



# **Fredericton Municipal Arts Policy**

**Development Services Department  
CITY OF FREDERICTON  
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# Fredericton Municipal Arts Policy

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# I Background

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## (i) Rationale for a policy

Municipalities in North America have long recognized that the arts and culture are “good” for a community in economic and social terms. But it is only within the last twenty years that municipalities have made a more concerted effort to play an active role in celebrating, promoting, and supporting the arts through strategic planning and a concomitant package of programs and services. Contributing factors include:

- (a) ***A shift away from traditional urban economies:*** Late twentieth-century de-industrialization, together with corporate and/or government restructuring, have forced communities to diversify in order to remain self-sustaining. Municipalities are now exploring strategic opportunities in the arts, culture and heritage to help create such diversity, and consequently to gain from direct and induced economic benefits. Downtowns, where the built environment is conducive to arts activity and where significant impacts on the quality of life can be made, are often key “target areas” for such opportunities.
- (b) ***Recognition of urban communities as “ecosystems”:*** Economic, social, cultural and political systems are interdependent and all are considered essential for urban growth. The arts are one of the building blocks of a healthy and sustainable community in which citizens are not only consumers, but are challenged and inspired by the arts – enhancing creativity in research and development, education, and commerce. Moreover, people looking for a high quality of life for themselves and for their employees seek communities with a lively arts profile. A healthy and sustainable community is therefore one in which the arts play an integral role in the quality of urban life.
- (c) ***Changing patterns of social cohesion:*** In an era of globalization and mass media, populations tend to be less connected or “rooted” to their communities. The arts, together with traditional means (neighbourhoods, church or social groups, and workplaces) can play a role in social cohesion – the building of shared values and a sense of belonging, inclusion, and participation (“community pride”) among citizens of all ages, backgrounds and incomes.
- (d) ***Changing roles and relationships:*** Given that the arts are most accessible in urban communities, where there is the corresponding infrastructure and human capital, municipalities are being called upon to assume larger “partnership” roles in arts development. They are being challenged to invest an equitable share of financial and in-kind resources, and to create

programs and services that complement those at other levels of government.

Today, municipalities are regarded as key players in arts development, with the ability to tailor programs and services to suit their unique circumstances, to rationalize the use of space for arts and cultural purposes, and to engage the various communities of interest – arts, recreation, business, and education among them - in their community planning efforts. The development of an *arts policy* is a primary mechanism to give legitimacy to the actions of a municipality with respect to the arts, and to formalize its relationship with these communities of interest. Further, it enables municipal leaders to make informed decisions about how to invest in the arts, the programs and services it should offer, what organizational and procedural mechanisms it should develop to serve the community, and what goals and strategies it should employ as it looks to the future.

## **(ii) Fredericton’s experience**

There has always been widespread recognition of Fredericton’s impressive legacy in the arts. Its nineteenth-century renown as the “Poet’s Corner” represents only a beginning for a city that has become an important arts landmark in the Maritimes and in Canada. As home to writers, visual and performing artists, and craftspeople of distinction, and as host to various institutions, Fredericton’s arts scene has become more and more synonymous with the identity of the community. But in recent years, artists, professionals, and the general public have commented that Fredericton’s programming and policy development related to the arts was falling below a standard that has been achieved by other municipalities. Other cities, they say, have made significant strides to utilize the arts to support growth and development, and much could be done by Fredericton as a partner in supporting and promoting the arts for economic and social benefit.

In 1999, the Fredericton City Council created a new division within its Development Services Department. The Heritage and Cultural Affairs Division was mandated to work in three broad areas: arts and culture, built heritage, and design review. The arts and culture portfolio includes policy formulation, program development, assistance with promotions and services, and assistance with product development.

The formulation of an arts policy was the essential “first step” in this portfolio. It was understood that such a policy should:

- (a) Express a common language of understanding between the municipality and the community, so that concepts of “culture” and “the arts” are readily understood, and the values embraced;

- (b) Have a shared vision that is grounded in the social, cultural and economic aspirations of the community;
- (c) Be adaptable and flexible so as to respond to changing community needs;
- (d) Be an enabling tool as opposed to a regulatory tool, one that would support strategic partnerships.

Given limited staff resources, the policy development focus was the creative arts. The policy would not be a “cultural policy” because it would not address matters of cultural heritage, including built heritage and material culture, and therefore would not address infrastructure such as museums and libraries. It was recognized that other elements of cultural policy would also be developed as part of the Municipal Plan.

### **(iii) The policy development process**

In the summer of 2000, Council appointed a Policy Working Group (see Appendix i for group composition). Comprised of representatives of the various arts sectors (visual, performing, literary and media arts, City staff and a municipal Councillor), this group discussed issues and opportunities in the arts, carried out a survey of stakeholder groups, held an internal workshop to determine values, a vision and principles for the arts, and prepared a discussion paper for public review. The Working Group then conducted a series of public consultations in February 2002 (see Appendix ii for findings). Participants in the consultations included artists, volunteer representatives or arts organizations, educators, professionals in the built environments, and business people. In essence, the process of policy development became as important as the policy itself because of the opportunity it presented in the exchange of ideas.

Staff assembled the comments, drafted a policy, and submitted it to the Working Group for review and further discussion.

### **(iv) The policy structure**

The policy is structured as follows:

- (a) A **Preamble** that recognizes Fredericton’s legacy in the arts and establishes the City interest;
- (b) A **Purpose**, being a statement of the Policy’s intent;
- (c) **Definitions** of “culture” and “the arts”;
- (d) **Value** statements associated with the arts;
- (e) A **Vision** statement

- (f) A set of **Principles** that respect the integrity of the arts
- (g) A set of relevant **Goals and Strategies** that provide a “roadmap” to the future.

When adopted by Council, the policy is intended to form part of the *Capital City Municipal Plan*. Some elements of the policy will exist as operating policy with corresponding procedures administered by relevant divisions in the municipal structure.

## **II. Fredericton Municipal Arts Policy**

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### **1.0 Preamble**

This policy formalizes the municipal interest in the arts in the community. The City of Fredericton recognizes the importance of the arts – and culture generally – in the life of the community. It recognizes that a rich artistic tradition builds social cohesion through the flow of energy and ideas, affirms the community’s sense of pride and identity, and contributes to economic prosperity through direct and induced benefits. As a Provincial Capital, as host to major educational institutions, and as a centre for commerce, research and technology, the City of Fredericton understands the arts as one of the building blocks of a healthy and sustainable community.

### **2.0 Purpose of the policy**

This policy governs the actions of the municipality with respect to the arts. The actions of the municipality, including those policies and procedures subsequently developed, subscribe to the values, vision and guiding principles included in this policy. The purpose of this policy is to:

- 2.1 Formally establish the place of the arts in the life of the community, and as such, to acknowledge the arts as one of the means by which the City commits to enhancing the quality of life for citizens and visitors;
- 2.2 define the role of the City in community development utilizing the arts;
- 2.3 assist the City in its decision-making with respect to investment, in-kind assistance, programming, promotion, and communications; and
- 2.4 assist in rationalizing the services offered by the City through its operational structure.

## 3.0 Definitions

### 3.1 CULTURE

We observe the arts in the context of “culture,” which we define as **the values, customs and traditions that characterize a community**. By this definition, culture is inclusive, and refers to culture belonging to First Nations peoples, peoples of historical and contemporary settlement, popular culture, and the places, events, products and creations that contribute to such values, customs and traditions.

### 3.1 THE ARTS

“The arts” refers to the creative arts in all its forms of expression, including those past, present and future forms of expression. Present forms of expression include:

- **visual arts** (*painting, sculpture, printmaking, fine craft, photography, mixed media*)
- **literary arts** (*fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, playwriting*)
- **performing arts** (*theatre, music, dance, opera*)
- **media arts** (*film, video, sound recording, cyber arts*)
- **arts industries** (*production-line fine craft, publishing, graphic and surface design*)
- **civic arts** (*architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, art in public places*)
- **culturally specific arts** (*arts influenced by the values, customs and traditions of First Nations peoples; arts influenced by the values, customs and traditions of peoples of historical or contemporary settlement*)
- **community arts** (*recreational arts; variety or novelty arts*)

Taken together, we define the arts as **the creative processes in which culture is reflected, perceived, interpreted and presented**.

## 4.0 Values associated with the arts in Fredericton

- 4.1 The City of Fredericton values the importance of the arts as an agent in articulating our sense of community and identity through ongoing artistic activity, and through events, performances, exhibitions and festivals held throughout the year.

- 4.2 The City of Fredericton values the power of the arts in channelling the creative process in all of us, in connecting people, in challenging people, and in communicating ideas.
- 4.3 The City of Fredericton values the role of all arts constituencies – professional, non-professional and emerging – in the personal development of people of all ages throughout the city, whether they are active or passive participants.
- 4.4 The City of Fredericton values the contribution of the three founding cultures – First Nations peoples, Acadians and other francophones, and British – to the arts in the community, values all other cultures adding to the city’s cultural mosaic, and recognizes the diversity of artistic processes.
- 4.5 The City of Fredericton values the direct and induced benefits in the areas of economic development, tourism, education, and downtown/neighbourhood revitalization that are incurred through arts development, and values the arts as a way of enhancing Fredericton’s quality of life and attracting new business.

## **5.0 Vision for the arts in Fredericton**

*As New Brunswick’s Capital City, Fredericton is an artistic and cultural centre where creativity, excellence, diversity and freedom of expression flourish in an accessible and sustained environment.*

## **6.0 Guiding Principles**

- 6.1 **Freedom of expression** Artists should be protected from undue constraints on the creative process.
- 6.2 **Excellence** In all aspects of the arts, excellence should be recognized appreciated, encouraged and communicated.
- 6.3 **Enrichment** An environment should be created in which activity in the arts can flourish.
- 6.4 **Innovation** Innovative and entrepreneurial artistic endeavours should be supported.

- 6.5 **Accessibility** The arts should be open to all, and easily accessed and enjoyed by all.
- 6.6 **Pluralism** Participation in arts activity amongst all people, regardless of culture, language, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation or social standing should be recognized, respected and encouraged.
- 6.7 **Sustainability** Infrastructure for the purposes of creation, production, presentation, promotion and distribution should be maintained and supported.

## **7.0 Goals and strategies**

### **7.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

*Goal:*

**To strengthen the community through a continuous process of strategic cultural planning.**

*Strategies:*

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|--------------------|--|
| <b>Analysis</b>    | 7.1.1 Council shall conduct an economic impact study of the arts in Fredericton in support of arts development, a quality business environment, and the forging of partnerships.   |
|                    | 7.1.2 Council shall prepare and maintain an inventory of cultural space to rationalize needs and priorities for communities of interest, and for the community at large.   |
|                    | 7.1.3 Council shall work with other levels of government to collect relevant statistics, when deemed necessary, on the arts and culture within the Fredericton region in order to recognize and respond to trends in the arts and culture. |
| <b>Development</b> | 7.1.4 Council shall explore the creative application of planning and regulatory tools towards arts development and the development of physical space as it relates to the arts.  |

7.1.5 Council shall continue to develop the Historic Garrison District as a “festival centre” dedicated to the profiling of Fredericton’s history, culture, arts and crafts. In service to the arts community, Council shall pursue, in co-operation with other levels of government, the development of on-site amenities required for programming.

**Partnerships**

7.1.7 Council accepts the wisdom of setting policies, and designing programs and procedures, that are compatible with those offered by others, and shall actively seek partnerships:

- (a) with other levels of government regarding opportunities in arts development including the rationalization of cultural space, programs, funding arrangements, and production;
- (b) with educational institutions to create shared learning opportunities and other programs or projects;
- (c) with the business community and economic development support organizations to participate in and contribute towards the enrichment of cultural space;
- (d) with custodians of cultural space in order to facilitate their use for performances, exhibitions and other arts events;
- (e) with local arts organizations and arts attractions regarding opportunities for promotion and theme development, as well as tourism products of quality and authenticity;
- (f) with community groups, including recreational groups, to create shared opportunities in the arts;
- (g) with culturally specific communities to encourage cross-cultural activity;
- (h) with communities of professional practice, including pan-Canadian networks of municipal cultural officials, to keep abreast of best practices in cultural planning.

## 7.2 INVESTMENT

***Goal:***

**To enhance the economic and social well being of the community by contributing to the stability of artists and arts organizations.**

***Strategies:***

**Funding**

7.2.1 Council shall offer financial support to non-profit arts

organizations who wish to undertake an event, project or activity of benefit to the community, such support to be determined on an annual basis.

7.2.2 Council shall investigate new funding opportunities in partnership with other levels of government and the private sector.

**Employment** 7.2.3 Council shall offer fair compensation in the employment of all professional artists and the programs they serve.

**Facilities** 7.2.4 Council shall pursue, subject to needs analysis and feasibility, development and support of additional cultural space, including enclosed and open-air space.

### **7.3 ACCESS AND AWARENESS**

#### ***Goal:***

**To strengthen the visibility of the arts in the city and to integrate the arts into the everyday life of the community.**

#### ***Strategies:***

**Art in public places** 7.3.1 In concert with an operations plan, Council shall display or present on its premises, visual, literary, performing or media art, by professional, non-professional and emerging local artists.

7.3.2 Council shall develop and administer a policy on art in outdoor public spaces under its direct administrative control.

7.3.3 Council shall pursue mechanisms to encourage the procurement and presentation of artistic work in new development, such as through development agreements and/or by-laws.

**Donation** 7.3.4 Where feasible and appropriate, Council shall accept the donation of art for public buildings and appropriate open spaces.

**Civic arts** 7.3.5 Council shall encourage the development of a built environment of a quality commensurate with Fredericton's role as a Provincial Capital by

- (a) considering the integration of fine arts and fine crafts into public works and building projects;
- (b) recognizing, through formal means such as awards, works of architecture, landscape architecture and civic design of merit in the community.

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|-----------------------|-------|---|
| <b>Community arts</b> | 7.3.6 | Council shall develop, support and promote activities for adults, seniors and youth and encourage cross-discipline activity, such as the arts and sport/recreation, and the arts and multiculturalism.  |
| <b>Participation</b>  | 7.3.7 | Council recognizes the importance of volunteers in the arts, and shall consider the appointment of artists and representatives of arts organizations on committees and task forces devoted to the City's mandate, while encouraging its employees to participate in the arts as volunteers. |

#### **7.4 FACILITATION**

***Goal:***

**To strengthen the operational effectiveness of arts activity.**

***Strategies:***

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| <b>Festivals/<br/>events services</b> | 7.4.1 | Council shall provide an effective co-ordination service for festivals and events, including guidance on permits.  |
|                                       | 7.4.3 | Council shall pursue support for shared information/retail space for operators of festivals and events.  |
| <b>In-kind<br/>services</b>           | 7.4.4 | Council shall provide a flexible package of services in kind (road closures, picnic tables, fencing, etc.) for festivals, events and other outdoor arts functions, and shall provide a user guide to service needs.          |
| <b>Film<br/>production</b>            | 7.4.5 | Council shall accommodate location film production where and when feasible.  |
| <b>Tourism<br/>services</b>           | 7.4.6 | Council shall actively promote the City of Fredericton as a cultural destination in co-operation with other levels of government, and shall, where feasible and appropriate, promote the arts within its tourism literature. |
|                                       | 7.4.7 | Council shall provide assistance toward development of authentic tourism products associated with the arts and culture, in co-operation with the arts constituency.  |

**Communication and promotion services** 7.4.8 Council shall make provision for accessible, accurate and time-sensitive information and promotions of arts and arts activities to the benefit of residents, visitors and arts organizations.

## 7.5 GOVERNANCE

### *Goal:*

**To provide an efficient and effective administrative structure to serve the communities of interest in the arts and culture.**

### *Strategies:*

**Arts Advisory Committee** 7.5.1 Council shall appoint, in consultation with the arts community, a committee of stakeholders, including professionals in the arts, to advise on matters affecting arts development within the municipality, including but not limited to art in public places, donations of art, exhibitions within City spaces, participation of youth, seniors and other groups, and financial investment. The Arts Advisory Committee shall report to the community on the implementation of strategies identified in the policy as well as to allow for discussion of issues.

**Dedicated staff** 7.5.2 Council shall dedicate staff to advance the values associated with the arts in the municipality, co-ordinate policy implementation, provide assistance to volunteers and professionals in the arts, seek out business and partnership opportunities, and ensure a smooth flow of information between city departments.

### **III. Appendices**

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#### **(i) Arts Policy Working Group members**

##### **Co-chairs**

**Ross Leckie**, Director, Creative Writing, Department of English, University of New Brunswick; Editor, *The Fiddlehead*; Fredericton Arts Alliance

**Laurie Glenn**, Head, Programming and Communications, The Beaverbrook Art Gallery

##### **Members**

**Bernadine Perley**, artist, representing the Aboriginal arts community

**Tony Merzetti**, Co-ordinator, New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-operative

**Trudy Gallagher**, artist and craftsperson, "Bejewel"

**Janice Wright-Cheney**, visual artist, instructor, New Brunswick College of Craft and Design

**Ilkay Silk**, Drama Co-ordinator, St. Thomas University

**Melissa Durling**, General Manager, Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival

**Christian Whalen**, New Brunswick Arts Board; *Jeunesses Musicales*

**Andy Belyea**, downtown Fredericton businessperson, "Joy of Framing"

##### **Fredericton City Council**

**Deputy Mayor Walter Brown**

##### **Staff**

**Bill DeGrace**, Development Services Department, Heritage and Cultural Affairs Division, project co-ordinator

**Colleen Hanna**, Community Services Department, Recreation Division

**Dave Seabrook**, Development Services Department, Tourism Division

## (ii) Public consultation findings

The following summarizes the findings from the public consultation series held early in 2002, as well as from submitted briefs:

- (a) ***Awareness of the value of the arts*** – Respondents commented on the need for decision-makers to appreciate the contribution of the arts to the quality of life, and that such quality yields economic benefits. Some people felt that there is still too much of a “divide” between the artists and the community, and that the City has a role in promotion and outreach, if not education, in order to erase the apparent impression of a “closed” arts community. Awareness of the value of the arts was also seen as something that should extend to all City departments, so that they embrace these concepts in their own operations.
- (b) ***Excellence, authenticity and professionalism*** – Many respondents wanted to ensure that any policy recognizes artists as professionals, and that professionals should be included in advisory committees and consulted on cultural products and programs to be offered by the City. Given that excellence ensures long-term sustainability, it was felt that any “product” developed, such as a cultural tourism product, be of a quality and authenticity that respects artistic merit. On the other hand, some respondents countered that “populism”, meaning popular arts and entertainment, and community (non-professional) arts endeavours, are needed to engage the full community.
- (c) ***Facilities*** – Several respondents felt that the City’s record of investment in cultural facilities has only recently been improved with the purchase of the Playhouse, and that more could be done, whether in terms of capital contributions or rent subsidies for artists or arts organizations. Three types of facilities were identified: an artist-run centre, a multi-purpose arts venue, and open-air facilities in parks and open spaces. Particular attention was given to current efforts on the part of the Fredericton Arts Alliance to convert the Charlotte Street School into an Arts and Learning Centre managed by the arts constituency. They pointed to the capabilities of such a centre for education and outreach, as well as its potential role in neighbourhood revitalization.
- (d) ***Arts and the built environment*** – Several respondents commented that the arts and culture are inseparable from the built environment. An artistically rich city, they said, cannot also be one that is devoid of buildings that are aesthetically pleasing, and the comment was made that the architectural quality of buildings in the downtown has declined in recent years. A related theme was the request to have more art in public places, including a percentage of construction budgets given over to public art, as occurs in other cities.

- e) **Funding** – Some respondents commented that funding levels to the arts were not sufficient. The current level of funding is only a beginning, they said, and does not match that of other municipalities of the same size. The process for awarding grants should also be transparent.
- (f) **Services** – Many respondents pointed to the limited human resource capacity of their organizations, and the burnout that frequently occurs with volunteerism in the arts. People felt strongly that if the City could not provide more funding, it should take on a stronger and more effective role as a facilitator, event and program co-ordinator, advisor to organizations, and in-kind service provider. Some people commented that there seems to be a lot of “red tape” in organizing events, that is, the number of people they might have to call before getting what they want, or the numbers of permit applications they might have to fill out. They also remarked that the web site event calendar and the printed guides are not as user-friendly as those in other communities from an arts perspective, because not all arts events appear to fit the categories. Others noted that programs and products, like studio tours or public art, were lacking and should be developed. Clearly, they said, a “let’s make it happen” philosophy is lacking in City operations. Some people regarded the formation of a provincial capital commission, which has been under study in recent years, as a possible solution in terms of cultural administration and services.
- (g) **Inclusiveness** – Some respondents expressed concern that important components of Fredericton society and culture were being left out or neglected, and that somehow these should be addressed by the Policy. In particular, there is a tendency to focus arts development on the south side because of downtown and the universities, and more could be done to bring the north side into the picture, especially given the potential contribution of the First Nation. Additionally, there is a persistent “town/gown” divide, i.e. between the Universities and the city, and that perceived or real barriers should be brought down. Finally, and of particular note, aboriginal artists and francophones felt that the Policy should respect and promote their legacy and contribution to the arts.