

The Arts Are Who We Are

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead... his eyes are closed."

Albert Einstein

An enormous amount of time and energy has already been invested in examining the ways in which Winnipeg can enhance its cultural profile through the arts – and there's more work to come. Somewhat less time has been spent on examining exactly why such work is considered a priority. It's a fair question: **Why is culture important?**

To answer that question, we must first start with a common understanding of just what we mean by "culture." The most widely accepted contemporary definition of culture is "the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning" (Bates & Plog, *Cultural Anthropology*, 1990).

As a society we understand the importance of culture on a visceral level. We instinctually come together to celebrate our identity, pride and common interests, as was seen time and time again during Winnipeg's Cultural Capital year. Culture is an essential part of our daily lives and our overall well being as a city, and art is by far our best means of expressing that culture. It can be as basic as a child's finger painting or as complex as a ballerina's perfectly executed arabesque, but from amateur to expert, the arts is the paramount symbolic language of our culture, and the best representation of who we are as a city.

Knowing that the arts are society's unique means of understanding and relating to itself and expressing our culture to the rest of the world, it follows that a society that invests in the arts will be better positioned to understand – and to leverage – its unique qualities than a society which dismisses cultural investment. Successful places, economies, and communities help to define the uniqueness of a people. Places with a strong artistic identity are viewed as attractive places to visit, work, live, and invest.

The arts and culture are strongly tied to place. Indeed, the relationship between people and place has been reflected through cultural practices and traditions reaching far back throughout human history. Artistic expression is embedded in all aspects of our lives from the time we are born and it is deeply connected to our sense of home and origin. This inherent connection is one that cities across the world are relying on in order to strengthen the qualities that make them distinctive – for those unique qualities are what make cities attractive, and ultimately, competitive. This is all the more critical in a global economy that is seeing a shift from being industry-based to knowledge-based, where creative thoughts and ideas drive the economy, as opposed to natural resources and machinery.

For this reason, cities in Canada and abroad are taking an optimistic approach towards planning for the arts by validating the various forms of local cultural expression, celebrating the uniqueness of their communities, building social capital, promoting grassroots involvement, and nurturing communities in the broadest sense.

A plan for the arts can be a tool to facilitate artistic development, creating a ripple effect that can translate into benefits in a number of key areas. This requires a multi-faceted approach aimed at recognizing and promoting Winnipeg's artistic assets, improving quality of life, recognizing and celebrating diversity, strengthening the economy, and creating a strong sense of place. This multi-faceted approach underpins the strategic initiatives outlined in this plan.

Art will always emerge organically, growing and expanding with our city's changing demographics. It will be how we facilitate that growth – nurture it, value it and aid it – that will determine whether our city will be among the great centres of the 21st century, and whether our city can expand from simply a location into a destination.

Given that
culture is
embedded in
all aspects of
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for culture
ought to be
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all aspects of
city building.



1. Art and Winnipeg

“... arts and culture contribute to who we are as a society and as people... It’s important from the core that culture be nurtured whether it’s independent music, or the WSO, or little dancers on the stage.”

Lynn Sawatzky, Business Owner, Beyond Flowers (as quoted in Ticket to the Future Phase 1)

Each city has its own personality and temperament; Winnipeg is no different. Our artistic expression is irrevocably affected by the things we share: a history, a landscape, a climate. It is no surprise that with the uniqueness of Winnipeg, our art and artists emerge as distinct and vibrant.

There is a wealth of art – music, theatre, visual arts, literary arts, film and video – that tells the story of Winnipeg and the people who live or have lived within the city. It is a story worth telling: a story of our First Nations, of the European explorers, and of the Métis; a story of farming settlers, of rail barons, and of rebellion; a story of ingenuity and of heroic sacrifice; a story of isolation, of immense spaces, and the never-ending cycle of struggle and rebirth that forms our love-hate relationship with Winnipeg’s climate. It is also a story of a modern city that is setting a bold course for the future, a city that acknowledges and embraces its complex history while refusing to be constrained by it.

During the *My City’s Still Breathing* symposium, this was made evident through the performers, artists, musicians and writers who came together with decision makers, cultural planning experts, academics, and City staff to discuss the importance of culture in cities such as Winnipeg, and to discuss the future of planning for the arts. The indelible connection between art and place resonated throughout the symposium – art informs and empowers our understanding of Winnipeg as a place, and of ourselves as Winnipeggers. By that measure alone, the value of investing in strategies to foster creative expression in Winnipeg would be evident; but of course, that is only the beginning of the story. As we will explore in the following sections, arts and culture also have a demonstrable and valuable role to play in the social and economic success of the City.

2. Creative Economy

“Arts and Culture needs to think of themselves as an industry. Collectively, they are an economic driver and engine in themselves.”

Stuart Duncan, former CEO, Destination Winnipeg Inc. (as quoted in Ticket to the Future Phase 1)

Over time the economies of societies shift based on the availability of resources. Canada has evolved from being a largely agricultural and resource extraction-based society to being a largely manufacturing and industrial processing-based society, to, finally, a knowledge and creativity-based one (see Table 1). Each of these shifts has required different inputs and has resulted in varying urban forms (progressing from rural to more urban). Agriculture and resource extraction were driven by raw resources, while manufacturing and industrial processing were largely driven by machinery and fossil fuels. The knowledge and creative economy is driven by thoughts, ideas, innovation, collaboration, and technology.

According to influential thinkers and economists, creativity drives the economy in at least two ways (see Table 2). First, it is an overarching “force” that shapes outputs in all industries. At the *My City’s Still Breathing* Symposium, Simon Evans (keynote speaker and founder of Creative Clusters) demonstrated how suppliers of traditional goods and services are finding it increasingly difficult to compete first on price and then quality. In response to these challenges, suppliers have had to find new ways of building lifestyle or cultural value into their products and services – they have had to recognize that creativity presents the opportunity to redefine value. A white t-shirt is functional, but can only fetch a certain price. A white t-shirt with a peace sign on it has a cultural value. That creative influence increases the value of a product significantly, and the possibilities for diversification of that product are endless.

Table 1: Major Shifts in the Economy

	1867	1967	2008
Political System	British Empire	Nation State	Cities and Regions
Economy	Agriculture and Resource Extraction	Manufacturing and Industrial Processing	Knowledge and Creative
Rural/Urban Population	80/20	40/60	20/80

(Source: Authenticity, Enabling Culture to Thrive in Oakville: Oakville’s Strategic Directions for Culture, adapted)

According to Statistics Canada data, 80% of Canadians live within cities, and this is a trend that is reflected around the world as people move to larger urban centres in search of employment and other opportunities.



The second way that creativity drives the economy is through a specific range of industries and economic activity, known as the “creative economy.” According to Statistics Canada data, creative and cultural industries are one of the fastest growing sectors within the economy. During the 1990s, the culture sector labour force grew by 31%, compared to 20% for Canada’s labour force as a whole. Figure 1 below shows the relationship between **creative economy**, **creative industries**, and **creative cultural industries**. The creative economy is an overarching force that drives the overall economy. Within the creative economy there are creative industries whose primary economic activity is the

generation of ideas and intellectual property. According to the work of Richard Florida, core creative industries include science and engineering, architecture and design, and information and cultural industries, while the broader group of creative professionals includes business and finance, law, health care and related fields. Creative cultural industries are identified as those sectors that are driven by “expressive” value. The core of production for these industries is the symbolic, aesthetic, or artistic nature of the products that they create (Authenticity, *Hamilton: Our Community Culture, Phase 1 Report*).

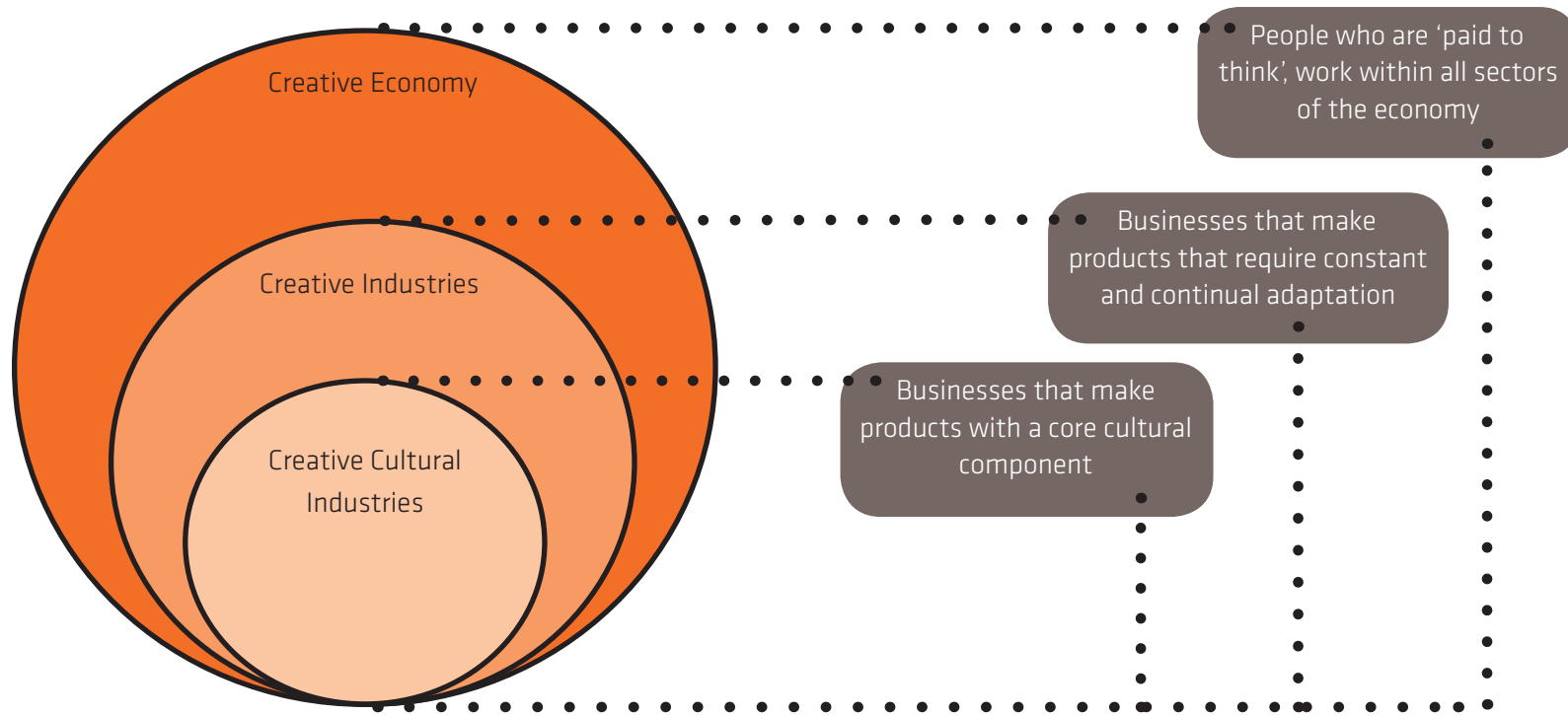
Table 2: Influential Thinkers – Creativity and the Economy

Concept	Author	Key Ideas
Home Grown Economies	George Latimer	80% of future investment and economic growth is driven by assets already in the city. Rather than leveraging these assets, economic development offices spend too much time chasing a small number of business/industry relocations.
Place Marketing	Philip Kotler	Strategic marketing of place is key to building rigorous local economies. Cities must invest in essential public infrastructure and market distinctive local features and assets.
Industry Clusters	Michael Porter	Economic success depends on geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, suppliers and research infrastructure. Cluster strategies are needed to map existing strengths and assess gaps/weaknesses.
Creative Economies	Richard Florida	Creativity and culture are the new economic drivers. Quality of place is now a core competitive advantage because business and investment follow people, not vice versa.

(Source: *Authenticity, Enabling Culture to Thrive in Oakville: Oakville’s Strategic Directions for Culture*, adapted)



Figure 1: Creative Economy, Creative Industries, and Creative Cultural Industries



FedNor, Prince Edward County/Lennox & Addington Community Futures Development Corporation (June 2009). *Canada's Creative Corridor: Connecting Creative Urban and Rural Economies Within Eastern Ontario and the Mega Region.*

(Source: Authenticity, Hamilton: Our Community Culture Phase 1 Report, adapted)

Under this new economic framework, cities and regions have become the main economic engines within the country, drawing in people from rural areas and other places around the world. Cities that are able to attract and retain the most creative workers increase their chances for building a strong and vibrant economy, which is becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization, where recent downturns in the economy have threatened the livelihood of

cities. There is a growing body of literature that shows how skilled workers are choosing dynamic and vibrant communities with lively downtown cores. Cities that share these qualities have been best able to attract skilled workers and are expected to continue doing so (Canada Council for the Arts). This makes improving quality of life within Winnipeg a key economic development strategy for the long term.



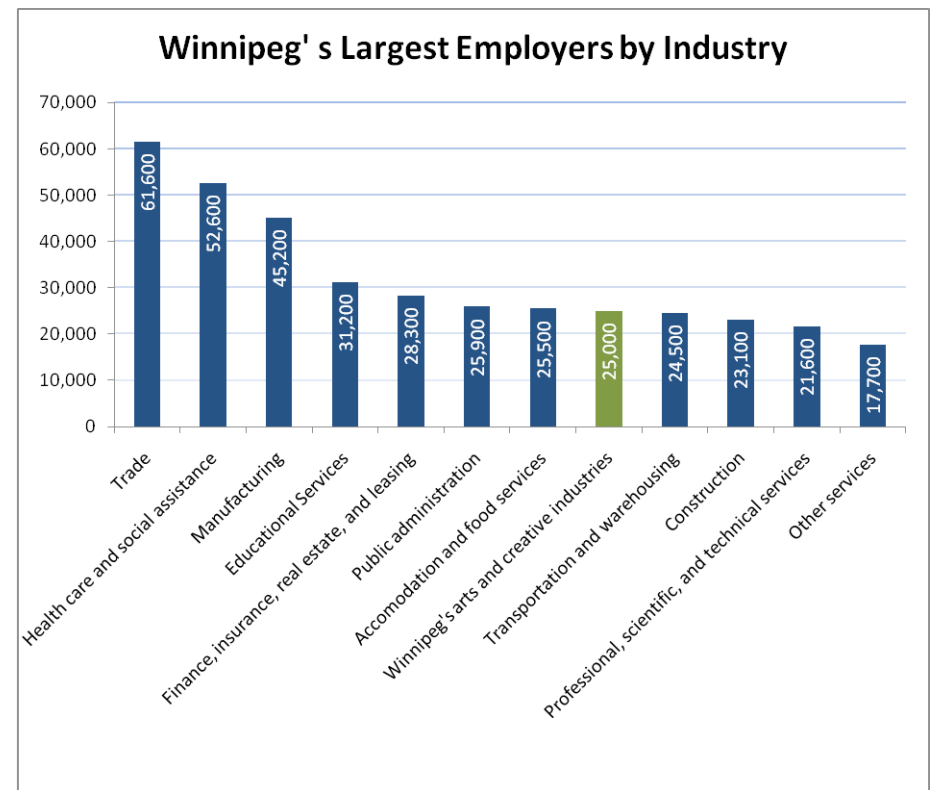
• Winnipeg's Creative Economy

This shift towards a creative economy is going to bode well for the people of Winnipeg. As the home of some of Canada's first inhabitants, as well as the birthplace of much of Canada's trade and the destination of generations of hopeful immigrants, Winnipeg is a place that inspires dreams and demands imagination. Simply surviving here required creative thought; and the fact that the city has been able to thrive and grow implies a tenacity, defiance and ingenuity that are undercurrents of Winnipeg culture. Now is the time to capitalize on these qualities and take advantage of the winds of change blowing increasingly in Winnipeg's favour.

Achieving greater economic diversity helps to create more resilient cities. It should come as no surprise that, according to recent studies by Moody's Investor Services and the Conference Board of Canada, Winnipeg has been viewed as having one of the most diverse economies of any major city in Canada, and these findings are re-affirmed by Economic Development Winnipeg *Key Facts* August 2010).

Within Winnipeg, the arts and creative industries already employ 6.3% of the City's total labour force, which is equivalent to 25,000 people. When compared to other industries in the city, this exceeds the number of people employed in transportation and warehousing, and construction (*Ticket to the Future Phase 1*) (see Table 3).

Table 3: Winnipeg's Largest Employers by Industry



(Source: *Ticket to the Future Phase 1*, Destination Winnipeg Inc., based on Statistics Canada data)

Clearly, the arts and creative industries within Winnipeg are a significant contributor to the local economy and add to the economic diversity of the city. Nearly one in ten business establishments in Winnipeg are included in the arts and creative industries, and four cents from every dollar of outcome produced in the city comes from arts and culture. The gross domestic product of Winnipeg's arts and creative industries is approximately \$948.6 million, or about 3.7% of the city's total output (*Ticket to the Future Phase 1*, pg. 5). According to a study by the Conference Board of Canada, it is estimated that the cultural sector as a whole contributes to 3.8% of the country's overall economic output. The study also estimates that the cultural sector influenced a part of the national economy nearly twice its own size (7.4%). If this is considered to be a national trend, then the arts and creative industries in Winnipeg affect approximately \$1.8 billion of gross domestic product in the city of Winnipeg (Conference Board of Canada, *Valuing Culture: Measuring and understanding Canada's creative economy*, 2008).

Funding for arts and culture opportunities is often perceived as being a cost when it needs to be seen as an investment: an investment that is not just limited to economics, but to the social and cultural capital of the city as well. According to the Conference Board of Canada, the level of government investment between 2003 and 2004 was \$7.7 billion, which generated an economic impact of close to \$70 billion, and helped to create 600,000 jobs. The findings of TTTF Phase 1 support this trend: each dollar invested by the City into arts and culture was found to leverage an additional \$18.23 from other levels of government and the private sector.

3. The Arts and Quality of Life

The arts and quality of life are inseparable. Not only are the arts an important reflection of the current quality of life enjoyed by citizens, but the more opportunities provided to residents and visitors to access and participate in different artistic activities, the more enjoyable they will find Winnipeg as a place to visit or call their home. We have seen arts involvement increase communication, self-confidence, empathy and understanding in individuals and communities.

In many Canadian cities, quality of life (QOL) has become an important indicator of the health of communities, and there are a number of key ways in which QOL is measured. This includes the opportunities provided for residents to undertake different activities (outdoor and indoor), to access education, employment, and other essential services (healthcare), to obtain housing opportunities for a diverse range of demographics, and the freedom to openly express views and opinions.

There are a number of efforts already underway to use art to improve quality of life within the city for all residents. Community-based arts organizations, youth groups, multicultural agencies, post-secondary institutions and other key individuals and groups are helping to build cultural and social capital while providing positive spin-offs for economic development efforts.

Enhancing Cultural Capital: The Arts and Community Development in Winnipeg provides findings that show how community-based arts organizations can help to empower marginalized communities, including newcomers and economically challenged neighbourhoods. In addition to being a key tool in celebrating diversity, the organizations who participated in this study saw arts programming function as a means for addressing factors that compound poverty, including unemployment, education, health and skill development, community connections, individual self-worth, communication skills and other important building blocks. These organizations also identified the importance of accessible arts activities for activating and strengthening bonds between people, families and communities and the city at large. (We will talk about this more in the following section 5.4, entitled Demographics.) The value of community asset-building programs cannot be underestimated. In order to maintain and improve the quality of life, mechanisms must be set in place for greater and more flexible funding, maintaining and enhancing access to art-based training in schools, and the creation of more linkages and partnerships amongst different groups who all have a shared interest in improving quality of life within Winnipeg.

4. Demographics

It is a very exciting time in our city's history. People are living longer, more and more people are immigrating, and the Aboriginal communities are growing in population and influence. Our arts and cultural activities need to be responsive to the evolving local demographic in order for our city to be an inclusive and interesting place. This includes not only a healthy respect for cultural diversity, but also the provision of programs that are catered towards specific needs and challenges.

Increased health and longevity have large implications for most cities across Canada, especially Winnipeg. According to the Conference Board of Canada, one in four Canadians will be 65 years or over by 2030. In 2007, those aged 65 years and over made up 13.3% of the population and this is expected to increase to 13.5% in 2011 and 17.6% by 2030. According to the Canada Council for the Arts, more seniors than ever before are physically active and involved in their communities and traditionally this demographic has an enormous appetite for the arts as creators, consumers, participants, or volunteers. This demographic will increase over all arts consumption, and will also have specific needs when it comes to accessing cultural opportunities within the city.

Immigration is another key trend. According to statistics provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, approximately 250,000 immigrants came to Canada in 2006 (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2009). Out of this total, 7,639 chose to move to Winnipeg.

From 2001 to 2006, the foreign-born population in Winnipeg grew by 10.5%, which significantly outpaced the total growth of the census metropolitan area

Major Canadian cities are the location of choice for new immigrants and a primary source of population growth across many regions in the country. In 2006, 95% of Canada's foreign-born population and 97% of recent immigrants who arrived in the last five years lived in an urban area, compared to 78% of the Canadian-born population. Compared to the other cities, Winnipeg was ranked seventh in terms of the number of immigrants landing, ahead of Surrey, Ottawa, and Edmonton but behind Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary.

(CMA), which increased by 2.8% during the same time period. According to the 2006 census, the foreign-born population in Winnipeg was 121,300, or 17.7% of the total population, up from 16.5% in 2001 (<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/p26-eng.cfm>). About 20% of foreign-born residents arrived in Winnipeg from 2001 to 2006, and these newcomers were predominantly born in Asia and the Middle East.

According to statistics from the Conference Board of Canada, immigration will become an increasingly important factor for population growth, and the city's ability to attract new immigrants will become an important determinant of its future economic potential (Conference Board of Canada, 2007, Long-term Demographic and Economic Forecast for Winnipeg's Census Metropolitan Area). It is anticipated that the City will average 8,700 immigrants per year up until 2030 (Conference Board of Canada).



Eagle and Hawk perform with the WSO before a sold out crowd at the Concert Hall for *2010: The Concert*. Photo by Robert Barrow.



According to the Canada Council for the Arts, this immigrant population is one of the greatest areas for new audience development for arts and culture organizations. Winnipeg is one of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada with some 100 languages represented in the region.

A third major demographic trend is the city's growing Aboriginal population. According to the 2006 census, Winnipeg has the largest Aboriginal population compared to other major cities in Canada. In 2006, there were 63,745 Aboriginal persons living within the city, representing 10.2% of the city's total population (Statistics Canada). The proportion of Aboriginal people living within the city is higher than Saskatoon (9.9%), Regina (9.3%), Edmonton (5.3%), and Victoria (3.4%). The city's Aboriginal population falls into two main groups: the Métis (59% of all Aboriginal persons) and the North American Indian (39%). According to Statistics Canada, the city's Aboriginal population is proportionally younger than the non-Aboriginal population – about 50% of all Aboriginal persons are younger than 25 years of age.

There are many distinguished Aboriginal artists within the city who have played an important part in increasing the profile of Winnipeg's vibrant arts and culture scene. Aboriginal artists within the city are also impressing audiences at home and abroad, playing an important part in shaping the cultural landscape of the country (Canada Council for the Arts). This is also the case for other culturally diverse artists (Canada Council for the Arts). These groups have a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic or cultural groups. Encouraging these groups to contribute, and to define, Winnipeg's art scene is essential to continuing to flourish while creating a more welcoming and inclusive city.

5. Sense of Place

Art is an important calling card for a city, and becomes as vital to a city's success as infrastructure and transportation. When one visits New York or Paris, it is the cultural institutions, icons and events that are remembered: the Louvre, the Empire State Building, Fashion Week. Roads and buses may give us a way to get around a city, but it is the arts that give us a *reason* to use them.

While it is natural to compare our city to other large cities in Canada, in reality, it is our unique features that make us *different* from other places, that draw people in to experience what our city has to offer. The natural and built environment, history and heritage, and the people and culture are all the things people think about when choosing where to live, work and play.

There are a number of key areas and “cultural hubs” such as the Exchange District, Osborne Village, The Forks, the University of Winnipeg/Winnipeg Art Gallery and St. Boniface, all of which offer unique experiences that are specific to Winnipeg. These places help to build the identity of the city and instill a sense of local pride among residents. These areas are known for their heritage, people, arts, architecture, streetscapes, open spaces, restaurants, festivals, and other cultural and entertainment attractions.

Of all the cultural hubs in Winnipeg, perhaps none are as artistically rich as the Exchange District. The Exchange District consists of twenty city blocks in the heart of the downtown and was designated a National Heritage Site in 1997. As with many heyday neighbourhoods in great cities, the Exchange's warehouses, financial institutions, and early terra cotta-clad skyscrapers that date back from the turn of the 20th century have been repurposed for galleries, specialty retail shops, restaurants, and nightclubs. The classic architecture and nostalgic design have made the Exchange a popular location for film and television productions and increasingly, buildings in this area are being converted to condos.

This neighbourhood is a dynamic and vital artistic centre of the city. However, the redevelopment of this area is resulting in increased rents, which negatively impact the affordability for artists and some organizations. Given the age of many buildings, existing spaces are not as easily adaptable due to structural limitations, thus requiring artists and organizations to either commit substantial funds for reconfiguring/expanding existing spaces or find another space elsewhere outside of the downtown core. This presents a serious challenge to what could be an important cluster of artistic resources within the heart of the downtown.



In recent years, there has been a substantial focus on downtown revitalization within Winnipeg. There have been a number of key projects that have occurred within the downtown core, which includes Shaw Park, the MTS Centre, Red River's downtown campus, Waterfront Drive, the Esplanade Riel, Millennium Library, and new development within the Forks and Exchange District. It is estimated that these capital projects have injected nearly \$900 million dollars in capital investment (Winnipeg, A City of Opportunity). Organizations such as the Forks North Portage Partnership and CentreVenture have helped to direct investment within the downtown, although there have been challenges for artists and community-based organizations remaining within the downtown core in the face of increased rents and gentrification. Organizations such as Artspace Inc. provide affordable space to local artists and community organizations and serve as a model that should be expanded in order to increase the presence of creative industries and organizations within the downtown core.

This Catch-22 is a common challenge for emerging artistic areas in cities. Downtown regeneration efforts often drive out those same individuals and organizations that have played an important part in drawing in investment and increasing the vibrancy of an area. The proposed Warehouse District Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges that the issue of gentrification within the Exchange District is a key challenge that will need to be addressed in order to preserve the unique character of the neighbourhood. The plan is being developed out of the need to address new pressures in the Exchange District arising from new residential development and concerns over the slow rate of neighbourhood improvements and downtown revitalization efforts. The need for increased investment and improvements to infrastructure and maintenance of streets and buildings are also key concerns. The draft plan for the Warehouse District will provide policy direction to guide development and decision making over a twenty-year period. The Plan is also intended to create an overall vision for the study area through the creation of policies that recognize the character-defining elements of the neighbourhood, working with heritage experts, property owners, residents, developers and local merchants.

Because it thrives in the era of the knowledge and creative economy, culture is proving to be an appropriate and effective tool for urban revitalization. According to Stern and Seifert (2007), culture-based regeneration is no longer limited to developing institutions such as the symphony, ballet, or other large-scale institutions, but for making arts and culture more accessible, active, and “polyglot.” While arts are commerce, they revitalize cities not through their bottom line but through their ability to build social capital. The social networks that are created help to translate cultural vitality into “economic dynamism” (Stern and Seifert, 2007). This is achieved through the social networks that are often built between artist, community development organizations, financial institutions, government, etc.

Table 4 shows the success factors that contribute to vibrant and active places where the arts are allowed to flourish and where there are strong relationships between people, place, and culture. This is broken down into three key areas: Activity, Built Form, and Meaning. This table suggests that creating vibrant spaces within the city requires a holistic approach that takes into consideration land use planning, architecture, urban design, cultural planning, economic development, social planning, and environmental sustainability.

According to the Economic Opportunity Framework titled “Winnipeg, A City of Opportunity,” Winnipeg’s downtown footprint is “too large for a city of its size.” The framework recognizes a need for focusing development on improving Portage Avenue from Main Street to the University of Winnipeg, expanding arts and culture districts, continuing the variety of office, shopping, housing, and nightlife options in the Exchange District. An increase in downtown housing is also identified as an important consideration that is also reflected in other policies and documents.

The policies of *OurWinnipeg* are directed towards using a *Complete Communities* approach to city building that is rooted in sustainable transportation and infrastructure. The City’s Complete Communities guidebook presents a framework that is based on a growing movement in contemporary planning practice, that recognizes the importance of creating compact, complete communities that are rooted in a sense of place, that cherish distinctiveness, and that embrace sustainable approaches to land use planning, urban design, and movement. This approach also recognizes urbanism as a way of life that is not only desired, but also provides us with our only real option for significantly reducing the environmental footprint of human life on the planet. It is a way of life that is becoming increasingly popular in Canada as the majority of our population continues to move to cities across the country.

Table 4: Activity, Built Form, and Meaning

Activity – Economic, Cultural and Social	Built Form – Relationship Between Buildings/ Spaces	Meaning – Sense of Place, Historical and Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of activity • Independent businesses • Evening and nighttime activity • Active street life and building frontages • Visible and active institutions and linking organizations • Cultural production and consumption venues at a variety of scales • Public places animated through festivals/ events, public art • Dense networks of small firms (particularly in creative and cultural industries) • Skilled, educated and creative people living and working in the area • Access to education providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design quality in the built form • Fine grain urban morphology • Variety and adaptability of building stock • A pedestrian-oriented environment and scale • A critical mass of uses and users • Permeability and legibility of streetscape • Amount and quality of public space • Active building frontages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important meeting and gathering spaces • Sense of history and progress • Strong identity through imageability (impressions) and legibility (coherence) • Design appreciation and style

(Source: Montgomery, J. in *Planning, Practice & Research*, November 2003, adapted)



The role of *place* in urban planning is essential to the creation of sustainable communities that are shaped by meaning and imagination. Just as vital is the notion of *cultural urbanism* (Keesmaat, J. in Baeker, *Rediscovering the Wealth of Places*, 2010). If we understand culture to be that which makes a people and a place unique, as expressed through the symbolic language of the arts, then cultural urbanism recognizes that the design of places is inherently tied to our expressions of culture, and correspondingly, expressions of culture as inherently tied to a *place*. It is an approach to urban planning and design that recognizes all city building processes as fundamental to defining our quality of life.

The City's *Complete Communities* guidebook defines such communities as being places that “both offer and support a variety of lifestyle choices, providing opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to live, work, shop, learn and play in close proximity to one another” (*Complete Communities*). Given the large urban footprint of the city, the creation of complete communities is an important step that can help make Winnipeg more sustainable, while also creating more artistically vibrant places. The initiatives outlined within *TTTF Phase 2* are intended to complement the guidelines of the *Complete Communities* guidebook and the *OurWinnipeg* Plan.

In this respect, where Winnipeg chooses to direct its growth will have a significant impact on whether residents are able to live in communities where working, shopping, and playing can be accessed on foot.

Table 5: Characteristics of a Complete Community

A complete community provides...	
<i>Options for accessing services, amenities, and community resources</i>	Ensuring that most of the daily necessities of life – services, facilities, cultural resources, and amenities such as grocery stores, banks, restaurants, community centres, schools, and day care centres – are within reach of a reasonable walk or a short transit trip home.
<i>Options for mobility</i>	Support and facilitate public transit, active modes of transportation (such as walking and cycling), and by enabling a lifestyle that reduces the number and length of automobile trips. This design approach does not preclude the option to drive; it enables the option to choose alternative modes of travel by carefully planning integrated land uses.
<i>Options for housing</i>	Providing a mix of housing that accommodates a range of incomes and household types, at all stages of life.
<i>Options for local employment and culture</i>	Recognizing to varying degrees that not all, or even most, residents of a complete community will live near their place of employment and key cultural facilities. A complete community should, however, entail a mix of uses that will provide the option for some to choose to live near their place of employment.

(Source: Keesmaat, J., in Baeker, *Rediscovering the Wealth of Places*, 2010)

In Winnipeg the city's large urban footprint has resulted in a widespread dispersal of the population. The downtown core lacks a much-needed critical mass to support a vibrant and active central core. Policies of the proposed *OurWinnipeg* Plan and the guidelines of the *Complete Communities* guidebook are both aimed at increasing density in key areas of the city, such as the downtown. The following points provide some of the key requirements that need to be addressed when trying to achieve a sufficient level of density:

- The provision of local retail, services, and a “creative core” within walkable distances;
- The provision of regular and reliable transit service, with competitive frequencies that make travel by transit a better option than travel by car;
- Developing a community with a compact form that facilitates active modes of transportation due to walkable distances between various amenities;
- Justifying high quality public realm investments such as public parks, wide sidewalks, street furniture, and public art; and,
- Generating the critical mass of activity that produces vibrant, safe, and pedestrian-friendly streets

(Keesmaat, J., in Baeker, *Rediscovering the Wealth of Places*, 2010).

6 . Through a Cultural Lens

In the past, arts and cultural planning was understood to be about facilities (museums, galleries, theatres) and programs (public art in the street, festivals). Although limited, this planning framework was essential to the development of cultural industries that supported the expression of ideas and creativity in society (particularly in the absence of an understanding of culture as expressed in our streets, public spaces, and land use patterns). However, these explicit and readily identifiable cultural resources need places to thrive; their success (particularly by environmental standards) is entwined with the completeness of the neighbourhoods in which they are located. By implication, cultural planning demands consideration of, and integration with, that which is most local: stories, landscapes, and streetscapes.

An underlying assumption is that the completeness of our communities – from a land use planning perspective – will directly impact how, where, and the extent to which we are able to nurture arts and culture. It is imperative that design accommodates a critical mix of uses, pedestrian places and spaces, and active forms of transportation on a local scale. With these elements in place, creativity and spontaneity will, over time, increase artistic expression, therefore advancing distinctiveness and sense of place. Completeness, which includes artistic expression, needs to be supported on a local scale in order to create places that have meaning, that reflect a way of life, and that are tied to the patterns and processes that make any one neighbourhood complete. To do so, less restrictive planning frameworks that promote mixed-use communities are necessary, allowing for ingenuity, spontaneity, and evolution over time.



Undertaking city building through a cultural lens can complement these directions through strategies that are focused on identifying and supporting the growth of cultural hubs within the city, helping to increase opportunities for unique experiences within the downtown, and to draw in residents from around the city in order to support creative industries, restaurants, entertainment providers, and other businesses. Other key planning strategies that exist or are underway for strengthening the downtown core include the Warehouse District Neighbourhood Plan and the CentrePlan.

By implication, the neighbourhood as a place, and its relative completeness, is an essential component of cultural meaning and expression, and will either serve to facilitate or undermine it. If completeness is the goal, the development of cultural facilities, programs, and creative industries will not only continue to be a core component of cultural planning, they will also need to become fundamental to neighbourhood planning.

If the design of places is inherently tied to our expressions of culture, then broad collaborations between professionals, planners, engineers, urban designers, cultural planners, and heritage planners are necessary to infuse design development with a variety of perspectives and interests. For example, if we understand streets to be the most prominent public spaces that we share in common, shaping the image of the city, defining its look, feel, and function for all users (as opposed to simply vehicles), a significant negotiation will need to take place to determine the distribution of the right-of-way into pedestrian places, cycling lanes, vehicular movement, and the accommodation of public art.

But doing so is not simply a technical exercise to be undertaken by professionals. Cultural urbanism recognizes the negotiation of our cultural values as embedded in the way that we plan streets, land uses, and public spaces. This implies and points to the importance of public processes in shaping design outcomes. At the front end, consultation about what we value, and the society that we are seeking to both affirm and create, will bring clarity to the exercise of determining who we believe we are and how that is reflected. At the later stages, the ongoing involvement of an active population in the life of a place will define its success as a place of cultural meaning.

The policies of *OurWinnipeg* call for a focused district, destination and cluster approach to downtown development in order to provide predictability and opportunity for investment, increase the variety of complementary experiences and opportunities, and to achieve a critical mass of people-oriented activity that is vital to ongoing economic success.

The Winnipeg Arts Council is now responsible for overseeing the **Urban Idea Centre**. The purpose of this centre is to “encourage and facilitate the exchange of ideas and opinions related to the city, the quality of urban life, and future possibilities.” The centre will provide an important mechanism for encouraging discourse on placemaking within the city and to promote public participation in exploring both current and future arts and cultural issues confronting the city. Some of the strategies for the Urban Idea Centre will be to provide opportunities such as conferences, forums, festivals, meetings and exhibitions in order to broaden the community’s understanding of urban issues.

Programs such as the Urban Idea Centre are intended to strengthen the public’s understanding of the relationship between arts, culture, and placemaking. This in turn will help to increase the community’s level of awareness and involvement in the cultural development of the city.

Agassiz Ice by Gordon Reeve is an artwork located in Assiniboine Park. It was created through the Winnipeg Arts Council Public Art program. Photo by cam bush.

