



# Action • Plan

• **culture counts** •

• Oshawa Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan •

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# A Message from Mayor John Henry

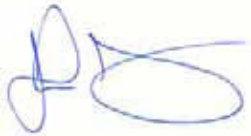
On behalf of Oshawa City Council and staff of the City of Oshawa, I am proud to provide you with an executive summary of Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan.

We thank our community and stakeholders for providing their valuable time and input which was essential to developing a plan unique to the Oshawa community. We couldn't have done it without you!

The Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan is a five to ten year plan that identifies important opportunities and strategies the City of Oshawa and the arts, culture and heritage sector can collaboratively work towards by building and maintaining Oshawa's cultural vitality.

We are excited about Oshawa's changing face of arts and culture and embrace new opportunities and relationships from our ever-changing community.

Yours truly,



John Henry  
Mayor



# Introduction

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In February 2014, City Council unanimously approved *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan*.

This plan identifies key opportunities that the City and the arts, culture and heritage sector can implement over the next five to ten years to help Oshawa maintain and build upon its cultural vitality.

## Plan Development Process

The process to develop the City's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan began in February 2013. The Plan was developed with the assistance of an outside consultant, a community Steering Committee and an interdepartmental staff team.

The City of Oshawa received partial funding from the Government of Ontario for the development of the plan.

Essential to the project was consultation with the community and stakeholder groups. The consultation process included a survey, community launch event and visioning session, three focus groups, workshops (with City Council and the Steering Committee), two community soundings (students and labour), and a community forum. In all, over 300 people were involved in the consultation program.

The results of the consultation program were combined with an analysis of relevant plans and the creative economy in Oshawa, best practices and research to produce the approved plan.

## The Culture Counts Brand

"Culture Counts" is the brand for Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan. The colour of the brand represents vibrancy, creativity and energy. The dots in the logo represent the need to better connect different components of the arts, culture and heritage sector in the City. The words themselves express the importance of culture to Oshawa's economic development and quality of life.

## Action Plan and Next Steps

The action plan represents the collective recommendations of the Steering Committee, the public, stakeholders and the staff team at a fixed period in time. Ongoing generation of strategies and actions will be encouraged in support of achieving the individual strategic directions and the future vision for arts, culture and heritage in Oshawa.

# A Vision for Arts, Culture and Heritage in Oshawa

**In 2020, successful implementation of *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* will have contributed to making Oshawa a city in which:**

## **Culture Counts.**

Cultural vitality is widely acknowledged as essential to making Oshawa a creative, vibrant and sustainable community in which people and businesses are proud to live, work, learn and play. Culture engages and inspires residents and is a source of civic pride. Oshawa's strong creative cultural industries are major economic drivers in a thriving creative economy attracting talent and investment regionally, nationally and internationally.

A 'culture of design' infuses decisions, producing a city that boasts a vital downtown and beautiful places throughout the community. Oshawa has embraced a vision of a living heritage connecting past and present and encompassing the diverse cultural traditions of all its residents. The City of Oshawa is recognized as a leading municipality integrating culture into all facets of planning and decision-making.



Oshawa Rising, a sculpture by artist, Ron Baird, on permanent display at Oshawa City Hall.



# Guiding Principles

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The following principles will guide the implementation of *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* and ongoing cultural development in Oshawa.

- **Sustainability** – the plan will identify actions, which are aimed at building a sustainable arts, culture and heritage community. The plan itself will also be a living document.
- **Fiscal Responsibility** – make the most efficient and effective use of City resources ensuring value for money through continuous improvement.
- **Accountable and Engaged Leadership** – ensure respect, responsiveness and transparency in all decision-making.
- **Community Collaboration** – adopt a collaborative approach of shared responsibility for cultural development supported by ongoing communication between the City and arts, culture and heritage groups, other levels of government, and the private and voluntary sectors.
- **Integrated Planning** – ensure arts, culture and heritage resources and opportunities are considered and valued in all recognized and respected areas of planning and decision-making.
- **Enabling Action and Removing Barriers** - in collaborating to implement *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* and supporting ongoing cultural development, the City will make it a priority to remove barriers and enable full community engagement in advancing the agenda.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion** – provide arts, culture and heritage opportunities, resources and activities which are accessible to residents of all ages, genders, ethnicities, races, socio-economic status, persons with disabilities, religions, sexual orientations, and geographical areas.

# Strategic Directions

The following Strategic Directions provide the framework for *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan*:

1. Broaden and Evolve the City's Role in Arts, Culture and Heritage
2. Grow Culture-Led Economic Development
3. Increase and Strengthen Communication within and about the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector
4. Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector
5. Create Vibrant Places and Spaces
6. Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa's Cultural Life

*"The plan provides an opportunity to stitch culture into every department"*

*~Survey Participant*



The Ontario Philharmonic Orchestra.



# 1. Broaden and Evolve the City's Role in Arts, Culture and Heritage

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**Strategy:** Establish Governance Structure and Administrative Requirements to Implement the Plan

Actions:

- Define and articulate a corporate mandate for cultural development.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Establish a dedicated cultural staff position within the Recreation and Culture Services Branch to support the implementation of *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan*.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Establish a cross-sectoral leadership group (e.g. Cultural Roundtable) to align resources across the public, private and voluntary sectors in order to build the collective capacity to implement the Plan and ongoing cultural development. Ensure representation from a wide cross-section of municipal, cultural, business, community and educational interests.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Monitor human resource needs as *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* moves forward in its implementation.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Adopt a cultural lens by integrating cultural resources and opportunities into all corporate planning and decision-making.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Become a member of the Creative Cities Network of Canada and investigate other relevant provincial or federal memberships to arts, culture and/or heritage organizations.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Develop Municipal Cultural Planning Indicators and Performance Measures.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



## Strategy: Support Interdepartmental Collaboration

### Actions:

- Convert the interdepartmental staff team formed to support development of *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* to an ongoing interdepartmental cultural staff team to support implementation of the Plan and ongoing cultural development.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Convene a staff forum, upon approval of the Plan, to introduce and communicate the strategies and actions internally.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Ensure strong and ongoing internal communication regarding *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* and its implementation to raise awareness and understanding across the corporation.  
**Timing:** Ongoing

*"Culture is connected  
to personality.  
Every town needs its unique  
personality.  
What is Oshawa's  
unique identity?"*

*~Survey Participant*



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## **Strategy:** Increase and Communicate the City's Financial Support for Arts, Culture and Heritage

### Actions:

- Investigate models for long-term funding and implement a sustainable funding program for cultural development.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Raise awareness of the City's grant programs and clarify the City's existing financial assistance programs to explicitly state that these programs support art, culture and heritage initiatives.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Develop a strategy to strengthen philanthropic support and corporate sponsorship for arts, culture and heritage resources and activities in Oshawa.  
**Timing:** Short Term: 2-3 Years
- Research and collaborate with arts, culture and heritage groups/ organizations on grant opportunities that will support the implementation of *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan*.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Lobby the provincial government for a change to the *Development Charges Act*, which would allow development charges to be used toward the funding of arts, culture and heritage facilities.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



Colonel Robert Samuel McLaughlin,  
Oshawa's first entrepreneur and philanthropist.

## **Strategy:** Address the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Planning and Development

### Actions:

- Consider undertaking a comprehensive Cultural Heritage Master Plan for Oshawa addressing a wide range of heritage conservation and interpretation issues, including treatment of the intangible heritage of community stories.  
**Timing:** Medium Term: 4-9 Years
- Consider undertaking an Archaeological Master Plan.  
**Timing:** Long Term: 10-15 Years
- Continue to ensure heritage properties are considered early in the planning process for any new public or private sector development.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Develop a strategy to collect, store and promote intangible cultural resources (including stories, photos and oral history).  
**Timing:** Short to Medium Term: 2-9 Years
- Expand the promotion of the Heritage Property Tax Reduction Program.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



Parkwood Estate National Historic Site.

*"The city's big challenge is changing the narrative"*

*~Survey Participant*



## 2. Grow Culture-Led Economic Development

**Strategy:** Leverage Cultural Resources to Support Downtown Revitalization

Actions:

- Explore potential tools and incentives to encourage more people to live in the downtown.  
**Timing:** Short to Medium Term: 2-9 Years
- Increase arts, culture and heritage programs and activities throughout the year in the downtown.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Maximize use of the General Motors Centre for arts and entertainment purposes.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Work with downtown landlords to expand studio and office space for artists and creative enterprises potentially in empty or underutilized buildings in the downtown.  
**Timing:** Short to Medium Term: 2-9 Years



Avanti restaurant in Oshawa's downtown.

## Strategy: Grow Oshawa's Creative Cultural Industries

### Actions:

- Encourage the growth of creative cultural industries through the support of existing cultural industries and through continued partnerships with Oshawa's post-secondary institutions.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Launch Creative Minds events as networking and peer-to-peer learning opportunities for creative cultural enterprises (examine best practices implemented in other Ontario municipalities as models for such events).  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Examine opportunities for the use of empty buildings in the downtown for the creation of incubators for the creative cultural industries.  
**Timing:** Short to Medium Term: 2-9 Years



Located in downtown Oshawa, CORE21 offers a communal space for business incubation and idea generation.

*"By working together and sharing our talents we can make beautiful music."*

*~ Interview Participant*



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## **Strategy:** Expand Cultural Tourism Locally and Regionally

### Actions:

- Better align responsibilities for tourism promotion and development within the City and through partnerships with local and regional agencies (including Durham Region).  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Investigate and create ways to capture the economic value of arts, culture and heritage resources including tourism opportunities.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Leverage the City's brand Prepare to be Amazed in support of tourism development.  
**Timing:** Short Term: 1-3 Years



Visitors enjoying the peonies at the annual Peony Festival.

## Strategy: Work Collaboratively with Oshawa's Educational Institutions

### Actions:

- Recruit leadership from the educational sector to act as champions for *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan*.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Secure strong representation from educational institutions on the Cross-Sectoral Leadership Group.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Support all post-secondary institutions in their efforts to build stronger business and community partnerships in cultural development.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



The Regent Theatre in Oshawa opened in 1919. The City of Oshawa declared it a heritage building and began the Regent Theatre Renewal Project, with plans to restore the theatre for use as a live performance space. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology, now owners of the building, have restored the historic building. The theatre serves as a 600-seat university lecture hall by day and community events venue in the evenings and weekends.

*"We need to think about public works as public art in the city"*

*~ Interview Participant*



### 3. Increase and Strengthen Communication within and about the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector

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**Strategy:** Strengthen Communication within the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector

Actions:

- Convene a Culture Counts Annual Cultural Summit to sustain community engagement in implementing *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* and monitor and measure implementation.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Convene issue-based community forums to sustain communication and engagement with specific recommended actions in the Plan and ongoing cultural development issues in Oshawa.  
**Timing:** Short Term: 1-3 Years
- Convene regular information networking sessions bringing individuals working directly for arts, culture and heritage organizations and activities together to share information and opportunities for collaboration. Focus attention on connecting groups across disciplines and linking the mainstream and alternative cultural scenes in Oshawa.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



Community launch of the *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* at the Oshawa Civic Recreation Complex.



## **Strategy:** Increase Community Awareness and Promotion of Cultural Resources

### Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive communication plan to communicate *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* broadly across the community using a variety of media outlets and communication tools.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Create a cultural portal on the City's website, by expanding and evolving the use of the Culture Counts web pages.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Leverage and extend use of corporate communications and marketing systems and capacities at the City to support awareness of arts, culture and heritage resources and activities in the City through the use of the Culture Counts brand.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Launch an interactive cultural map and searchable database to increase awareness and participation in local arts, culture and heritage activities.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Sustain cultural mapping activity through partnerships and community participation.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Strengthen awareness and promotion of cultural resources through improved signage, way-finding tools and publications.  
**Timing:** Short-Medium Term: 2-9 Years
- Increase the presence and promotion of cultural heritage assets in corporate communication materials including the City's website.  
**Timing:** Ongoing

*"Create a cultural quilt:  
Tell individual stories and  
stitch them together"*

*~ Interview participant*



## 4. Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector

**Strategy:** Build and Sustain Partnerships across the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector

Actions:

- Consider the development of a Civic Arts, Culture and Heritage Award program.  
**Timing:** Short-Term: 2-3 Years
- Continue to look for opportunities to leverage partnerships in the arts, culture and heritage sector.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



Douglas Coupland sculpture, entitled Group Portrait 1957, was permanently placed on the outside of the Robert McLaughlin Art Gallery in 2011.

**Strategy:** Expand Financial Resources from all Sectors to Support Arts, Culture and Heritage

Actions:

- Support arts, culture and heritage organizations by connecting them to community resources and training opportunities to build skills to generate donations and sponsorships from the private sector and build business and entrepreneurial skills.

**Timing:** Ongoing

- Consider an application to artsVest, a program of Business for the Arts aimed at growing business support for arts, culture and heritage organizations.

**Timing:** Ongoing



Rotary Gazebo in the Memory Garden at the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens.

*"We need tools  
instead of rules"*

*~ Focus Group Participant*

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## **Strategy:** Increase Opportunities for Cultural Programming for all Ages

### Actions:

- Investigate partnerships with school boards, Oshawa Senior Citizens Centres and others to increase arts, culture and heritage education and programming for all age groups.

**Timing:** Ongoing

- Participate in the provincial Culture Days celebrations.

**Timing:** Ongoing

- Investigate ways to engage youth in the delivery of arts, culture and heritage education and programming.

**Timing:** Ongoing



A family taking a tour at the Robert McLaughlin Gallery.

## Strategy: Conserve and Celebrate Oshawa's Rich History and Heritage

### Actions:

- Examine best practices in new media and digital technologies to support the promotion and interpretation of Oshawa's heritage (e.g., a Murmur project , QR codes for built heritage and sites, etc.) and implement.  
**Timing:** Medium to Long Term: 4-15 Years
- Encourage greater collaboration among City museums, heritage groups, archives and the Oshawa Public Library as collections-based heritage institutions.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Increase awareness of Oshawa's heritage through expanded plaques, public art and monuments, banners and other physical manifestations of heritage throughout the City.  
**Timing:** Medium to Long Term: 4-15 Years
- Explore opportunities to capture and promote 20th century story lines and historic resources.  
**Timing:** Short Term: 1-3 Years
- Plan a coordinated approach to celebrating significant upcoming anniversaries (e.g., 2017 is Canada's 150th, Parkwood Estates' 100th, Robert McLaughlin Gallery's 50th, among others).  
**Timing:** Short Term: 1-3 Years
- Strengthen the Doors Open event.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Consider branding and promoting Simcoe Street as a heritage corridor.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Explore opportunities to rejuvenate the commemorative/celebratory aspects of McLaughlin Day.  
**Timing:** Ongoing

*"We need a  
Collaboration Secretariat"*

*~ Launch Event participant*



## 5. Create Vibrant Places and Spaces

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**Strategy:** Build on Current Strengths to Support Vibrant Festivals and Events

Actions:

- Reduce barriers and restrictions that discourage or make it more difficult for arts, culture and heritage groups to organize and deliver community festivals and events.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Continue to provide opportunities for local talent from the arts, culture and heritage sector to be involved in events and celebrations throughout the City.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Develop a Festivals and Events Strategy.  
**Timing:** Medium Term: 4-9 Years
- Consider the creation of a new signature festival aimed at establishing a vibrant cultural brand and buzz about Oshawa's cultural life.  
**Timing:** Medium Term: 4-9 Years
- Encourage greater cross-promotion of festivals and events.  
**Timing:** ongoing
- Consider a quarterly calendar of festivals and events.  
**Timing:** Short Term: 2-3 Years



Canada Day celebrations at Lakeview Park in Oshawa.

## Strategy: Implement a Public Art Policy and Program

### Actions:

- Review the City's existing mural program.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Finalize and implement the Oshawa Public Art Policy and Program.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Establish a Public Art Committee to manage juried competitions for the City.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Establish a Public Art Fund.  
**Timing:** Short Term: 2-3 Years



The Ontario Regiment - 130 Years Of Service mural is located on the east wall of Memorial Park Bandshell.

*"There's a gap between grassroots/alternative and established cultural institutions in Oshawa"*

*~ Interview Participant*

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## **Strategy:** Increase Spaces and Facilities in which Cultural Activities Occur

### Actions:

- Conduct a feasibility study on converting the Arts Resource Centre into a Cultural Hub  
**Timing:** Medium Term: 4-9 Years
- Maximize the use of civic spaces for arts, culture and heritage events and showcases.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Undertake a comprehensive inventory of arts, culture and heritage spaces and facilities in the city where activities can take place, including the potential to repurpose existing space.  
**Timing:** Medium Term: 4-9 Years
- Explore the long-term need and business case for a new performing arts centre serving Oshawa and the surrounding region, following the completion of the comprehensive inventory of arts, culture and heritage spaces and facilities.  
**Timing:** Long Term: 10-15 Years
- Review and update the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens (O.V.B.G.) Master Plan and Study.  
**Timing:** Long Term: 10-15 Years



Oshawa's Arts Resource Centre.



## 6. Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa's Cultural Life

**Strategy:** Respond to the Cultural Needs of all Ages

Actions:

- Encourage a cross-section of ages on the Cross-sectoral Leadership Group  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Consider festivals, events and activities geared to the interests of youth and students from both secondary and post-secondary institutions.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Create an Events Planning Guide, which will include standards for accessibility for residents as both participants and audience members.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



Students in Downtown Oshawa Farmers' Market located on Victoria Street, a pedestrian-only street next to the Regent Theatre.

*"Know your assets,  
grow your assets"*

*~ Interview participant*



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## **Strategy:** Address the Cultural Aspirations of Diverse Communities

### Actions:

- Encourage representation from diverse communities on the Cross-sectoral Leadership Group.  
**Timing:** Year 1: 2014
- Continue to support festivals, events and arts, culture and heritage activities that reach out to recent immigrant groups.  
**Timing:** Ongoing
- Encourage all arts, culture and heritage organizations to introduce programming to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse community.  
**Timing:** Ongoing



Ukrainian dancers performing during Fiesta Week.

# Culture Counts Team Members

## Steering Committee

- Councillor Amy England, City of Oshawa
- Brian Malcolm and Lisa Weiss, Parkwood Estate
- Diane Stephen, Heritage Oshawa
- Ellen Stroud, Oshawa Public Libraries
- Gabrielle Peacock, Robert McLaughlin Gallery
- Greg Murphy, Durham College
- Julie Maclsaac, City of Oshawa
- Laura Suchan, Oshawa Community Museum
- Will McGuirk, Cultural Blogger

## Interdepartmental Staff Team

- Angelo Daicopoulos, Recreation & Culture Services
- Brad Rosnak, Parks & Environmental Services
- Dan Livesey, Information Technology Services
- David Tuley, Economic Development Services
- Helen Break, City Manager's Office
- Julie Powell, Human Resource Services
- Laurie Jones, Recreation & Culture Services
- Margaret Kish, Planning Services
- Paul Radoslovich, Corporate Communications
- Ron Diskey, Recreation & Culture Services
- Rose Mary Mason, Recreation & Culture Services

Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan, was developed by a community steering committee, an interdepartmental staff team and the consulting firms of AuthentiCity (a division of Millier Dickinson Blais) and Public Interest.

View the consultant's report and the full Culture Counts plan with the detailed action plan at [www.oshawa.ca/culturecounts](http://www.oshawa.ca/culturecounts).

For more information or to become involved in the Culture Counts initiatives, visit [www.oshawa.ca/culturecounts](http://www.oshawa.ca/culturecounts) or email [culturecounts@oshawa.ca](mailto:culturecounts@oshawa.ca).



# Oshawa Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan

**culture counts**

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