Hamilton has transformed itself from the steely exterior of the Metropolitan Area to a complete community that supports a wide range of social, arts and culture functions.

Ontario in a Creative Age Commissioned by Premier Dalton McGuinty

**Situation**

As the City of Hamilton continues to grow, our cultural assets grow with it, serving our citizens, and attracting visitors and potential investors. It is important to understand our cultural assets and where they are located or clustered so we’re able to assess what’s unique about ourselves, what’s here, what’s not, separately and collectively, and what could be added, supported or fostered in support of our quality of life.

This assessment of cultural assets is a continuous process, as the assets continue to change and our identity evolves. It is also important for Hamilton to ensure a linkage between its cultural assets and other City Divisions and Departments. A healthy cultural community is an important consideration, for example, for organizations and businesses as they assess the suitability of Hamilton as a new location for their enterprise. Supporting culture has clear, practical and tangible benefits. Yet, culture also has the power to capture our imaginations. It feeds both the body and the soul and supports economic and community development.

**Opportunity**

Ontario in the Creative Age is a report commissioned by Premier Dalton McGuinty to define a future economic vision for Ontario. Released in February 2009 the report, prepared by the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto, included an analysis of competitiveness in city regions in North America. The report cites Hamilton, as one of two city-regions in Canada, for its achievements in building creative economic capacity and transforming itself from an industry-based economy to a creativity-based economy.

Phase 1 of the “Our Community Culture (OCC) Project builds on this foundation, advancing our understanding of which cultural assets exist currently in the City, as well as where they are located or clustered. This process is called Cultural Mapping and it also includes intangible cultural resources such as our values, stories and traditions.

Having a comprehensive Cultural Mapping System of all of Hamilton’s cultural assets (what they are, where they are and where they are not) allows us to layer these assets with data from other Divisions and services including Tourism, Planning, Police, Social Services, and Economic Development to name a few. This multi-layered approach permits the City to develop integrated plans to leverage our cultural richness in support of wider social and economic goals. OCC Phase 1 mapping data is an essential building block in municipal cultural planning.

Since 2003, the government of Ontario has been promoting the practice of municipal cultural planning, encouraging municipalities to integrate cultural planning into their daily business, to emphasize local arts, cultural industries, heritage and libraries as they plan for the future of their communities. Municipal growth plans, economic development, downtown revitalization, youth engagement and community sustainability strategies are strengthened by leveraging local cultural assets.

In 2004, Council endorsed the development of a cultural policy and plan for the City of Hamilton. By undertaking cultural planning, Hamilton is engaging in a leading edge practice. The work is significant and will help us make Hamilton a vibrant city.
Economically successful and vibrant cities are those that engage the creativity of their residents and maintain an authentic and environmentally sustainable setting. It pays for a municipality to make a proactive role in cultural development as a key part of its core business.

Richard Florida, 
Rise of the Creative Class

Credentials

The OCC Project is the most comprehensive approach to the development of cultural planning to date in Canada and has the potential to establish a new national benchmark for planning practice.

The OCC Project evolved over a period of 18 months led by a Project Steering Team comprised of City staff and community representatives. The Project Steering Team worked with Dr. Greg Baeker and Kat Runnalls of the consulting firm AuthentiCity who together bring more than sixty years of experience in culture sector planning and development.

The content of the OCC Phase 1 Report was developed from City planning documents and data identified by the Project Steering Team, analyzed by the Consultants and combined with relevant statistical and historical research.

The research and analysis component of Phase 1 was guided by the following five goals:

1. To complete a cultural statistical analysis of Hamilton.
2. To identify all potentially relevant City policies, plans and strategies relevant to culture.
3. To review relevant City policies, plans and strategies to extract policy themes and priorities.
4. To identify existing and potential opportunities to connect culture with the planning context in Hamilton.
5. To identify overarching strategic themes to inform Phase 2, the Cultural Plan.

Using a strategic framework developed by the federal government, the Project Steering Team mapped six accepted cultural categories or clusters in Hamilton:

- Creative Cultural Industries
- Community Cultural Organizations
- Spaces and Facilities
- Cultural Heritage
- Natural Heritage
- Festivals and Events

Benefits

There are many benefits to continuing to develop the cultural policy and plan for the City of Hamilton including but not limited to:

- Integrating the development of a municipal policy and set of principles to guide priority-setting with the larger vision and strategy that will form the Cultural Plan.
- Ability to maximize the City’s strategic investments and/or programs.
- Integrates culture into other initiatives such as youth development, immigration, human services planning, etc.

- Helps to enhance positioning of Hamilton to prospective investors regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Provides valuable information to other City Divisions and Departments that will assist them in refining their own strategic plans and investments.

The cultural mapping work completed in Phase 1 has already provided resource information for City projects such as the Hamilton Creative Catalyst Project and the Human Services Planning Initiative.

Phase 1 of the OCC has established a solid and integrated foundation for citizen engagement towards the development of a cultural policy and plan.
WHAT IS CULTURAL MAPPING?

Cultural mapping is a tool for identifying what is unique about a community and leveraging cultural assets to support economic prosperity and improved quality of life.

Report Overview

The following executive summary of the content of the report is divided into three key sections:

1. **Method** – How the Cultural Mapping Process Was Conducted
2. **Findings** – Summary of What We Discovered
3. **Recommendations** – Suggested Strategic Next Steps

1. **Method** - How the Cultural Mapping Process Was Conducted

Cultural mapping identifies what is unique about a community and it has two dimensions:

**Resource Mapping** - identifies the tangible cultural resources.

**Community Identity Mapping** - exposes intangible cultural resources, the history, values, traditions and stories.

The first dimension of cultural mapping, cultural resource mapping as undertaken in Phase 1 of the OCC Project, was guided by the following three goals:

1. To establish baseline information on cultural resources in Hamilton and to complete initial analysis of these findings;
2. To establish the ongoing mapping system that will be used to expand mapping over time; and,
3. To recommend next steps and opportunities for further mapping work in Hamilton.

The second dimension of cultural mapping, community identity mapping, has also commenced. A Story Us is a historical narrative of Hamilton’s history and geography. A Story of Place is the beginning of a conversation of Hamilton’s unique culture and identity.

The Phase 1 Report marks the end of this phase of the project and establishes the base of research and analysis for the broader community engagement process to be undertaken in Phase 2.

The chart on the following page highlights the major steps, related timelines and key outputs of Phase 1.
Throughout history, arts and culture have contributed numerous benefits to individuals and communities. A large body of research documents the social benefits derived from arts and culture. Culture plays a pervasive, socially integrating role in fostering community identity, creativity, cohesion, and vitality.

Cultural heritage and contemporary expressions of it have provided a worldwide focus for urban renewal. In the midst of economic development we find inspiration in the buildings, artifacts, traditions, values and skills of the past. Culture helps us to adapt to change by anchoring our sense of being; it shows that we come from somewhere and have a story to tell.


2. Findings - Summary of What We Discovered

The baseline mapping of cultural resources in Hamilton identified over 2,000 cultural resources in six industry standard categories or clusters. The data is drawn from a variety of sources including Statistics Canada, Inform Hamilton, and other local sources.

The second and highly important facet of cultural mapping, community identity mapping, has been recorded in A Story of Us/A Story of Place. The narrative is built around a series of themes.

**A Story of Us**
Theme 1 - Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion
Theme 2 - Innovation and Creative Economies
Theme 3 - Citizens, Engagement and Protest

**A Story of Place**
Theme 1 - Geography and Environment
Theme 2 - Urban Development
Theme 3 - Built Form

The City’s 2008 Strategic Plan envisions the City of Hamilton as a complete community: “The best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities”.

In reviewing the existing City of Hamilton plans and strategies, a range of strategic themes emerged that provide the opportunity to embed culture in Hamilton’s planning system.

1. Creative Hamilton
2. Culture Feeds Sustainability
3. Cultural Sector Development

1. Creative Hamilton
Hamilton’s leadership in creative economy building continues to grow. Ontario in the Creative Age cites that “Hamilton has (transformed itself) from the steely exterior of the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area to a complete community that supports a wide range of social, arts and culture functions”.

The City of Hamilton’s Official Plan, completed in June 2009, recognizes the creative cultural sector as one of the key clusters in the city’s economy. Visionary projects such as the Hamilton Creative Catalyst Project are helping regenerate the downtown and redefine Hamilton’s image of itself.4
When every place looks the same there is no such thing as place anymore … Part of municipal cultural planning is about combating the geography of nowhere.

Glen Murray, President and CEO, Canadian Urban Institute and former Mayor of Winnipeg

2. Culture Feeds Sustainability
The City of Hamilton has a strong commitment to integrated planning to support community sustainability and has adopted Vision 2010 to guide community development. Cultural vitality is essential to a healthy sustainable society. The community recognizes Arts and Heritage as a key theme for Vision 2020. A Cultural Policy and Plan offers the opportunity to renew and develop new key Vision 2020 goals and indicators.

Hamilton will embrace the growing international consensus that culture is the fourth pillar of sustainability. Canada’s Harcourt Commission proposed that municipalities embrace planning frameworks based on the four pillars of community sustainability: economic prosperity; social equity; environmental sustainability and; cultural vitality.

3. Cultural Sector Development
The City of Hamilton has a proud tradition of supporting local cultural development. The City has worked with volunteer committees who provide expertise on Arts and Heritage and has participated in provincial initiatives such as Doors Open.

Hamilton’s Cultural Policy and Plan will help integrate investment strategies and actions to take a holistic view of culture, strengthen partnerships to advance cultural development and strengthen connectivity amongst the independent stakeholders in the creative sector.

OCC Draft Principles
The City of Hamilton will need to establish principles related to culture in order to recognize culture’s importance to our future as a community. The following draft principles will be validated in Phase 2 through a community consultation process.

• We understand the creative industries as an important and rapidly expanding source of economic growth, employment and wealth creation.
• We see cultural planning as an essential dimension of planning for sustainability, alongside social, economic and environmental considerations.
• We see our rich heritage, diversity, creativity and culture playing a major role in defining Hamilton’s identity nationally and globally.
• We understand culture as a source of community pride and central to making Hamilton a complete community where people want to live, work, play and invest.
• We value artists and creators as essential sources of new ideas, innovation and technologies important to our future.
• We believe the diversity of cultures in our community is a source of strength and central to our values of inclusion and equity.
• We value creativity and culture as central to making the downtown a social, economic, and cultural hub of the community.
• We support a dynamic cultural sector of organizations and enterprises working together toward shared purposes and capacities.
In the landscape of the 21st century, nothing looms larger than culture. It is the new infrastructure, the civic bedrock on which the most successful modern metropolises are built. Culture is to the contemporary city what roads, sewers and bridges were in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Christopher Hume
Urban Affairs Columnist, Toronto Star

3. Recommendations - Next Steps
The OCC Report was prepared by the consultants in conjunction with the Project Steering Team (PST). Next steps appear throughout the consultant’s report and key next steps are summarized below.

1. Maintain the Culture Division, Community Services Department, as the lead in developing detailed plans to undertake Phase 2 of the OCC Project, development of the Cultural Policy and Plan.

2. Establish a Project Steering Team of staff from across City of Hamilton departments and representatives from the community led by the Culture Division, Community Services Department to oversee the planning and implementation of Phase 2.

3. Plan and implement a collaborative community and stakeholder engagement process building on the work completed in Phase 1 to complete a Cultural Policy and Plan for Hamilton, addressing the deliverables identified for Phase 2 of the OCC Project.

4. Establish a Cultural Resource Mapping Partnership with representatives from relevant City departments and community partners needed to oversee the next phase of cultural mapping and to support ongoing management and development of the City’s cultural mapping capacities.

5. Establish an Interdepartmental Working Group to identify opportunities for the integration of municipal cultural planning principles and practices in the ongoing work of the City.

6. Establish an operating budget and two new staff positions (one position with skills in database and system administration and a second position with skills in project management, cultural planning, facilitation and community development) within the Culture Division, Community Services Department. Dedicated staff resources are required to continue the cultural mapping from Phase 1 and to successfully implement Phase 2.

The components and deliverables of Phase 2 - The Cultural Policy and Plan are summarized in the following chart.

Birks Clock at King Street East and James Street South.
phase 2 - a cultural plan for Hamilton

Start Up
- Establish Project Steering Team (cross-departmental and cross-sectoral)
- Establish a community engagement strategy and stakeholder consultation process
- Establish a Cultural Resource Mapping partnership to oversee ongoing management of cultural mapping

A Vision of Culture
- Engage in community and stakeholder consultation to explore the cultural mapping findings, strategic themes and opportunities identified in Phase 1
- Validate the cultural mapping findings
- Develop a vision for culture

City of Hamilton Cultural Mandate
- Develop a mandate to guide the City’s role in cultural development

Policies and Supporting Principles
- Develop a cultural policy to guide planning and decision making

Create Strategies and Actions
- Develop strategies and actions to be implemented by the City in collaboration with its business and community partners

Operational Plans and Performance Measures
- Develop operational plans and performance measures to guide the implementation of strategies and actions

Culture Division Roles
- Identify the Culture Division’s prioritized core business areas and capacity needs

Implementation