event in public parks.

Future Initiatives

➤ **Develop Cultural Spaces Across Barrie's Neighbourhoods and Business Areas**

Encourage the development of new public spaces adjacent to commercial and mixed-use areas that can create gathering spaces for residents and offer opportunities for creatives to perform or showcase their practices.

Example: Vancouver's Neighbourhood Plazas create small outdoor public spaces that support community events, local businesses, and social interaction. These spaces are developed in partnership with business improvement associations (BIAs), local businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents.

➤ **Promote Citizen-led Cultural Activations and Events**

Establish micro-grants to support community-driven events and placemaking initiatives that activate public spaces and neighbourhoods. Review City policies to streamline processes, such as permitting and regulations, to better support and encourage grassroots cultural activities.

Example: City of Guelph's Activating Community Micro-Grant offers a minimum of \$500 to a maximum of \$1000 for creative ideas that activate neighbourhoods through arts-based initiatives.

Example: Kitchener's LoveMyHood program that encourages residents to shape their neighbourhoods through a Neighbourhood Matching Grant, and streamline associated policies (e.g., easing requirements for road closures, insurance, signage, and noise.)

Barrie's downtown is recognized as a Cultural District, concentrating cultural activities, events, and spaces to enhance its role as a cultural hub.

Immediate Actions

➤ **Designate Downtown as a Cultural District**

Collaborate with the Development Services Department, Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie, as well as local institutions, businesses, creatives, and community members to establish downtown as a Cultural District. The district area should encompass MacLaren Art Centre, Five Points Theatre, Meridian Place, and the future Performing Arts Centre / Culture Hub, highlighting Barrie's historic architecture, cultural spaces, public art, festivals, culinary experiences, and creative infrastructure, including studios, performance venues, and galleries.

Example: Mississauga's 2019-2029 Culture Master Plan identified six neighbourhoods to be established as Cultural Districts, due to each being distinct mixed-use areas that attract people due to their high concentration of cultural facilities and activities. To implement the Culture Plan recommendations, the City of Mississauga developed the Culture Districts Implementation Plan to align policies, develop coordination between the public and private sector and the community, and determine achievable and high-impact actions.

➤ **Become a Member of the Global Cultural Districts Network (GCDN)**

Connect with culture districts across the world and understand how to develop a strong culture district through knowledge-sharing opportunities and events.

➤ **Brand the Downtown as a Cultural District**

Establish a distinct visual identity for the Cultural District through cohesive branding, marketing campaigns, wayfinding, and creative placemaking that connects cultural attractions and enhances the downtown's identity as a cultural destination.

Future Initiatives

➤ **Encourage Growth of the Cultural District**

Explore Municipal incentives to support the growth of the Cultural District through co-location of cultural infrastructure and attractions and creating an artful public realm. Opportunities to attract growth include property tax adjustments or rebate programs for cultural infrastructure, reduced event permit fees for cultural performances and festivals, and streamlining public art approvals and special event permit applications.

Example: The City of Kelowna provides a permissive tax exemption for Kelowna-based, registered non-profit organizations using property for cultural purposes.

➤ **Build the Night Economy of Barrie**

Develop a Night Time Economy Strategy aimed at generating jobs, attracting tourists and talent, fostering a sense of community, and enhancing safety in the downtown area. Engage with the community and industry stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities, while exploring incentives for restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues through licensing, by-laws, and zoning to boost nighttime cultural and economic activity. Additionally, consult with youth to identify and promote all-ages nighttime activities that encourage inclusivity and engagement.

Example: The City of Ottawa created the Night Economy Action Plan to grow and develop Ottawa's nightlife economy, with a focus on dedicating leadership to oversee collaboration, coordination and place branding, as well as identifying actions to nurture nightlife businesses and organizations, increase safety of both nightlife workers and customers, and enhance the quality and inclusivity of nightlife experiences.



Making Culture Accessible to All

Prioritizing accessibility, the City of Barrie strives to ensure that arts and culture are inclusive and available to all residents and visitors, regardless of age, background, or ability.



Why This is Important

As culture is embodied at the community level, Barrie residents should be aware of and have access to cultural opportunities that inspire and resonate with them. Historically, arts and culture have been reserved for those in high society. Today, municipalities can democratize the benefits of culture to everyone in their community by supporting awareness, helping residents find opportunities that interest them, and reducing the physical and financial barriers of cultural participation.

Priority 3 ensures that everyone in Barrie, regardless of age, demographic, or socioeconomic status, has access to culture.

Prioritizing access to culture supports:

Inclusivity and Equity: Ensuring that arts and culture promote social equity and are accessible to all, regardless of age, background, ability, or socioeconomic status, by breaking down barriers that historically exclude certain communities and individuals from cultural participation and fostering a more inclusive environment.

Community Well-Being: Access to arts and culture contributes to individual and collective well-being. When cultural programming is accessible, it can enhance social cohesion, improve mental health, and create opportunities for personal growth and community building.

Economic Impact: By making culture accessible to all, Barrie can attract broader and more diverse audiences. This not only enriches the city’s social fabric but also boosts the local economy through increased cultural tourism and creative sector growth.

What’s Been Achieved

Promoting Cultural Opportunities: Creative Barrie channels, radio partnerships, and City facility screens are utilized to promote cultural opportunities and initiatives across Barrie.

Inclusive Communications: The Recreation & Culture Services Department integrates a multicultural approach to communications for events like Canada Day and Winterfest.

Accessible Transportation for Events: Free shuttle services are provided to major events such as Winterfest, Barrie Air Show, and New Year’s Eve Downtown Countdown.

Ensuring Event Accessibility: All stages at City events are required to have ramps to ensure accessibility for all attendees.

Celebrating Diverse Talent: The Barrie Arts Awards includes the Artist Beyond Barriers Award, recognizing artists who live with a disability. The City also strives to have ASL interpreters at the event when available.

What We Heard

Enhance Awareness of Culture in Barrie: There was a strong call for improved promotion of cultural offerings to educate and increase awareness to residents and visitors about upcoming events and activities. A clear call to action was centralizing information and promoting opportunities through digital and analog means. This enhancement is seen as vital for elevating participation levels and fostering more coordinated collaboration among cultural organizations.

Prioritize Inclusive Events: Focus on ensuring cultural spaces and activities are inclusive of equity-deserving groups, such as older adults, youth, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and the disabled community. Opportunities for families and people of all ages are also emphasized as key to inclusivity, with considerations for offering childcare services to enhance participation of families.

Enhance Affordability: Supporting low-cost and free events is essential for boosting participation. This approach helps dismantle the perception that culture is reserved for the “elite” and reaffirms its purpose as a resource for everyone.

Increase Physical Accessibility: Participants highlighted the importance of ensuring that all cultural events and venues are physically accessible and provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities to experience cultural opportunities.

Enhance Mobility and Connections to Culture: Additionally, there is a desire for improved access to cultural opportunities through active and public transportation networks, making it easier for everyone in Barrie to participate, regardless of where they live or where the cultural opportunity is located. Another aspect of this is ensuring that adequate parking is available for those driving to experience culture.



GOAL 1

Clear and accessible communication ensures that community members and visitors can easily discover cultural opportunities, reaffirming Barrie’s identity and fostering pride and belonging.

- Ongoing Actions**

➤ **Expand Community Outreach Campaigns**
Enhance outreach to the local community by leveraging the Creative Barrie Instagram account, along with newsletters, mailings, radio spots, and information sessions to raise awareness about cultural opportunities and initiatives. Amplify outreach efforts through partnerships and joint campaigns with local organizations, particularly those engaged with equity-deserving groups.
- **Integrate a Multicultural Approach to Communications**
Continue to implement multilingual materials to ensure cultural opportunities are accessible to all community members, especially newcomers and diverse populations. This includes translations of event listings, brochures, and digital content.

- Immediate Actions**

➤ **Designate a Centralized Digital Platform for Arts and Culture**
Designate a current platform or develop a new one that serves as a comprehensive online hub where residents and visitors can easily find and upload information on cultural events, programs, initiatives, and organizations. This platform should integrate or consolidate existing resources from Tourism Barrie, Barrie Public Library, and other information hubs. The platform should also be promoted and used by residents and tourists alike.

Example: The City of Kitchener’s Arts, Culture and Events webpage is a central hub for, making it easy for residents and visitors to find and share information on events, public art, and creative programs. It supports community engagement by offering resources for artists, event planning tools, and venue rentals.
- Future Initiatives**

➤ **Increase Digital Literacy Amongst Community Members and Cultural Organizations**
Enhance awareness and access to cultural opportunities by developing programs that build digital knowledge, skills, and capacity.

Example: The City of Toronto proclaimed October 7 to 13, 2024 as Digital Inclusion Week. During this week, the Toronto Public Library offered online and in-person programs about artificial intelligence, digital privacy, smart cities, digital content creation and more.

GOAL 2

Cultural opportunities are inclusive, accessible, and affordable, ensuring that all individuals, including equity-deserving groups such as youth, seniors, and newcomers, are included.

- Ongoing Actions**

➤ **Increase Support for Subsidized, Low-cost, and Free Programming**
Continue developing and supporting free City-led events and explore community partnerships to expand affordable and accessible cultural activities, with a focus on equity-deserving groups.

Example: Toronto Public Library’s tpl:map program offers library cardholders free access to arts and cultural attractions, including the Royal Ontario Museum, Hot Docs Festival, the Royal Conservatory for Music.
- **Expand Connectivity and Access to Cultural Attractions with Public and Active Transportation**
Continue to collaborate cross-departmentally to enhance public transportation and active transportation services that connect cultural venues and events. Explore additional transit and active transportation routes during events and enhance linkages between cultural attractions, making it easier for residents and visitors to engage with cultural offerings.

- Immediate Actions**

➤ **Support More Spaces for Youth to Engage with Culture**
Explore opportunities for City facilities and partners (e.g., Barrie Recreation and Community Centres, Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre) to offer dedicated times and spaces for youth for unstructured and self-directed cultural activities and expression.

Example: Art Inside at the Rose Theatre in Brampton is a monthly performing arts workshop for young adult and youth 14+ led by professional artists with a focus on creation, community, and connection.
- **Increase Physical Accessibility of Cultural Spaces through Knowledge-Sharing**
Establish a centralized resource hub that provides guidelines, education, funding resources, and case studies for making cultural spaces and events more accessible.

Example: Accessibility Toolkit: A Guide to Making Art Spaces Accessible offers guidance and education on accessibility in cultural spaces.

Celebrating Barrie's Cultural Diversity

Promoting a community that is welcoming, inclusive, and representative of all members, Barrie fosters a rich cultural environment that honours and showcases the diverse cultures and heritage that shape the city's identity.



Why This is Important

As Barrie's population continues to grow and diversify, there is a pressing need to support a wider range of cultural expressions. When individuals see their identities, heritage, and traditions reflected in the city's cultural life, it fosters a strong sense of belonging and pride of place. Cross-cultural interactions and shared experiences strengthen social bonds, creating a more united community.

Priority 4 ensures that everyone in Barrie feels represented in cultural expressions and is welcome to participate in Barrie's cultural offerings. The success of this priority requires continually assessing Barrie's changing demographics and ensuring that the cultural opportunities and organizations also evolve to reflect this.

Embracing cultural diversity fosters:

Cultural Representation: Celebrating diversity enables residents and visitors to see themselves reflected in the city's cultural life. This representation enhances a sense of belonging and strengthens Barrie's identity.

Reflecting a Growing and Diverse Population: As Barrie's demographic landscape evolves, it is essential that the city's arts and cultural offerings adapt to meet the needs of a diverse population. By fostering an environment where everyone can contribute, Barrie positions itself as a progressive, inclusive, and culturally rich city.

Cultural Tourism: Celebrating the diversity of Barrie's residents can attract both locals and tourists, drawn to the city's rich mix of cultural experiences, including diverse food, music, art, and festivals. This further enriches the city's social and economic fabric.

What's Been Achieved

Celebrating Cultural Diversity: City of Barrie programming for Canada Day, Culture Days, and the Arts Awards highlights the city's diverse cultures and heritage.

Inclusive Public Art and Adjudication: Public art and adjudicator calls include language that encourages applications from diverse backgrounds and equity-deserving groups.

Supporting Black History Month: The City partners with Black-led organizations to deliver programming for Black History Month annually.

What We Heard

Celebrate Cultural Diversity: Participants expressed a strong desire for celebrating the diverse foods, music, dance, and art from the many cultures represented in Barrie, ensuring that all individuals feel included and welcome. There was a shared belief that Barrie's cultural offerings have the potential to more fully reflect the tapestry of its diverse communities, embracing various backgrounds, ages, and ethnicities. A call to action was for more partnerships and collaboration with arts and cultural initiatives and organizations that are working with newcomers and diverse groups in Barrie.

Support Diverse Artists: Celebrating diverse cultures also extends to showcasing and supporting artists and creatives of diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Celebrate Barrie's Heritage and History: The community takes pride in Barrie's rich heritage and history and supports greater efforts to preserve and raise awareness of the city's origins. This can be achieved through knowledge-sharing initiatives, exhibits, and events that highlight Barrie's evolution.

GOAL 1

Barrie’s cultural diversity is actively celebrated through events, programs, and initiatives that promote cross-cultural dialogue, empathy, and foster a sense of unity within the community.

- Ongoing Actions**

Support Events and Festivals Celebrating Diversity

Encourage both City-led and community-led events that highlight Barrie’s diverse cultures and heritage, supporting cross-cultural understanding and connection.

Example: DiversCity Festival on Prince Edward Island celebrates diversity, Canadian multiculturalism, and connects newcomers with established residents.
- Hire Diverse Artists for City Opportunities**

Ensure that artists hired for City programming and public art reflect Barrie’s cultural diversity, creating inclusive public spaces and experiences that represent a wide range of cultural perspectives and stories.

- Future Initiatives**

Develop a Fund for Showcasing Diversity

Investigate opportunities to provide funding or grants for events and programs that emphasize multiculturalism and inclusivity. This could include designated funding from the Arts and Cultural Investment Program (ACIP) or collaborating with external funding bodies to secure resources for community use.

Example: The Equity and Inclusion in the Arts Fund in Ottawa aims to reduce barriers while advancing artistic expression within Indigenous and equity-deserving communities by providing funding to individual artists and organizations to support art events, arts workshops, community collaborative projects, and festivals that support self-expression, capacity building, or visibility and celebration. Funding ranges from \$2000 for small-scale artistic projects, to \$20,000 for larger-scale projects.



GOAL 2

Equitable representation in Barrie’s cultural sector ensures that the traditions, histories, and stories of all communities, including Indigenous peoples and newcomers, are prominently featured and celebrated.

- Ongoing Actions**

Deepen Engagement With Equity-Deserving Groups

When developing cultural development programs, engage and build relationships with multicultural groups, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQIA+ community, Indigenous Peoples, newcomers, etc. to understand and address needs and desires.
- Immediate Actions**

Conduct a Needs Assessment with Multicultural Groups

Collaborate with multicultural groups to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that explores opportunities and obstacles in cultural programming and development, including areas like funding, space, and awareness. Leverage these insights to design and implement initiatives that ensure cultural opportunities authentically represent Barrie’s diverse communities.

- Support Inclusive Representation in Decision-Making**

Ensure arts and culture advisory groups, like the Barrie Arts Advisory Committee and Barrie Public Art Committee reflect the diversity of Barrie’s community. To avoid community consultation fatigue, explore opportunity to engage existing City advisory groups, like Barrie’s Youth Council, Anti-Racism Task Force, and Seniors & Accessibility Advisory Committee on cultural matters.

Furthering Reconciliation and Supporting Indigenous Futures

In response to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, Barrie is committed to building authentic and reciprocal relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, collaboratively supporting Indigenous culture and heritage.



Why This is Important

Municipalities in Canada play a crucial role in advancing reconciliation and decolonization by engaging respectfully and meaningfully with Indigenous Rights Holders. This involves implementing the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* and recognizing the importance of supporting Indigenous art and culture.

Priority 5 serves as a critical step for the City of Barrie’s reconciliation efforts, focusing on the development of authentic and reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

The proposed actions under this priority must be implemented collaboratively with Indigenous communities and in accordance with Indigenous protocols. Building authentic and reciprocal relationships requires dedicating significant and continuous time and resources.

Prioritizing Indigenous art and culture supports:

Dedication to Reconciliation: Barrie’s commitment to reconciliation is furthered by acknowledging the impacts of colonization on Indigenous Peoples and aligning with *the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action*, particularly in cultural revitalization and supporting Indigenous artistic expression.

Cultural Representation and Visibility: Enhancing the visibility of Indigenous art and culture within Barrie recognizes and celebrates the stories and traditions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, fostering a more inclusive cultural environment.

Reciprocal Relationships: Dedicating time and resources to building authentic relationships with Indigenous communities ensures they are active partners in shaping cultural policies and initiatives, integrating their leadership and perspectives into decision-making processes.

Cultural Revitalization: Supporting Indigenous art and culture helps to preserve and revitalize traditions that may have been suppressed or marginalized. This is essential for supporting Indigenous identity, pride, and resilience.

What’s Been Achieved

Relationship Building with Indigenous Communities: The Recreation & Culture Services Department meets regularly with representatives from local Indigenous groups and organizations to collaborate on events such as Indigenous Peoples’ Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Indigenous Awareness Training: The City offers optional training in Indigenous topics to all staff members.

Supporting Sacred Traditions: The City provides Municipal property for sacred fires.

What We Heard

Increase Visibility of Indigenous Cultures: There is a strong desire for greater representation and celebration of Indigenous art, culture, and heritage in Barrie. Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members call for a stronger Indigenous visibility through events, education, and showcases.

Expand Education on Indigenous Heritage and Culture: Participants expressed a need for enhanced educational opportunities through public art, events, celebrations, and storytelling.

Improve Collaboration and Leadership with Indigenous Peoples: There is an ongoing need to build authentic relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Barrie. This includes ensuring that Indigenous Peoples actively lead and participate in decision-making processes that shape city planning and public spaces.

Ensure Authentic Representation of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous Peoples in Barrie, as well as across Canada, advocate for processes and policies that protect Indigenous rights. It is essential to ensure that support and resources are directed toward authentic representation of Indigenous Peoples and communities.

GOAL 1

Strengthened and deepened relationships are established with Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals, fostering mutual respect and collaboration.

Ongoing Actions

➤ **Strengthen Relationships with Indigenous Communities for Improved Cultural Representation**

Continue to build relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, organizations, and individuals to understand barriers to cultural development, and identify actions to further opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and representation in Barrie.

Immediate Actions

➤ **Adopt and Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation.

➤ **Establish Protocols and Policies to Engage Indigenous Communities**

Ensure that engagement and communication with Indigenous Peoples and communities respects Indigenous protocols and worldviews. This also includes establishing policies alongside First Nations, Métis, and Inuit that prevent harmful appropriation of Indigenous peoples and ensures that all individuals and groups benefiting from Indigenous opportunities and funding are authentically Indigenous.

Future Initiatives

➤ **Establish an Indigenous Advisory Circle**

Explore developing an Indigenous Advisory Circle for City-wide initiatives with Council and City Clerks to ensure decision-making involves Indigenous Peoples. The Committee can include subcommittees for specific Municipal programs, like Special Events and Festivals, Cultural Development Programs, and Public Art.

GOAL 2

Barrie actively showcases and honours Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories, ensuring they are visible, respected, and celebrated across the city.

Ongoing Actions

➤ **Embed Indigenous Placekeeping through Art and Culture in Public Spaces**

Collaborate with and support Indigenous Rights Holders to identify locations and opportunities for Indigenous art, culture, and living heritage to be featured across Barrie. This includes public art, cultural programming, and initiatives that ensure Indigenous cultures are visible and celebrated throughout the city.

Example: ᐱᓄᓄᓄ (îNîW) River Lot 11 in Edmonton features 6 artworks by Canadian Indigenous artists and acknowledges the historic river lot originally home to Métis landowner Joseph McDonald. The park is a collaboration between the City of Edmonton, Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations, Métis Nation of Alberta, the Edmonton Arts Council and Indigenous artists.

Immediate Actions

➤ **Protect Indigenous Rights in Municipal Spaces**

Explore policies that protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples to practice their traditions and ceremonial practices at Municipal facilities, properties, and functions, including events and programs. This includes, but is not limited to, smudging, ceremonial fires, lighting the quilliq, and pipe ceremonies.

Example: The City of Toronto, in collaboration with Indigenous community members and leaders, identified areas in three City parks as Designated Sacred Fire sites.

Future Initiatives

➤ **Recognize and Protect Indigenous Significant Sites**

Work with and support Indigenous Rights Holders to identify and recognize sites of Indigenous cultural significance, traditions, and stories in Barrie. These efforts should be supported by cultural markers, storytelling initiatives, and educational programming to honour Indigenous heritage.

➤ **Support Indigenous Land Stewardship and Conservation**

Collaborate with Indigenous communities to explore opportunities for land stewardship in City public spaces, parks, buildings, and facilities. This could include supporting Indigenous-led initiatives to care for and conserve land within Barrie, promoting both ecological sustainability and Indigenous cultural practices.

Example: kihcihkaw askî (“This place here is Sacred” in Cree) is located in Whitemud Park in Edmonton and provides a natural setting for Indigenous Peoples, groups and communities to host spiritual ceremonies, sweatlodges, cultural camps and talking circles, grow medicinal herbs and facilitate intergenerational learning in an appropriately designed outdoor learning space.

Becoming a Culture-Friendly Municipality

Building a foundation for success, the City of Barrie champions culture across all Municipal departments, to support and leverage opportunities that enable culture to thrive.



Why This is Important

Prioritizing culture at the municipal level creates the framework for long-term success. By integrating arts and culture into city planning and operations, Barrie supports a cultural ecosystem that enhances quality of life, economic vitality, and community cohesion. When culture is positioned as a core element of the city’s identity, it sparks opportunities for tourism, boosts local businesses, and engages citizens.

Priority 6 involves recognizing culture as a fundamental element in creating an attractive and thriving urban environment, and embodies the City of Barrie’s role as a champion of culture.

Being a culture-friendly municipality means:

Interdepartmental Synergy: Collaboration across City departments ensures that cultural initiatives are integrated into city planning and services. This approach maximizes resources and expertise while creating a more cohesive citywide cultural strategy.

Municipal Excellence: Engaging creatives in municipal processes leads to innovative solutions that can challenge status quo and reflect community values.

Community Trust: Transparency and ongoing communication about the City’s progress on cultural initiatives strengthens community trust. This fosters engagement, ensuring that residents feel heard and valued, fostering civic pride.

What’s Been Achieved

Cross-departmental Collaboration: The Economic and Creative Development Department and The Recreation and Culture Services Department collaborate on projects and meet semi-regularly to align goals and programs.

Coordinating Event Proposals: Barrie’s Event Action Team (BEAT) was created to bring together all affected departments and service providers to discuss event proposals, issues, and opportunities.

Cross-Departmental Partnerships for Public Art: Partnerships within the corporation have resulted in public art initiatives aligning with the work of Traffic Services, Transit, Parks Planning, and Corporate Facilities.

What We Heard

Build on Barrie’s Cultural Foundation: Community members felt that Barrie has the momentum and passion in the arts and culture sector to become more of a regional hub for culture, and called on more dedicated and consistent support from the City of Barrie to propel culture to the next level.


Be a Community Partner: Educating Municipal staff about the value of culture allows the City of Barrie to be a stronger partner to the cultural sector. A better understanding of the sector’s needs and potential will enhance collaboration and support for its growth.

Connect The Delivery of Cultural Services: There is a call to improve coordination between the Economic & Creative Development and Recreation & Culture Services departments to streamline the delivery of cultural services, making it easier for creatives and residents to engage with City-supported programs and spaces.

Implement an Integrated Approach to Culture: Strengthening internal synergies will support the cultural sector and ensure that culture is woven into daily life in Barrie, from public art installations to cultural programming in all city wards.

GOAL 1

Fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing to strengthen the understanding of culture’s intrinsic value.



Ongoing Actions


Support Knowledge Building with City staff and Council on the Value of Culture in City Building
Develop educational campaigns for City staff and Council members that highlight the social, economic, and community-building benefits of culture. This includes creating an annual report on culture that highlights projects and accomplishments from both the City of Barrie and the broader community.

Example: Port Moody’s Art at Council showcases local creative talents for the public and City Council and share cultural projects taking place throughout the city



Immediate Actions

Create an Interdepartmental City Committee for Public Art and Culture
Designate staff members across City departments to act as cultural ambassadors, ensuring that cultural considerations are embedded into daily operations and decision-making within their respective Departments or projects. Economic & Creative Development Development staff should convene quarterly meetings with ambassadors to discuss projects that can support cultural development, cultural spaces, and public art.



Clearly Define Roles and Responsibilities between Economic & Creative Development and Recreation & Culture Services departments
Ensure that roles and responsibilities between the two departments are defined, and host quarterly meetings to improve collaboration and share ideas, identify challenges, and explore opportunities for supporting the cultural sector.




Future Initiatives

Support Data Sharing and Collaboration with External Partners
Strengthen data transparency and foster collaboration with external partners, such as Tourism Barrie, Barrie Public Library, and other cultural and civic organizations, to share insights and data related to cultural activities, visitor engagement, and community needs. Gathered data can aid in identifying trends and needs of community members, visitors, creatives, and cultural organizations, enabling Barrie to better position itself as a cultural city.


GOAL 2

Harnessing creativity to address municipal challenges and priorities.



Ongoing Actions

Embedding Art and Culture in Municipal Policies and Strategies
Continue to prioritize art and culture in City plans, strategies, and documents to holistically support and advance culture throughout all Municipal departments.



Immediate Actions


Enhance Civic Engagement Through Arts-based Practices and Methods
Develop and support arts-based participatory engagement processes where stakeholders and residents are encouraged to collaborate on City projects and express their ideas with the support of artists and using artistic mediums. Art can act as an equalizer, which can be a powerful tool to connect broadly with community members of different ages and backgrounds.



Future Initiatives

Work Alongside Creatives to Support Municipal Innovation
Encourage artist residencies within City departments to infuse creative perspectives into municipal projects, addressing urban challenges through innovative solutions.

Example: City of Saint Paul, MN, City Artist program brings artists into City Hall where they advise on major City initiatives, including capital project design, planning studies, street construction, and programming of public space while working on their own art practice.



Establish “Creativity Labs” to address complex issues facing cities

Connect City staff with artists, art organizations, and community members to understand complex challenges facing Barrie and develop creative, experimental, and transformative solutions.

Example: City of Vancouver’s Solutions Lab (SLab) connects City staff with community collaborations to address complex challenges such as reconciliation, social isolation, equity, climate change etc.

Encouraging ongoing engagement to ensure decision-making and cultural initiatives reflect the needs and interests of all residents.

Immediate Actions

➤ Establish Culture Data Management Protocols

Ensure that culture related data is consistently tracked, maintained and that protocols are created to share such data appropriately to provide an accurate picture of the sector and to inform decision-making.

Example: The Ottawa Culture Research Group is a public—private partnership committed to tracking and analyzing the state of culture in Ottawa.

➤ Share Regular Updates on the Culture Plan Process

Provide consistent and transparent updates on the progress of the Culture Plan. Share key milestones, upcoming initiatives, and opportunities for public input to keep residents informed and engaged throughout the Plan's implementation.

Example: City of Kelowna, BC published the bi-annual Cultural Plan Progress Report Card which reviews the process made towards strategic outcomes of the culture plan.

Future Initiatives

➤ Establish Community Feedback Loops

Create structured and ongoing channels for community feedback on culture, including surveys, forums, and public meetings. Regularly engage with residents to understand their evolving needs and preferences, ensuring that cultural programming and support initiatives are responsive and relevant to all members of the community.





Art and Culture Action Plan

1.4

Ongoing Actions

Immediate Actions

Future Initiatives

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To guide the implementation of the six key priorities (and corresponding actions) outlined in the previous section, this section outlines a high-level “Action Plan” to guide who should be leading these initiatives, what resources are expected to be required for implementation, and potential funding sources to support these efforts.

As this Action Plan was developed at a moment in time, it is intended to serve as a “living” document for City staff to adopt and adapt to fit with its own internal planning tools. Regular reviews and updates should therefore be conducted to ensure the plan remains aligned with new data, evolving funding opportunities, community needs, and sector trends over the ten-year life span of this document.

Interpreting the Action Plan

Timing: Actions are organized by their expected timing of implementation, starting with all Ongoing Actions, followed by Immediate Actions, and Future Initiatives.

Responsible: Identifies the recommended City of Barrie department to lead implementation, along with supporting or collaborating departments. External partners may also be listed when relevant for additional support or coordination.

Resource: Identifies the “ballpark” allocation amount for implementation in either Operating or Capital budget. When applicable, cost estimates are indicated using the following:

- \$ – Under \$25,000
- \$\$ – Under \$50,000
- \$\$\$ – Under \$100,000
- \$\$\$\$ – Over \$100,000

Funding Sources: Potential new and existing municipal funding envelopes, and external sources that the City may explore such as grants or philanthropy.

Ongoing Actions

Include key steps or initiatives the City is already taking, which should be maintained or expanded upon.

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Showcase Barrie’s Culture & Creatives</u> Continue to promote local creatives, organizations, and events across municipal communication channels and services.	GOAL 1.1: Barrie’s local talent and unique cultural advantages are celebrated and showcased, solidifying Barrie’s cultural identity and attracting visitors.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Marketing & Communications Partners: Tourism Barrie	Operating: \$-\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/or tickets from Municipal facilities), Philanthropy, Grants, Corporate Sponsorships
<u>Support Programming That Highlight’s Barrie’s Cultural Advantages</u> Encourage and support programming that highlights Barrie’s diversity and unique cultural advantages in music, theatre, public art, and culinary arts.	GOAL 1.1: Barrie’s local talent and unique cultural advantages are celebrated and showcased, solidifying Barrie’s cultural identity and attracting visitors.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Marketing & Communications Partners: Tourism Barrie	Operating: \$-\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/or tickets from Municipal facilities), Philanthropy, Grants
<u>Support a Connected Cultural Ecosystem</u> Continue to organize regular networking events that unite the creative sector and facilitate relationship building.	GOAL 1.2: A unified and collaborative creative sector in Barrie drives the sustained growth and vitality of the city’s cultural landscape.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Barrie Public Library, Georgian College, the Small Business Centre, Downtown Barrie BIA,	Operating: \$-\$\$	Grants (e.g., Province of Ontario, Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Trillium Foundation)
<u>Expand Capacity Building for All Career Stages</u> Continue to build on and expand Barrie’s Cultural Development Programs through ongoing skill development, mentorship, and showcases for all career stages.	GOAL 1.3: Cultural career incubation provides opportunities for creatives and organizations to develop and thrive.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development	Operating: \$-\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/or tickets from Municipal facilities), Philanthropy, Grants, Corporate Sponsorships
<u>Support Continuous Improvement and Transparency of the Arts & Culture Investment Program (ACIP)</u> Review funding allocations annually with a continued focus on equity and transparency	GOAL 1.4: Strategic investment in the creative sector supports the growth and sustainability of cultural initiatives.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development	Operating	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Leverage City-owned Spaces to Accommodate Cultural Uses</u> Continue to explore opportunities for City-owned spaces to accommodate various cultural needs.	GOAL 2.1: Appropriate, accessible, and affordable cultural spaces attract and retain artists, businesses, and community members in Barrie.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Corporate Facilities Partners: Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre	Operating	
<u>Design Public Spaces to Support Cultural Programming</u> Partner with Parks Planning to design or retrofit parks and public spaces for cultural activities.	GOAL 2.2: Public spaces and the waterfront serve as active venues for public art and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.	Lead: Parks Planning and Operations Support: Economic & Creative Development, Recreation & Culture Services	Capital: \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	
<u>Expand Public Art Across the City</u> Encourage public art initiatives led by residents, community groups, and the private sector, while also continuing to expand the Municipal public art program by diversifying revenue resources and increasing staffing capacity.	GOAL 2.2: Public spaces and the waterfront serve as active venues for public art and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Development Services, Parks Planning and Operations, Corporate Facilities	Capital: \$\$\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., Increases to the Public Art Reserve Fund, Municipal Capital Projects Percent-for-Public-Art program, Municipal Fees & Service charges), Private Developer Incentives
<u>Advance Winter Cultural Activities</u> Develop a Winter Placemaking Strategy that identifies arts, culture, and tourism opportunities during the winter months.	GOAL 2.2: Public spaces and the waterfront serve as active venues for public art and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA, Barrie Tourism	Capital: \$\$-\$\$\$	Philanthropy, Grants, Corporate Sponsorships
<u>Expand Community Outreach Campaigns</u> Enhance outreach to the local community by leveraging the Creative Barrie Instagram account, along with newsletters, mailings, radio spots, and information sessions to raise awareness about cultural opportunities and initiatives.	GOAL 3.1: Clear and accessible communication ensures that community members and visitors can easily discover cultural opportunities, reaffirming Barrie’s identity and fostering pride and belonging.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Marketing & Communications Department	Operating: \$	Grants

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible:	Resource:	Funding Source:
<u>Integrate a Multicultural Approach to Communications</u> Continue to implement multilingual materials to ensure cultural opportunities are accessible to all community members, especially newcomers and diverse populations.	GOAL 3.1: Clear and accessible communication ensures that community members and visitors can easily discover cultural opportunities, reaffirming Barrie’s identity and fostering pride and belonging.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development, Recreation and Culture Services Support: Marketing & Communications Department	Operating: \$	Grants
<u>Increase Support for Subsidized, Low-cost, and Free Programming</u> Continue developing and supporting free City-led events and explore community partnerships to expand affordable and accessible cultural activities, with a focus on equity-deserving groups.	GOAL 3.2: Cultural opportunities are inclusive, accessible, and affordable, ensuring that all individuals—including equity-deserving groups such as youth, seniors, and newcomers—are included.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development, Recreation and Culture Services Support: Barrie Public Library, Downtown Barrie BIA	Operating: \$-\$\$\$\$	Philanthropy, Grants, Corporate Sponsorships
<u>Expand Connectivity and Access to Cultural Attractions with Public and Active Transportation</u> Continue to collaborate cross-departmentally to enhance public transportation and active transportation services that connect cultural venues and events.	GOAL 3.2: Cultural opportunities are inclusive, accessible, and affordable, ensuring that all individuals—including equity-deserving groups such as youth, seniors, and newcomers—are included.	Lead: Recreation and Culture Services Support: . Development Services, Transit & Parking Strategy, Infrastructure Partners: Barrie Transit	Capital: \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	
<u>Support Events and Festivals Celebrating Diversity</u> Encourage both City-led and community-led events that highlight Barrie’s diverse cultures and heritage, supporting cross-cultural understanding and connection.	GOAL 4.1: Barrie’s cultural diversity is actively celebrated through events, programs, and initiatives that promote cross-cultural dialogue, empathy, and foster a sense of unity within the community.	Lead: Recreation & Culture Services Support: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Organizations representing diverse communities	Operating: \$\$-\$\$\$	Philanthropy, Grants, Corporate Sponsorships
<u>Hire Diverse Artists for City Opportunities</u> Ensure that artists hired for City programming and public art reflect Barrie’s cultural diversity, creating inclusive public space and experiences that represent a wide range of cultural perspectives and stories.	GOAL 4.1: Barrie’s cultural diversity is actively celebrated through events, programs, and initiatives that promote cross-cultural dialogue, empathy, and foster a sense of unity within the community.	Lead: Recreation & Culture Services Support: Economic & Creative	Operatingl: \$	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible:	Resource:	Funding Source:
<u>Deepen Engagement With Equity-Deserving Groups</u> When developing cultural development programs, engage and build relationships with multicultural groups, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQIA+ community, Indigenous Peoples, newcomers, etc. to understand and address needs and desires.	GOAL 4.2: Equitable representation in Barrie’s cultural sector ensures that the traditions, histories, and stories of all communities, including Indigenous peoples and newcomers, are prominently featured and celebrated.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Anti-Racism Task Force and organizations representing equity-deserving groups	Operating	
<u>Strengthen Relationships with Indigenous Communities for Improved Cultural Representation</u> Continue to build relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, organizations, and individuals to understand barriers to cultural development, and identify actions to further opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and representation in Barrie.	GOAL 5.1: Strengthened and deepened relationships are established with Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals, fostering mutual respect and collaboration.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Indige-nous Rights Hold-ers, Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle	Operating	
<u>Embed Indigenous Placekeeping through Art and Culture in Public Spaces</u> Collaborate with and support Indigenous Rights Holders to identify locations and opportunities for Indigenous art, culture, and living heritage to be featured across Barrie.	GOAL 5.2: Barrie actively showcases and honours Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories, ensuring they are visible, respected, and celebrated across the city.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Indigenous Rights Holders, Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle	Capital: \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/ or tickets from Municipal facilities and/or increases to the Public Art Reserve Fund, Municipal Capital Projects Percent-for-Public-Art program)
<u>Support Knowledge Building with City staff and Council on the Value of Culture in City Building</u> Develop educational campaigns for City staff and Council members that highlight the social, economic, and community-building benefits of culture.	GOAL 6.1: Foster collabora-tion and knowledge-sharing to strengthen the under-standing of culture’s intrinsic value.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services	Operating	
<u>Embedding Art and Culture in Municipal Policies and Strategies</u> Continue to prioritize art and culture in City plans, strategies, and documents to holistically support and advance culture throughout all Municipal departments.	GOAL 6.2: Harness creativity to address municipal chal-lenges and priorities.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Development Services, Infrastructure	Operating	

Immediate Actions

New initiatives to be implemented within 1-3 years. They are expected to have a short-term impact on Barrie’s culture sector, helping build momentum.

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Strengthen Partnerships with Tourism Organizations to Increase Cultural Tourism</u> Enhance collaborations with Tourism Barrie and regional tourism boards and cultural alliances to promote Barrie’s cultural offerings beyond city limits, attracting cultural tourists and supporting the local economy.	GOAL 1.1: Barrie’s local talent and unique cultural advantages are celebrated and showcased, solidify-ing Barrie’s cultural identity and attracting visitors.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Marketing & Communications Partners: Tourism Barrie, Tourism Simcoe County	Operating	
<u>Launch a City-Wide Cultural Campaign</u> Develop a promotional campaign to position Barrie as a vibrant hub for music, theatre, public art, and culinary arts, highlighting the city’s diverse creative landscape to engage residents and attract visitors.	GOAL 1.1: Barrie’s local talent and unique cultural advantages are celebrated and showcased, solidifying Barrie’s cultural identity and attracting visitors.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Marketing & Communications Partners: Tourism Barrie, Tourism Simcoe County, Downtown Barrie BIA	Operating: \$\$	Grants (e.g., Province of Ontario, Region 7 Regional Tourism Organization)
<u>Strengthen Collaboration and Resource Sharing Amongst City Partners</u> Expand collaborations between the City of Barrie and its cultural partners by organizing annual or bi-annual meetings to discuss upcoming plans and current challenges, and explore opportunities for joint programming, sharing resources, and broadening audiences.	GOAL 1.2: A unified and collaborative creative sector in Barrie drives the sustained growth and vitality of the city’s cultural landscape.	Lead: Economic & Cre-ative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services Partners: Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre, Georgian College, the Small Business Centre, Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie	Operating \$	
<u>Promote Cross-Sector Collaboration</u> Support partnerships between the private sector and creative sector through networking events and educational campaigns that speak to the value of culture in supporting attractive, livable and economically vibrant places.	GOAL 1.2: A unified and collaborative creative sector in Barrie drives the sustained growth and vitality of the city’s cultural landscape.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: The Small Business Centre, Downtown Barrie BIA	Operating \$\$	Grants (e.g., Province of Ontario, Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Trillium Foundation)
<u>Develop a “one-stop-shop” Approach to Centralizing Information and Resources for Creatives, Cultural Organizations, and Community Members</u> Appoint a current City staff member as a “Cultural Liaison” to serve as an advocate for the creative community and act as a primary point of contact for all cultural inquiries, including cultural development programs, cultural events, and renting City-owned facilities.	GOAL 1.3: Cultural career incubation provides opportunities for creatives and organizations to develop and thrive.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services	Operating	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Provide Customized Support for Creatives and Creative Enterprises</u> Offer bespoke support to cultural businesses, organizations, and individual creatives through the Small Business Centre, including specialized advice, training, and resources designed to foster growth and success.	GOAL 1.3: Cultural career incubation provides opportunities for creatives and organizations to develop and thrive.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: The Small Business Centre	Operating: \$-\$\$	Grants or Sponsorships
<u>Leverage Resources Amongst City Cultural Providers</u> Connect with City partners like the MacLaren Art Centre, the Small Business Centre, Barrie Public Library, and other community partners to support capacity-building initiatives by pooling resources and reaching broader audiences.	GOAL 1.3: Cultural career incubation pro-vides opportunities for creatives and organi-zations to develop and thrive.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre, Georgian Col-lege, the Small Business Centre, Downtown Barrie BIA	Operating	
<u>Develop a Strategy for the Arts & Culture Investment Program</u> Conduct a study of ACIP to determine its goals and outcomes, and identify priority funding areas to strengthen the program.	GOAL 1.4: Strategic investment in the creative sector supports the growth and sustainability of cultural initiatives.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Corporate Facilities, Finance	Capital: \$\$-\$\$\$	
<u>Diversify Revenue Sources to Fund the Arts & Culture Investment Program</u> Explore additional funding sources for ACIP, for example, adding an surcharge or allocating a percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, film permit fees, and/or ticket fees.	GOAL 1.4: Strategic investment in the creative sector supports the growth and sustainability of cultural initiatives.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Corporate Facilities, Finance	Operating	New Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/or tickets from Municipal facilities)
<u>Improve Access to City-owned Facilities and Public Spaces by Establishing a Community Group Registry</u> Create a Community Group Registry that supports cultural organizations, volunteer groups, clubs, and creatives in Barrie by providing benefits such as discounted space rentals and liability insurance coverage through the City’s insurance affiliates, making it easier for community groups to access the resources they need for cultural events and programming.	GOAL 2.1: Appropriate, accessible, and affordable cultural spaces attract and retain artists, businesses, and community members in Barrie.	Lead: Economic & Cre-ative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Legal Services, Service Barrie	Operating	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Encourage Non-City-Owned Spaces to Support Cultural Uses</u> Educate the private sector on the needs of the cultural sector, encourage them to offer non-traditional spaces for cultural use, and share information publicly to ensure these spaces are accessible.	GOAL 2.1: Appropriate, accessible, and affordable cultural spaces attract and retain artists, businesses, and community members in Barrie.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: The Small Business Centre, Downtown Barrie BIA, Local School Boards	Operating	
<u>Create a Multipurpose, Multidisciplinary Performing Arts Centre or Cultural Hub that is Accessible to the Barrie Community</u> Develop a multipurpose, multidisciplinary performing arts or cultural hub to host medium-to large-scale events, exhibitions, film screenings, performances, celebrations, and festivals organized by residents, community groups, arts organizations, and the City.	GOAL 2.1: Appropriate, accessible, and affordable cultural spaces attract and retain artists, businesses, and community members in Barrie.	Lead: Corporate Facilities Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Economic & Creative Development	Capital: \$\$\$\$+	
<u>Increase Opportunities for Outdoor Live Performances</u> Review and streamline policies that affect event and performances in public spaces.	GOAL 2.2: Public spaces and the waterfront serve as active venues for public art and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.	Lead: Recreation & Culture Services Support: Economic & Creative Development, Legal Services Department	Operating	
<u>Designate Downtown as a Cultural District</u> Collaborate with the Development Services Department, Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie, as well as local institutions, businesses, creatives, and community members to establish downtown as a Cultural District.	GOAL 2.3: Barrie’s downtown is recognized as a Cultural District, concentrating cultural activities, events, and spaces to enhance its role as a cultural hub.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Development Services, Marketing & Communications Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA, MacLaren Art Centre, Tourism Barrie	Capital: \$\$-\$\$\$	Grants (Federal and Provincial Grants, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, My Main Street, Region 7 Regional Tourism Organization)
<u>Become a Member of the Global Cultural Districts Network (GCDN)</u> Connect with culture districts across the world and understand how to develop a strong culture district through knowledge-sharing opportunities and events.	GOAL 2.3: Barrie’s downtown is recognized as a Cultural District, concentrating cultural activities, events, and spaces to enhance its role as a cultural hub.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development	Operating	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Brand the Downtown as a Cultural District</u> Establish a distinct visual identity for the Cultural District through cohesive branding, marketing campaigns, wayfinding, and creative placemaking that connects cultural attractions and enhances the downtown’s identity as a cultural destination.	GOAL 2.3: Barrie’s downtown is recognized as a Cultural District, concentrating cultural activities, events, and spaces to enhance its role as a cultural hub.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Marketing & Communications Department Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie	Operating: \$-\$\$\$	Grants (Federal and Provincial Grants, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, My Main Street, Region 7 Regional Tourism Organization)
<u>Designate a Centralized Digital Platform for Arts and Culture</u> Designate a current platform or develop a new one that serves as a comprehensive online hub where residents and visitors can easily find and upload information on cultural events, programs, initiatives, and organizations.	GOAL 3.1: Clear and accessible communication ensures that community members and visitors can easily discover cultural opportunities, reaffirming Barrie’s identity and fostering pride and belonging.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Marketing & Communications Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie, Barrie Public Library	Operating: \$-\$\$	Grants (Federal and Provincial Grants, Region 7 Regional Tourism Organization)
<u>Support More Spaces for Youth to Engage with Culture</u> Explore opportunities for City facilities and partners (e.g., Barrie Recreation and Community Centres, Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre) to offer dedicated times and spaces for youth for unstructured and self-directed cultural activities and expression.	GOAL 3.2: Cultural opportunities are inclusive, accessible, and affordable, ensuring that all individuals—including equity-deserving groups such as youth, seniors, and newcomers—are included.	Lead: Recreation & Culture Services Support: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre	Operating	
<u>Increase Physical Accessibility of Cultural Spaces through Knowledge-Sharing</u> Establish a centralized resource hub that provides guidelines, education, funding resources, and case studies for making cultural spaces and events more accessible.	GOAL 3.2: Cultural opportunities are inclusive, accessible, and affordable, ensuring that all individuals—including equity-deserving groups such as youth, seniors, and newcomers—are included.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Marketing and Communications Partners: Seniors & Accessibility Advisory Committee	Operating	
<u>Conduct a Needs Assessment with Multicultural Groups</u> Collaborate with multicultural groups to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that explores opportunities and obstacles in cultural programming and development, including areas like funding, space, and awareness.	GOAL 4.2: Equitable representation in Barrie’s cultural sector ensures that the traditions, histories, and stories of all communities—including Indigenous peoples and newcomers—are prominently featured and celebrated.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services Partners: Organizations representing equity-deserving groups	Operating	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Support Inclusive Representation in Decision-Making</u> Ensure arts and culture advisory groups, like the Barrie Arts Advisory Committee and Barrie Public Art Committee reflect the diversity of Barrie’s community.	GOAL 4.2: Equitable representation in Barrie’s cultural sector ensures that the traditions, histories, and stories of all communities—including Indigenous peoples and newcomers—are prominently featured and celebrated.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services Partners: Barrie Youth Council, Anti-Racism Task Force, Seniors & Accessibility Advisory Committee	Operating	
<u>Adopt and Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</u> Adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation.	GOAL 5.1: Strengthened and deepened relationships are established with Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals, fostering mutual respect and collaboration.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services	Operating	
<u>Establish Protocols and Policies to Engage Indigenous Communities.</u> Ensure that engagement and communication with Indigenous Peoples and communities respects Indigenous protocols and worldviews.	GOAL 5.1: Strengthened and deepened relationships are established with Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals, fostering mutual respect and collaboration.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services Partners: Indigenous Rights Holders	Operating	
<u>Protect Indigenous Rights in Municipal Spaces</u> Explore policies that protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples to practice their traditions and ceremonial practices at Municipal facilities, properties, and functions, including events and programs.	GOAL 5.2: Barrie actively showcases and honours Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories, ensuring they are visible, respected, and celebrated across the city.	Lead: Corporate Facilities Support: Economic & Creative Development, Recreation & Culture Services, Parks Planning & Parks Operations Partners: Indigenous Rights Holders	Operating	
<u>Create a Interdepartmental City Committee for Public Art and Culture</u> Designate staff members across City departments to act as cultural ambassadors, ensuring that cultural considerations are embedded into daily operations and decision-making within their respective Departments or projects.	GOAL 6.1: Fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing to strengthen the understanding of culture’s intrinsic value.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Corporate Facilities, Development Services, Infrastructure, Parks Planning & Operations, Barrie Transit, Marketing & Communications, Waste Management & Environmental Sustainability	Operating	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Clearly Define Roles and Responsibilities between Economic & Creative Development and Recreation & Culture Services departments</u> Ensure that roles and responsibilities between the two departments are defined, and host quarterly meetings to improve collaboration and share ideas, identify challenges, and explore opportunities for supporting the cultural sector.	GOAL 6.1: Fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing to strengthen the understanding of culture’s intrinsic value.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services	Operating	
<u>Enhance Civic Engagement Through Arts-based Practices and Methods.</u> Develop and support arts-based participatory engagement processes where stakeholders and residents are encouraged to collaborate on City projects and express their ideas with the support of artists and using artistic mediums.	GOAL 6.2: Harnessing creativity to address municipal challenges and priorities.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Development Services, Infrastructure, Parks Planning & Operations	Operating	
<u>Establish Culture Data Management Protocols</u> Ensure that culture related data is consistently tracked, maintained and that protocols are created to share such data appropriately to provide an accurate picture of the sector and to inform decision-making.	GOAL 6.3: Encouraging ongoing engagement to ensure decision-making and cultural initiatives reflect the needs and interests of all residents.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Tourism Barrie, Downtown Barrie BIA, Small Business Centre	Operating	
<u>Share Regular Updates on the Culture Plan Process</u> Provide consistent and transparent updates on the progress of the Culture Plan. Share key milestones, upcoming initiatives, and opportunities for public input to keep residents informed and engaged throughout the Plan’s implementation.	GOAL 6.3: Encouraging ongoing engagement to ensure decision-making and cultural initiatives reflect the needs and interests of all residents.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Marketing & Communications,	Operating	

Future Initiatives

Recommended actions for when more foundational, short-term actions have been completed. These may also require more planning and resources.

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Create a Directory of Local Creatives for Hire</u> Create a directory or another type of resource that promotes and facilitates the hiring of local creatives for City events and festivals, while also promoting their services to the broader community.	GOAL 1.1: Barrie’s local talent and unique cultural advantages are celebrated and showcased, solidifying Barrie’s cultural identity and attracting visitors.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Marketing & Communications, Small Business Centre	Operating \$	Grants (e.g., Province of Ontario, Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Trillium Foundation)
<u>Expand Arts & Culture Investment Program Funding Categories</u> As ACIP revenue streams become more diversified, expand the program’s funding categories to include individual artists/collectives and multi-year funding.	GOAL 1.4: Strategic investment in the creative sector supports the growth and sustainability of cultural initiatives.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development	Operating: \$\$\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/or tickets from Municipal facilities), Philanthropy, Grants
<u>Establish Partnerships with Private and Philanthropic Sectors</u> Explore partnerships and sponsorships with private and/or philanthropic organizations to create pilot or temporary funding programs to encourage creativity and innovation.	GOAL 1.4: Strategic investment in the creative sector supports the growth and sustainability of cultural initiatives.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development	Operating	
<u>Incentivize the Repurposing of Vacant Spaces or Underdeveloped Land for Cultural Uses</u> Explore incentives to encourage partnerships between property owners and cultural organizations, such as subsidies, fee matching, and property tax reductions.	GOAL 2.1: Appropriate, accessible, and affordable cultural spaces attract and retain artists, businesses, and community members in Barrie.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Building Services Department, Development Services Department Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA	Operating \$-\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/or tickets from Municipal facilities), Philanthropy, Grants
<u>Develop Cultural Spaces Across Barrie’s Neighbourhoods and Business Areas</u> Encourage the development of new public spaces adjacent to commercial and mixed-use areas that can create gatherings spaces for residents and offer opportunities for creatives to perform or showcase their practices.	GOAL 2.2: Public spaces and the waterfront serve as active venues for public art and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Building Services Department, Development Services Department (Parks Planning & Operations) Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA, Small Business Centre	Capital: \$\$-\$\$\$	Philanthropy, Grants, Corporate Sponsorships

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Promote Citizen-led Cultural Activations and Events</u> Establish micro-grants to support community-driven events and placemaking initiatives that activate public spaces and neighbourhoods.	GOAL 2.2: Public spaces and the water-front serve as active venues for public art and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services	Operating: \$-\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/or tickets from Municipal facilities), Philanthropy, Grants, Corporate Sponsorships Interdepartmental Partnerships (e.g., departments that focused on public health, urban design, and placemaking).
<u>Encourage Growth of the Cultural District</u> Explore Municipal incentives to support the growth of the Cultural District through co-location of cultural infrastructure and attractions and creating an artful public realm.	GOAL 2.3: Barrie’s downtown is recognized as a Cultural District, concentrating cultural activities, events, and spaces to enhance its role as a cultural hub.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Development Services Department, Building Services Department Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA	Operating	
<u>Build the Night Economy of Barrie</u> Develop a Night Time Economy Strategy aimed at generating jobs, attracting tourists and talent, fostering a sense of community, and enhancing safety in the downtown area.	GOAL 2.3: Barrie’s downtown is recognized as a Cultural District, concentrating cultural activities, events, and spaces to enhance its role as a cultural hub.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Development Services Department Partners: Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie	Capital: \$-\$\$	Grants (Region 7 Regional Tourism Organization, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)
<u>Increase Digital Literacy Amongst Community Members and Cultural Organizations</u> Enhance awareness and access to cultural opportunities by developing programs that build digital knowledge, skills, and capacity.	GOAL 3.1: Clear and accessible communication ensures that community members and visitors can easily discover cultural opportunities, reaffirming Barrie’s identity and fostering pride and belonging	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Partners: Barrie Public Library Downtown Barrie BIA, Small Business Centre	Operating: \$-\$\$	Grants (Federal Government, Ontario Government, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council), Corporate Sponsorships

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Develop a Fund for Showcasing Diversity</u> Investigate opportunities to provide funding or grants for events and programs that emphasize multiculturalism and inclusivity.	GOAL 4.1: Barrie’s cultural diversity is actively celebrated through events, programs, and initiatives that promote cross-cultural dialogue, empathy, and foster a sense of unity within the community.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development	Operating: \$-\$\$	New Municipal Funding Sources (e.g., revenue from percentage of municipal recreation registration fees, user fees, film permit fees and/ or tickets from Municipal facilities), Philanthropy, Grants
<u>Establish an Indigenous Advisory Circle</u> Explore developing an Indigenous Advisory Circle for City-wide initiatives with Council and City Clerks to ensure decision-making involves Indigenous Peoples.	GOAL 5.1: Strengthened and deepened relationships are established with Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals, fostering mutual respect and collaboration.	Lead: CAO Support: Economic & Creative Development, Recreation & Culture Services Partners: Indigenous Rights Holders	Operating: \$	
<u>Recognize and Protect Indigenous Significant Sites</u> Work with and support Indigenous Rights Holders to identify and recognize sites of Indigenous cultural significance, traditions, and stories in Barrie.	GOAL 5.2: Barrie actively showcases and honours Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories, ensuring they are visible, respected, and celebrated across the city.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Development Services Department	Capital: \$\$-\$\$\$\$	Grants (Federal Government, Provincial Government)
<u>Support Indigenous Land Stewardship and Conservation</u> Collaborate with Indigenous communities to explore opportunities for land stewardship in City public spaces, parks, buildings, and facilities.	GOAL 5.2: Barrie actively showcases and honours Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories, ensuring they are visible, respected, and celebrated across the city.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Development Services Department, Corporate Facilities Department	Capital: \$\$-\$\$\$\$	Grants (Federal Government, Provincial Government)
<u>Support Data Sharing and Collaboration with External Partners</u> Strengthen data transparency and foster collaboration with external partners, such as Tourism Barrie, Barrie Public Library, and other cultural and civic organizations, to share insights and data related to cultural activities, visitor engagement, and community needs.	GOAL 6.1: Foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing to strengthen the understanding of culture’s intrinsic value.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: Recreation & Culture Services, Tourism Barrie, Barrie Public Library, MacLaren Art Centre	Operating	

Recommended Action	Associated Goal	Responsible	Resource	Funding Source
<u>Work alongside Creatives to support Municipal Innovation</u> Encourage artist residencies within City departments to infuse creative perspectives into municipal projects, addressing urban challenges through innovative solutions.	GOAL 6.2: Harness creativity to address municipal challenges and priorities.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: All Departments	Operating: \$\$-\$\$\$\$	Grants (Federal Government, Provincial Government, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council)
<u>Establish “Creativity Labs” to address complex issues facing cities</u> Connect City staff with artists, art organizations, and community members to understand complex challenges facing Barrie and develop creative, experimental, and transformative solutions.	GOAL 6.2: Harness creativity to address municipal challenges and priorities.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development Support: All Departments	Operating: \$\$-\$\$\$	Grants (Federal Government, Provincial Government, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council)
<u>Establish Community Feedback Loops</u> Create structured and ongoing channels for community feedback on culture, including surveys, forums, and public meetings.	GOAL 6.3: Encouraging ongoing engagement to ensure decision-making and cultural initiatives reflect the needs and interests of all residents.	Lead: Economic & Creative Development	Operating	

Progress Tracking (KPIs) 1.5



KPIs for the Six Priorities of
the Culture Plan

The following section outlines what success looks like for the City of Barrie in its implementation of the Culture Plan. It outlines desired outcomes (“What Success Looks Like”) for the six priorities of the Culture Plan, and identifies key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress toward the goals associated with each priority. These KPIs will serve as key metrics to track advancement and offer valuable insights into the state of culture in Barrie as the City begins to implement the plan’s recommendations.

Establishing baseline KPIs in Year 1 (2025) will be the first step, which is done by tracking City-accessible data, as well as conducting outreach to gather relevant data from key creatives and cultural organizations. This should be followed by continuous monitoring in subsequent years to assess progress.

Priority 1: Fostering a Resilient and Thriving Creative Community

Cultivating a dynamic creative sector, Barrie positions itself as an attractive destination for cultural organizations, businesses, and artists, enhancing Barrie’s identity as a cultural hub and attracting more visitors.

What Success Looks Like

- Barrie is a vibrant cultural hub, with a thriving and resilient creative community.
- The city is widely recognized for its unique cultural offerings, particularly in music, theatre, public art, and culinary arts.
- Local talent is consistently showcased and celebrated, attracting visitors and fostering community pride.
- A unified and collaborative creative sector drives sustained growth, with strong cross-sector partnerships and a robust network of support for cultural initiatives.
- Creatives have access to comprehensive career incubation resources, including customized business support, centralized information, and expanded arts workshops.
- The Arts & Culture Investment Program is well-funded through diversified sources, offering equitable and transparent funding opportunities to a wide range of individuals and organizations.
- Barrie’s cultural landscape is dynamic, economically vigorous, and deeply integrated into the city’s identity and day-to-day life.

Priority 1 KPIs:

<p>Goal 1.1 Barrie’s local talent and unique cultural advantages are celebrated and showcased, enhancing the city’s identity and attracting visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased participation in City-run or supported cultural programs and events.• Number of funds distributed to local artists/creatives. <p><i>Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth in cultural tourism (number of cultural visitors, hotel bookings during cultural events).• Economic impact of cultural programs (e.g., artist earnings and local economic benefit measured through surveys and tools such as TRIEM).• Cultural sector employment growth (number of jobs created in the creative industries).• Public satisfaction with cultural initiatives (measured through community feedback surveys/events).
<p>Goal 1.2 A unified and collaborative creative sector in Barrie drives the sustained growth and vitality of the city’s cultural landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in cultural program attendance and engagement, indicating community support for a unified cultural sector.• Number of new programs or projects developed as a result of collaboration amongst city partners, businesses, and the creative community. <p><i>Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in the number of cross-sector partnerships formed between the creative sector and other industries.• Growth in community participation in cross-disciplinary events and programs.• Increased financial investment in the creative sector through business partnerships providing sponsorships and/or in-kind support.• Growth in economic activity generated by creative sector events and partnerships (measured by local business revenue, creative sector employment).• Increase in the perception of Barrie as a hub of creative collaboration (measured through community surveys).
<p>Goal 1.3 Cultural career incubation provides opportunities for creatives and organizations to develop and thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth in the number of participants engaging with arts workshops, outreach programs, and creative development opportunities.• Increase in the number of creatives accessing skills development and capacity-building programs.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Growth in the number of cultural enterprises (e.g., new businesses, startups) in Barrie.
- Increase in employment or freelance opportunities within the creative sector.
- Economic growth metrics for creative enterprises (measured through organizations self-reporting data on revenue and audience expansion).
- Increase in public awareness and participation in expanded literary arts programs.
- Audience growth and diversity in cultural career-focused events and initiatives.
- Improvements in skill levels, resource access, and business growth as reported by participants.

Goal 1.4 Strategic investment in the creative sector supports the growth and sustainability of cultural initiatives.

- Increase in the number and diversity of organizations accessing ACIP funding.
- Percentage of first-time applicants successfully receiving funding.
- Improved equity in funding distribution (measured through demographic data or funding patterns).

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Growth in the number of cultural enterprises (e.g., new businesses, startups) in Barrie.
- Growth in total ACIP funding from diversified revenue sources.
- Increased financial stability for the ACIP (measured by year-over-year funding increases).
- Increase in the number of funding recipients, their organizational growth and the number of projects produced in Barrie.
- Growth in the number of private sector and philanthropic partnerships.
- Improved long-term sustainability of cultural initiatives through expanded and diversified funding streams.

Priority 2: Supporting Spaces for Culture to Thrive

A commitment to enhancing physical and social environments, including venues, public spaces, and creative infrastructure, enables public art and culture to flourish throughout Barrie.

What Success Looks Like

- Barrie is a cultural hub with thriving spaces for arts and culture across the city.
- The downtown area is a bustling Cultural District, recognized for its diverse offerings of performances, exhibitions, and events.
- Artists and cultural organizations can access affordable, appropriate, and accessible spaces, including a new multipurpose culture hub.
- Public spaces throughout the city are alive and activated with year-round cultural activities, fostering stronger community connections.
- The night time economy is flourishing, creating jobs and attracting visitors.
- Barrie is known for its robust cultural infrastructure, active citizen participation in arts and culture, and a healthy creative community that contributes significantly to the city’s identity and economy.

Priority 2 KPIs:

Goal 2.1 Affordable, appropriate, and accessible cultural spaces attract and retain artists, businesses, and community members in Barrie.

- User satisfaction with the affordability, accessibility, and suitability of spaces.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Increase in the number of affordable and accessible cultural spaces available in Barrie.
- Percentage of cultural spaces utilized by local artists and organizations (measured through organizations self-reporting on user data).
- Growth in diversified revenue streams supporting cultural infrastructure.
- Financial sustainability of existing and new City-owned cultural venues (measured by balanced or surplus budgets).
- Increase in the number of cultural events or programming utilizing repurposed or new spaces that are City-owned or privately owned.

Goal 2.2 Enhanced public spaces serve as active venues for arts and culture year-round, strengthening community connections and participation.

- Increase in the number of cultural events and activities held in public spaces that are City-led and community-led.
- Number of residents and visitors attending cultural events in public spaces.
- Number of interdepartmental collaborations within the City to fund cultural events and initiatives.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Usage rates of new or improved public spaces by cultural organizations and community members.
- Growth in the number of community-led cultural activations and events.
- Increase in participation rates at neighbourhood and city-wide cultural events.
- Diversity of cultural events held in public spaces, including seasonal and cross-disciplinary events.
- Number of partnerships formed with local businesses, institutions, and city departments to support cultural programming.
- New funding sources and resources secured for citizen-led cultural activations.

Goal 2.3 Barrie’s downtown is recognized as a Cultural District, concentrating cultural activities, events, and spaces to enhance its role as a cultural hub

- Increase in the number of visitors attending cultural events, festivals, and performances downtown.
- Growth in revenue generated from cultural events, performances, and festivals in the downtown (measured through data collection in partnership with the Downtown Barrie BIA and event organizers).
- Growth in event attendance, and use of downtown cultural spaces.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Increase in the number of businesses and cultural institutions operating in the downtown.
- Increase in tourism and visitor spending in the downtown area.
- Public satisfaction with downtown cultural experiences (through surveys and feedback).
- Number of new cultural activities, performances, and exhibitions held in the downtown.
- Growth in participation in nighttime cultural events, including all-ages activities.
- Growth in collaborations with external stakeholders (e.g., youth groups, entertainment venues).

Priority 3: Making Culture Accessible to All
Prioritizing accessibility, the City of Barrie strives to ensure that arts and culture are inclusive and available to all residents and visitors, regardless of age, background, or ability.

What Success Looks Like

- Barrie’s arts and culture offerings are truly accessible to all residents and visitors.
- A comprehensive, user-friendly digital platform serves as a centralized hub for cultural information, seamlessly integrating with existing resources.
- Robust community outreach campaigns, including multilingual materials, ensure widespread awareness of cultural opportunities.
- Digital literacy programs empower both community members and cultural organizations to engage effectively online.
- The city offers an array of free, low-cost, and subsidized cultural events, with dedicated spaces for youth to explore self-directed activities.
- Cultural venues and events are physically accessible and supported by a rich knowledge-sharing resource hub. Enhanced public and active transportation connects cultural attractions, making them easily reachable for all.
- There is increased participation in cultural activities across all demographic groups, particularly among youth, seniors, newcomers, and other equity-deserving groups, fostering a strong sense of community pride and belonging.

Priority 3 KPIs:

Goal 3.1 Clear and accessible communication ensures that community members and visitors can easily discover cultural opportunities, reaffirming Barrie’s identity and fostering pride and belonging.

- Increase in overall attendance and participation in cultural events across Barrie.
- Percentage of residents who feel cultural opportunities are easily discoverable and accessible (through surveys).
- Growth in community engagement with arts and culture opportunities, both online and in-person.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Increase in the number of accessible events (e.g., multilingual, inclusive of diverse populations).
- Number of partnerships with local organizations formed to enhance outreach, especially to equity-deserving groups.
- Number of joint campaigns and co-organized events with community organizations.

Goal 3.2 Cultural opportunities are inclusive, accessible, and affordable, ensuring that all individuals, including equity-deserving groups such as youth, seniors, and newcomers, are included.

- Increase in overall participation in arts and culture programs across all demographic groups, particularly youth, older adults, and newcomers.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Percentage of cultural events and spaces meeting both affordability and accessibility standards.
- Increase in the use of public and active transportation for attending cultural events and venues (tracked through surveys).

Priority 4: Celebrating Barrie’s Cutlural Diversity

Promoting a community that is welcoming, inclusive, and representative of all members, Barrie fosters a rich cultural environment that honours and showcases the diverse cultures and heritage that shape the city’s identity.

What Success Looks Like

- Barrie is an inclusive city where cultural diversity is actively celebrated and woven into the fabric of community life.
- The City hosts numerous well-attended events and festivals showcasing various cultures, with strong participation from diverse communities.
- Public spaces and City programming feature art and performances representing a wide range of cultural perspectives.
- There are meaningful connections between established residents and newcomers, fostering a welcoming and inclusive community.
- The City’s decision-making bodies reflect Barrie’s diversity, ensuring all voices are heard and considered.
- Educational initiatives have increased cross-cultural understanding and empathy among residents.
- Equity-deserving groups have improved access to cultural opportunities, and there is a strong sense of belonging across all communities.
- Barrie is recognized as a model for multiculturalism, where the traditions, histories, and stories of all communities, including Indigenous peoples and newcomers, are prominently featured, respected, and celebrated.

Priority 4 KPIs:

Goal 4.1 Barrie’s cultural diversity is actively celebrated through events, programs, and initiatives that promote cross-cultural dialogue, empathy, and foster a sense of unity within the community.

- Increase in participation rates from diverse cultural communities in arts and culture programming.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Percentage of cultural programs and events meeting inclusivity and diversity standards.
- Increase in the number of partnerships with cultural organizations, communities, and external funders focused on promoting diversity.

Goal 4.2 Equitable representation in Barrie’s cultural sector ensures that the traditions, histories, and stories of all communities—including Indigenous peoples and newcomers—are prominently featured and celebrated.

- Increase in the percentage of diverse cultural groups represented in City decision-making bodies and advisory groups.
- Increase in the number of City programs promoting cultural diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Percentage of equity-deserving groups reporting improved access to cultural programs and opportunities.
- Positive feedback rates from surveys and consultations, showing a sense of belonging and representation within the community.

Priority 5: Furthering Reconciliation and Supporting Indigenous Futures

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, Barrie is committed to building authentic and reciprocal relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, collaboratively supporting Indigenous culture and heritage.

What Success Looks Like

- The City has established strong, authentic relationships with Indigenous communities, guided by respectful engagement protocols and an active Indigenous Advisory Circle.
- All City staff are well-educated on Indigenous issues, leading to more informed decision-making and policy development aligned with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Barrie’s public spaces prominently feature Indigenous art, culture, and living heritage, with protected significant sites and designated areas for traditional practices.
- Indigenous-led land stewardship initiatives flourish, promoting both ecological sustainability and cultural preservation.
- The City’s events, programs, and facilities fully support and protect Indigenous rights and traditions.
- Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives are deeply woven into the fabric of Barrie, visibly celebrated, respected and are integral to the city’s identity and operations, fostering a profound sense of inclusivity and reconciliation.

Priority 5 KPIs:

Goal 5.1 Strengthened and deepened relationships are established with Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals, fostering mutual respect and collaboration.

- Frequency of ongoing engagement between the City and Indigenous representatives.
- Increase in the number of collaborative initiatives and projects with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Percentage of Indigenous cultural representation across City-led events, festivals, and programs.
- Increase in City decisions, policies, and programming reflecting Indigenous perspectives and needs based on consultations.
- Improved public and Indigenous community perception of Barrie’s reconciliation efforts, gauged through surveys or consultations.

Goal 5.2 Barrie actively showcases and honours Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories, ensuring they are visible, respected, and celebrated across the city.

- Number of successful collaborations with Indigenous artists and cultural leaders.
- Percentage of Indigenous cultural representation across public spaces, municipal programs, and events.

Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:

- Increase in public awareness about Indigenous significant sites and the importance of land stewardship, gauged through surveys and participation in educational events.
- Growth in attendance and engagement with Indigenous programming and public art.
- Feedback from Indigenous communities and organizations regarding their representation, involvement, and the City’s efforts to honour their cultural practices.
- Satisfaction of Indigenous individuals in practising their traditions freely at municipal facilities and events.

Priority 6: Becoming A Culture-Friendly Municipality

Building a foundation for success, the City of Barrie champions culture across all Municipal departments, to support and leverage opportunities that enable culture to thrive.

What Success Looks Like

- Barrie is a culture-friendly municipality where art and creativity are seamlessly integrated into all aspects of city operations and decision-making.
- City staff and Council members are well versed in the value of culture, with culture ambassadors embedding cultural considerations in daily operations across departments.
- The City fosters strong collaborations between its Economic and Creative Development and Recreation & Culture Services departments, as well as with external partners, leading to data-driven cultural initiatives.
- Artists are actively involved in municipal innovation through residencies and “Creativity Labs,” that address complex urban challenges with creative solutions.
- Arts-based civic engagement flourishes, encouraging diverse community participation in city projects.
- The Culture Plan is transparently communicated, with regular updates and robust feedback loops, ensuring that cultural initiatives consistently reflect the evolving needs and interests of all residents.
- Barrie is recognized as a leading example of a city where culture is not only supported but shapes municipal governance, community engagement, and urban problem-solving.

Priority 6 KPIs:

<p>Goal 6.1 Fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing to strengthen the understanding of culture’s intrinsic value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of City departments actively involved in cultural initiatives or programs.• Number of external partnerships established or enhanced to support cultural data sharing and program development.• Percentage of City policies and plans that integrate cultural development and public art considerations. <p><i>Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth in cultural sector funding or support as a result of cross-departmental collaboration and external partnerships.• Increase in the cultural literacy and awareness among City staff and Council members, as evidenced by their engagement with cultural initiatives and references in policy discussions.
<p>Goal 6.2 Harnessing creativity to address municipal challenges and priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in interdisciplinary projects that include artists, cultural workers, and City departments.• Number of cross-departmental initiatives that integrate artistic and cultural perspectives. <p><i>Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage increase in community members engaging with City processes through arts-based methods.• Diversity of participants in City engagement initiatives (e.g., demographics, socio-economic backgrounds).• Percentage of City policies or strategies that have clear cultural objectives or consider the value of creativity in problem-solving.
<p>Goal 6.3 Encouraging ongoing engagement to ensure decision-making and cultural initiatives reflect the needs and interests of all residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in public awareness and understanding of the Culture Plan (tracked via surveys or focus groups).• Percentage of residents reporting that they feel informed about cultural initiatives and opportunities for input. <p><i>Additional KPIs to monitor long-term impact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of changes or updates to cultural initiatives based on community feedback.• Level of satisfaction with cultural programming, as reported by different community groups (through surveys or feedback forms).

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Thank You.