

Township of Madawaska Valley
Comments on Draft Ontario Culture Strategy
May 12, 2016

Do the Vision for Culture and guiding Principles reflect what is important for you/our municipality?

The Township of Madawaska Valley completed their community based Strategic Plan, A Path Forward for 2015-2019. Our residents helped to develop a mission for a healthy, growing, and culturally-rich community which values the contribution that residents and business owners make towards providing affordable and accessible amenities and an unparalleled quality of life. The principles of the draft Culture Strategy are consistent with the values of our municipality:

- Creativity and Innovation - Arts, culture and heritage are highly valued in Madawaska Valley. The Library is a key cultural stakeholder in our community and works with other cultural facilities to foster community hubs for students (including those home-schooled), seniors and people of all ages. Our business community and culture organizations like the library work in partnership with our Council and Township. **The Library requires steady multi-year funding to grow its programs that serve both Madawaska Valley and the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch , Raglan.**
- Quality of Life and Economic Development – New residents come to experience a superior quality of life due to the natural amenities found in the Ottawa Valley area. Multiple generations have valued this quality of life on original homesteads. Our community is strong in cultural tourism and outdoor recreation and is increasing our growth in learning and educational tourism. Culture and Tourism is emerging as an important economic driver for people of all ages attracted to our community. Economic Sustainability is a key to an area that was largely focused on the lumber industry.
- Diversity and Inclusion – in keeping with our mission to pursue progress in a climate of acceptance and careful consideration of short and long-term implications maintain the integrity and character of our Township, its assets, and amenities for people with disabilities and people of all ages, cultures in both rural and urban settings. Our heritage traditions are primarily Irish, Polish and German culture; however there is a growing black community. Each diverse group has representation through various historical or heritage associations which nurture the desire to maintain the respective traditions and culture, and to some extent, maintain the language.
- Respect for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples – in lieu of future Land Claim issues
- Collaboration and Partnerships – We have a significant volunteer community working with service organizations, Not-for-Profits and Charitable organizations/committees working collaboratively with our Township to increase community capacity and execute programs that promote quality of life and engagement in cultural activities.
- Public Value and Accountability-**This consultation process allows** for intergovernmental relations to help guide the **development of a final Culture Strategy for Ontario that builds capacity within municipalities** so that “...every person has the opportunity for creative expression and cultural participation, and where the diversity of our stories and communities is reflected and valued”. **Please be advised of the Rural Lens advocated by ROMA, Rural Ontario Municipalities:**
 - The Rural and Northern Lens provides us with an invitation....to all levels of government to do better with what they have and to ensure that the needs and requirements of rural and northern residents are met so that they may thrive and succeed. The Lens is particularly important for the provincial government. Various ministries must accommodate the needs of a large and urbanizing province and it is critical to ensure that rural and northern needs are not lost in the development of policy
 - Benefit or hinder the fiscal realities of Rural and Northern Ontario?
 - Have a business case that accounts for low and sparse populations?
 - Enhance opportunities in Rural and Northern Ontario?
 - Help or hinder goals of sustainability blending environmental, social and economic factors?

- Consider how and if rural people will be able to access it?
- Consider all options for delivery, ensuring efficiency, the potential for co-delivery and an acceptable administrative impact on municipalities?
- Account for the needs of special populations (such as youth, elderly and immigrants)?
- Have adequate human and financial resources to be effective?
- Ensure that Rural and Northern communities are receiving equitable treatment or services relative to others in the province?
- Recognize the geography, weather and scale of Rural and Northern Ontario and include adjusted program criteria to accommodate these realities?
- Accommodate the aspirations of residents from rural communities and the north?
- Build upon the input and advice of rural residents, communities and municipalities?

Do the overarching goals help grow or strengthen the culture sector in Ontario?

We whole heartedly support the 3 over arching goals in the draft Culture Strategy document, specifically:

1. Strengthen Culture in Communities with the expected result of targeted funding and greater recognition of libraries and other cultural spaces as a community hub in relation to expected outcomes of contributing to the economy, engaging all populations through arts and culture and equipping employers and workers in the culture industry through direct funding and a rural lens that supports rural and northern communities:
 - Help build strong community based culture organizations
 - a. **Working with government partners (municipalities) and culture stakeholders to maximize use of public libraries and other culture facilities**
 - b. Review and update provincial funding programs for public libraries to build capacity in rural and remote communities like the Township of Madawaska Valley, while improving digital services and support for leadership and innovation. Current funding has been static and technology is critical to expanding services to support entrepreneurs, students and those who do not have stable access to technology in their homes.
 - c. **Collaborate on continued implementation of the Ontario Volunteer Action plan to support Not-For-Profit Art Councils or parallel cultural organizations to build community capacity**
 - d. Ongoing work and sensitivity to First Nation Libraries
 - Conserve and promote Ontario's diverse cultural heritage
 - a. Provide tools to help communities protect and identify their cultural heritage
 - Connect people and communities by sharing and celebrating our diverse heritage and cultures
 - a. Bring together culture and tourism agencies and attractions and indigenous partners to increase public awareness and understanding of indigenous histories and contributions to art and culture
 - b. **Collaborate with sport and recreation partners to strengthen the integration of cultural engagement into community and recreation and support, and encourage cultural celebration as part of multi-sport games held in Ontario**
2. Make Ontario a cultural leader at home and internationally:
 - Seek opportunities to grow culture sector within the framework of Business Growth Initiative by working with partner ministries to facilitate innovation for entrepreneurs in the arts and culture industries. These objectives are consistent with the municipalities economic development strategy which highlights the benefits of the creative knowledge economy fostered by the convergence of entrepreneurship, culture and tourism:
 - a. Develop entrepreneurship and commercialization designed for arts and culture industries
 - b. Explore the development of risk capital programs in the rapid product development of arts and culture industry

- c. Attract investment to facilitate Ontario's global competitiveness in the culture sector
 - d. Mobilize and accelerate the creation of technology to strengthen the culture sector
- Working collaboratively with government partners (including municipalities) and the tourism industry to identify how to grow cultural tourism in Ontario to offer authentic visitor experiences
- Ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and other relevant government ministries to develop a long-term infrastructure plan that clearly benefits rural and remote communities.
- Build the talent and skills of Ontario's cultural workforce
 - a. Increase uptake of the Canada-Ontario Job Grant among employers in the culture sector to assist in building their workforce through employer-led digital skills training
 - b. Facilitate the positioning of a successful culture workforce in rural and remote communities by creating experiential learning opportunities funded through employer subsidies that benefit and create employment/training for those with disabilities, youth and adults to promote a skilled workforce in the emerging creative economy
- 3. Promote Cultural Engagement and Inclusion
 - Inspire the next generation to build careers in the culture sector
 - Reduce barriers and allow for greater participation in culture
 - a. Increase access and inclusion through the grant application and assessment process for those communities who may face barriers to accessing culture funding

Feedback on Proposed Initiatives/Expected results of Goals and objectives:

A fundamental cornerstone of a community is the concept that the health of community is also dependant on the health and thriving expression of its individuals. It is in the act of creation that art can best support the building of healthy communities (Suzanne Farkas, "Women Creating space for Healthy communities", [Women and Environments] International Magazine Fall 2000). These statements are consistent with the framework in The Status of Ontario's Artists Act that acknowledges the intrinsic value of art and its ability to promote the economy and healthier communities. These key results are a priority:

- Fewer barriers to access culture funding in rural communities to increase capacity in libraries/cultural spaces i.e. digital technologies,
- Funding more targeted to support a greater diversity of organizations and Arts Councils/parallel organizations as community hubs
- More opportunities for government/industry collaboration to drive cultural industry and integrate within Ontario's broader economic agenda by equipping Ontarians with skills and knowledge to contribute to the creative economy via employment programs for employers and municipalities

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