



Community Services *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: CS-2025-06

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Catania, Director of Community Services

PREPARED BY: Chris Catania, Director of Community Services

REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 5, 2025

SUBJECT: Arts and Culture Master Plan Draft Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CS-2025-06, Arts and Culture Master Plan Draft Recommendations be received for information; and

THAT staff be directed to bring a final Arts and Culture Master Plan to Council for adoption in June 2025

SUMMARY:

To provide Council with information on the Arts and Culture Master Plan Draft Recommendations resulting from key findings of the Interim Report. Furthermore, provide Council final steps required for the approval of the Township of Wilmot's 2025 Arts and Culture Master Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Culture plays a crucial role in building an attractive and vibrant community. Municipalities foster local cultural development through cultural plans that focus on identifying and managing cultural resources, while ensuring that culture is prioritized in decision-making processes.

In 2024, the Township embarked on the development of an updated Arts and Culture Master Plan that will replace the former plan completed in 2018, which provided direction from 2019 to 2024. The new plan aims at clarifying objectives and processes for the management of cultural resources, so that culture in Wilmot can continue to enhance quality of life, contribute to economic prosperity, and celebrate the unique characteristics of Wilmot.

Interim Report & Key Findings

On March 3, 2025, Staff presented Council with the Arts and Culture Interim Report that provided key findings comprising of the culmination research and data analysis and extensive community engagement and outreach. The Interim Report creates a benchmark with respect to how the Township is currently meeting the arts and cultural needs of its residents. It included quantitative results of the current inventory of assets, demographics, and growth projections. It is further informed by qualitative information through stakeholder engagement, policy alignment, trends and best practices, and sound planning principles.

The Interim Report does not contain any specific recommendations, rather helps identify gaps currently and how those gaps could be addressed. The report also identifies certain strengths the Township is already positioned to meet over the ensuing years that include existing natural and heritage assets, special events and strong presence of local talent (artists/musicians). However, through various stakeholder engagements, further opportunities emerged that included feasibility of a dedicated cultural facility, access to Township halls, expansion of programming beyond Castel Kilbride, enhanced municipal coordination with third party stakeholders, municipal financial and operational resourcing, awareness of existing programming, transportation and increase recognition and support for indigenous culture.

Culture was seen as an essential tool to support community cohesion, helping bridge gaps between different groups. These observations have informed themes and recommendations that will be driving the 2025 Arts and Culture Master Plan.

REPORT:

Arts and Culture Master Plan Draft Recommendations

The Township of Wilmot 2025-2035 Arts and Culture Master Plan sets forth key priorities and a strategy to foster cultural growth through actionable initiatives over the next 10 years. It updates the previous Arts and Culture Master Plan, which was developed in 2018.

Informed by the analysis of Wilmot's current demographic profile and culture context and responding to the insights received from community members and other stakeholders on identified needs, opportunities and challenges for the cultural ecosystem in Wilmot, the Arts and Culture Master Plan provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing Wilmot's cultural assets in a coordinated and sustainable manner. The plan envisions a desired future for culture in Wilmot and provides an ambitious action plan to guide its implementation. It is important to note that the recommendations outlined offer a framework for implementation for the Township, but these recommendations are not intended as binding municipal

commitments, and a number of the actions will require supplementary resources outside of municipal funding.

Five (5) strategic priorities have been developed and will guide the Township of Wilmot's support for arts and culture over the next ten years. These strategic priorities are key areas of importance, on which the Township concentrate attention to address current needs, help Wilmot's cultural ecosystem achieve its full potential, and ensure the benefits of culture are felt by all community members. The five (5) strategic priorities listed below will build upon each other, creating a cohesive framework to help achieve an overall arts and culture vision:

1. **Celebrate our Roots while Fostering Innovation:** This will focus on honouring Wilmot's roots while encouraging creative expression and cultural evolution to ensure a vibrant, dynamic cultural landscape that evolves over time and with the residents of Wilmot.
2. **Sustainably Grow Cultural Resources:** This will focus on developing and maintaining cultural initiatives with a focus on long-term sustainability, integrating economic, environmental, and social considerations to benefit future generations.
3. **Collaborative Community Building:** This will focus on strengthening partnerships with local artists, community groups, and organizations, streamline processes, and create opportunities for cultural experiences that are accessible and impactful for all residents.
4. **Foster Inclusion:** This will focus on fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where residents of all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in and contribute to cultural programming, ensuring equal access and representation.
5. **Indigenous Recognition and Reconciliation:** This will focus on supporting Indigenous communities, recognize their culture and history, and ensure Indigenous perspectives are integrated into all cultural initiatives, promoting mutual respect, healing, and cultural preservation.

In the Arts & Culture Draft Recommendations (Attachment), each priority includes the following:

- **Outcomes of Achieving the Priority:** This details the expected impact of actions supporting the achievement of a strategic priority.
- **The Challenge (Community Engagement):** This section details findings from the community engagement and research processes, which led to identifying each priority as a key area of importance. It details more specifically identified challenges and opportunities.
- **What Work Has Already Been Accomplished:** This section outlines existing municipal investment, on which the Township can build.

- **What We Need to Get Us There (Goals for each Priority):** For each priority, listed series of goals, which will help monitor progress. These goals identify concrete objectives towards which the Township and its partners can work over the next ten years.
- **Action Plan for Each Goal:** Listed series of recommended actions for each goal. These are not intended to be read as commitments made by the Township but rather, as concrete suggestions to consider. In each case, general recommendation followed by more specific potential steps to take.
- **Timeframe:** For each recommended actions includes a timing mechanism. Timing is defined as Short-Term (1-3 years), Mid-Term (4-6 years) and Long-Term (7-10 years). This timing may be adjusted through proactive monitoring of trends, funding programs, staff availability, alignment with corporate priorities, volunteer support and other external influences that may affect implementation plans.
- **Potential Performance Metrics:** are indicated after each action list. These detail concrete data points that can serve as Key Performance Indicators for the suggested actions.

The suggested actions are to guide the Township and are not considered binding municipal commitments as many of the actions outlined in the draft appendix will require economic development initiatives that bring in revenues from outside municipal funding.

Regularly measuring the progress towards the vision and the priority goals will be imperative for the successful implementation of the Arts and Culture Master Plan. At minimum, the continual collection of relevant data—which can be based on the Performance Metrics suggested for the different actions—and an annual review of the work accomplished to date should be implemented. In addition, sharing the progress of the Arts and Culture Master Plan will be communicated regularly to Council and the greater community.

Next Steps

Staff will begin preparations for the completed, polished version of the Arts and Culture Master Plan. Community Services and STEPs will make a presentation to Council later this Spring, responding to any action items arising to date with draft recommendations (Priorities, Goals, Actions). This will include further stakeholder engagement on recommendations and any necessary refinements before a final report to Council recommending adoption of the 2025 Community Services Arts and Culture Master Plan.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Healthy Community

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Financial implications will be addressed through the annual municipal budget process. Any suggested actions throughout the Arts and Culture Master Plan are to guide the Township and are not binding municipal commitments.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Arts and Culture Draft Recommendations