



The City of Victoria will begin developing an *Arts and Cultural Plan* in 2010 to guide its vision and role in supporting local arts and culture. A complete list of projects that the City supports is available at:

[www.victoria.ca/cityhall/departments\\_comdev.shtml](http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/departments_comdev.shtml)

### Definition and Description

**Culture** can be defined as practices and values, heritage and place, the arts, diversity and social history.<sup>1</sup> As an element of culture, the **arts** include visual media (painting, print-making, drawing, sculpture, crafts, pottery/ceramics, photography, film and video), theatre, music, song, spoken word, literary arts and dance.

**Cultural industries** is an umbrella term for areas of creativity and productivity including: advertising, architecture, artisan crafts, fashion design, film and video, art and antique markets, industrial design, music and the performing arts, print media and publishing, television and radio and visual arts.

### Why Is This Topic Important?

Many communities, like Victoria, see arts and culture as essential social elements to a sustainable world class city. Some communities see arts and culture as a fourth pillar of sustainability that emphasizes the role it plays in community well-being and quality of life. The idea of the cultural or **creative city** is a popular strategy for connecting cultural policy and community planning. Sustainable cities seek to develop into centres of creativity

and encourage the conversion of older buildings to new cultural facilities. They support artists and cultural sectors of a local economy through financial incentives such as grants. A sustainable city also ensures there are adequate numbers of affordable spaces for artists and culture-related businesses downtown and in nearby areas.

### Did You Know?

**Canadian Heritage** named the City of Victoria a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2005. The City received funding for seven projects including *Signs of Lekwungen*, an interpretive walkway honouring the art, culture and history of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations in the Coast Salish family.

Three per cent of Victoria residents were employed in the information and **cultural industries** category of the 2006 census, and another three per cent had occupations in arts, entertainment and recreation.

The City supports the creation of **art in public places** that uses a wide variety of media such as sculpture, murals, landscape features and creative displays that interpret built or cultural **heritage**.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Approximately 500,000 people attended **festivals and celebrations** and other events in Victoria's public spaces in 2009.

Local poet and writer, Linda Rogers is Victoria's second **Poet Laureate** and will serve as the City's literary and cultural ambassador until November 2011.

The City of Victoria Butler Book Prize, currently in its seventh year, is a competition that honours members of the literary community who live in the Capital Region.

Public art and arts and cultural activities contribute to **place-making** in urban design. For example, the integration of two First Nations Spirit Poles and summer programming in Spirit Square has renewed the sense of place and vitality of Centennial Square.

The City supports the arts and cultural facilities through an annual property tax exemption. It also promotes the re-use of historic buildings as **cultural spaces**, such as Alix Goolden Hall, a former church.

## Issues and Trends

### Art in public places

- The City of Victoria's Public Art Policy was adopted by Council in 1993. It states the City's intention to create new works of art for the enhancement of public spaces. A review and update of the Public Art Policy is currently underway.
- The existing policy defines public art as "artistic visual works selected, commissioned, created or donated for locations in a public space or facility accessible to the members of the public and includes works of a permanent or temporary nature located in the public domain."
- The City provides annual funding of \$50,000 to art in public places. It can also allocate up to one per cent of the total cost of local government capital projects over \$250,000 in budget toward the purchase or commission of artwork that is either displayed in a public area or incorporated in the design of a building or structure.

### Creative heart of the region

- Victoria is the regional centre for arts and culture. To strengthen this role, the City hosts and financially assists medium to large scale non-profit annual festivals and celebrations through its Festival Investment Grant. Total support in 2010 will be \$147,500. In addition, the City coordinates summer programming and use of Victoria's new Spirit Square, in Centennial Square, and funds other outdoor venues such as Cameron Bandshell in Beacon Hill Park.
- Major arts and cultural facilities serving the region continue to be concentrated in Victoria. The City owns the McPherson Theatre and is one-third owner of the Royal Theatre; it annually contributes \$700,000 and \$237,800 to these venues respectively. Additional arts organizations and cultural spaces in Victoria that the City supports include the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Ballet Victoria, Dance Victoria, Pacific Opera Victoria, Victoria Symphony, the Victoria Conservancy of Music, Victoria Jazz Society, Open Space Gallery, Belfry Theatre and Metro Studio and Intrepid Theatre.

### Economic vitality and investment

- Creative cities have economic benefits. Three per cent of Victoria residents were employed in the information and cultural industries category of the 2006 Census, and another three per cent had occupations in arts, entertainment and recreation. Representing approximately six per cent of Victoria's economy, arts and culture is a significant economic sector.
- In support of Victoria as a creative city, the City allocated \$544,105 to its Arts, Culture and Events budget for 2009. In addition, it contributed \$796,000 to the Capital Regional District Arts Development Fund for operating grants for arts and cultural organizations in the region. The City also provides an annual property tax exemption to owners of arts and cultural facilities. In 2008, this amount totalled \$304,270.

## The City in Action: What We Do Now

The City has been working with arts and cultural groups over the past decade in various capacities. It supports everything from multicultural festivals and Canada Day celebrations to art in public places, Victoria's Poet Laureate and the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize. The City also connects the arts to community development through its Community Public Art Program and Artist-in-Residence Program. These offer opportunities for people in everyday life to collaborate with artists to help create the look and feel of Victoria in city neighbourhoods.

The City's Victoria Arts Scan is currently mapping existing arts and cultural resources to identify opportunities and gaps. The information collected will be used to identify future priorities and to shape the development of an *Arts and Cultural Plan*. The plan will guide the City's vision and role in supporting community arts and culture, and identify initiatives over the next five years.

## Shape Your Future Victoria

Existing policies and incentives support the invaluable role of art and culture in Victoria. Policy directions and priorities could change in the future:

- What is art and culture to you? Why is it important?
- Should Victoria focus on developing as a creative city? How?
- Does Victoria need more cultural spaces? Where and what?

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- Additional topic sheets are available online at [www.shapeyourfuturevictoria.ca/research-facts](http://www.shapeyourfuturevictoria.ca/research-facts)