The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie
Cultural Vitality Committee
Agenda

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

4:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Video Conference

Meetings may be viewed live on the City's Youtube channel
https://www.youtube.com/user/SaultSteMarieOntario

Pages

1. Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge, with respect, that we are in Robinson-Huron Treaty territory, that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and known as Bawating. Bawating is the home of Garden River First Nation, Batchewana First Nation, the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Metis Council.

2. Adoption of Minutes 3 - 5

Mover _____

Seconder _____

Resolved that Minutes of Cultural Vitality Committee meeting of January 21, 2026 be approved.

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mover _____

Seconder _____

Resolved that the Agenda for Cultural Vitality Committee meeting for February 18, 2026 as presented be approved.

5. Business Arising

5.1 Roadside Attraction - Resolution 6 - 6

5.2 Community Cultural Plan - 2026 and Beyond 7 - 61

6. Sub-committee / Task Force Updates

6.1 Public Art Master Plan Update

6.2 Cultural Forum 2026 Update

6.3 Community Committee on Graffiti Management Update 62 - 64

7. New Business

8. Correspondence

9. Next Meeting

9.1 March 18, 2026 - Meeting dates for ACAP Review (April-May 2026)

10. Adjournment

Mover _____

Seconder _____

Resolved that this Committee now adjourn.

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

Cultural Vitality Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, January 21, 2026
4:30 pm
Biggings Room, Civic Centre

Present:	D. Hilsinger, S. Meades, N. Moss, S. Spina, D. Lalonde, A. Arnott
Absent:	M. Bouchard, L. Rendell, E. Cho
Officials:	V. McLeod, A. Moore

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1. Land Acknowledgement

2. Election of Committee Positions

Moved by: S. Meades
Seconded by: N. Moss

Resolved that nominations be open for the position of Chair for the Cultural Vitality Committee for 2026.

Carried

Moved by: S. Meades
Seconded by: N. Moss

Resolved that Donna Hilsinger was declared Chair of the Cultural Vitality Committee for 2026.

Carried

Moved by: S. Meades
Seconded by: D. Hilsinger

Resolved that nominations be open for the position of Vice-Chair for the Cultural Vitality Committee for 2026.

Carried

Moved by: D. Hilsinger
Seconded by: D. Lalonde

Resolved that Nilah Moss was declared Vice-Chair of the Cultural Vitality Committee for 2026.

Carried

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

4. Adoption of Minutes & Agenda

Moved by: D. Lalonde
Seconded by: N. Moss

Resolved that Minutes for the Cultural Vitality Committee meeting of December 17, 2025 be approved.

Carried

Moved by: N. Moss
Seconded by: S. Meades

Resolved that the Agenda for Cultural Vitality Committee meeting for January 21, 2026 as presented be approved.

Carried

5. Business Arising

5.1 Cultural Forum Planning 2026

- Planning for first week of March 2026

- Committee members suggested ideas regarding concerns over shifting funding landscape for the arts and a presentation/facilitating organization to provide presentation

- Opportunity to get feedback for Public Art Master Plan and Cultural Plan

5.2 Public Art Task Force - Sault College 2026

Moved by: S. Meades
Seconded by: S. Spina

Resolved that the Public Art Task Force Members for the Sault College 2026 Project be Dawn Lalonde and Nilah Moss.

6. Sub-committee / Task Force Updates

6.1 Public Art Master Plan Update

- The Subcommittee met October 30, 2025 and outlined action items. An upcoming meeting of the subcommittee will take place on January 29, 2026.

6.2 Community Committee on Graffiti Management Update

- Meeting held on November 6th, 2025. Upcoming meeting in early February, 2026.

8. Correspondence

7. New Business

9. Next Meeting

10. Adjournment

Moved by: N. Moss
Seconded by: S. Meades

Resolved that this Committee now adjourn.

Carried

July 14, 2026

Mover Councillor S. Kinach

Seconder Councillor M. Bruni

Whereas Sault Ste. Marie is a community deeply rooted in winter culture and proud of its industrial heritage, particularly its longstanding contributions to the steel industry; and

Whereas the City of Sault Ste. Marie embraces its “Naturally Gifted” identity and is continually seeking creative ways to enhance tourism, promote civic pride, and celebrate its unique local character; and

Whereas roadside attractions are known to generate increased visitor traffic, create photo-worthy landmarks, and contribute to a sense of place and identity; and Whereas a giant snowflake sculpture, crafted from locally produced steel, would serve as a meaningful and visually striking symbol of both our natural climate and our local industry, reinforcing the city’s connection to winter and its manufacturing heritage; and

Whereas such a sculpture would not only contribute to beautification and placemaking but could also support local artists, fabricators, and businesses through its design, construction, and installation;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that City staff be requested to consult with local community and industry partners and report back to Council regarding potential project scope, design, location, and community engagement opportunities;

Further Be It Resolved that the report identify costs and funding sources, including Municipal Accommodation Tax revenue, City public art funding (Cultural Vitality Committee), donations, sponsorship, grants, and funding from other levels of government.

SAULT STE.MARIE

COMMUNITY CULTURE PLAN 2019-2024

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SAULT STE.MARIE

INTRODUCTION

Young Saultite plays a public piano in the downtown
Photo credit: Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Association

1. INTRODUCTION

WHY A COMMUNITY CULTURE PLAN FOR SAULT STE. MARIE

"When we talk about the value of arts and culture, we should always start with the intrinsic- how arts and culture illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world. This is what we cherish."[1] However, a considerable body of research shows that the arts create significant economic and social impact within society, and can affect great change on an individual level. Arts and culture products represent $25.0 billion or 3.3% of Ontario's gross domestic product. The province's culture GDP is larger than that of accommodation and food services, utilities industries, mining, forestry and a number of other natural resource-related industries.[2] Culture-based businesses and organizations:

1. Provide direct economic benefits
2. Create job growth in the cultural sector, expanding the sector as a whole
3. Promote and enhance cultural development
4. Help foster creative cities and communities
5. Improve the ability of urban centres to attract skilled workers
6. Help a community distinguish itself based on strong identities, cultures, arts and crafts, etc.
7. Help a community gain a competitive advantage as a "destination city" for cultural tourism
8. Spawn spin-off businesses, fortifying and diversifying the original initiatives' strengths
9. Can lead to subsequent economic regeneration through urban revitalization [3]

[1] Mowlah, Andrew et al. (2014). *The value of arts and culture to people and Society: An evidence review*. Manchester, UK: Arts Council England.

[2] Ontario Arts Council. (2019). *Economic Contribution of Arts and Culture in Ontario*. http://www.arts.on.ca/research-impact/research-publications/economic-contribution-of-arts-and-culture-in-ontar?lang=en-ca

[3] Creative City Network of Canada. (2005). *Culture as an Economic Engine.* https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/culture_economic_engine.pdf

Cultural organizations and providers require public and private assistance to grow and thrive, and to facilitate a strong, interconnected, and legitimate arts and culture industry.

Investing in culture is an economic imperative. Governments in Canada at all levels invest $10.1 billion in culture annually. This investment results in $45.9 billion in economic activity and creates 609,000 jobs.[4]

The effects of art and culture are broad, and range far beyond economics. Twenty-six different sectors have been identified where the arts affect and create social impact including; housing, community cohesion, diversity, access, equity and inclusion, education and youth development, environment and sustainability, health and wellness, public welfare, transportation, and agriculture.[5]

By investing in culture, Sault Ste. Marie is investing in the community's future social and economic wellbeing and sustainability.

[4] City of Hamilton. (2013). *Strategic Municipal Investment in the Arts.* https://www2.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/EBEEA692-C94A-4AE5-BDEF-BC095E96C69C/0/Jun0581_AAC12002_a_.pdf

[5] Americans for the Arts. (2018). *Arts + Social Impact Explorer.* https://www.americansforthehearts.org/socialimpact

BACKGROUND

Sault Ste. Marie is one of Canada's oldest settlements and has been a gathering place and home for Indigenous peoples for millennia. Situated along the St. Marys River—the waterway connector of two Great Lakes—the city and surrounding district are very much defined by their natural beauty, including a four-season recreational playground for hiking, fishing, skiing and much more. Today, nearly 74,000 people of diverse cultures and heritage make Sault Ste. Marie their home.

As Sault Ste. Marie's natural environment has defined the city, so too has its industry. For generations, throughout the 20th century, the city prospered thanks to a robust manufacturing sector. Algoma Steel, in particular, was a major contributor to the economy, employing nearly 15 % of the local workforce at its peak.

In the wake of another restructuring and possible closure of the steel plant, the City was compelled to rethink its future. In 2016, an initiative that came to be known as FutureSSM was spearheaded by a Community Adjustment Committee (CAC) to study the current landscape in Sault Ste. Marie. It not only examined the impact of factory closings and the dependence on a single industry, but also looked at aging demographics, net migrations, and failing health and wellbeing statistics. At the same time, the CAC was also tasked to make recommendations on how to build a vibrant, sustainable, prosperous, and resilient community.

In August 2017, FutureSSM submitted its Recommendation Summary Report, **"A Common Cause and New Direction for Sault Ste. Marie,"** to City Council, which then allocated funds to support implementation.

The goals and recommendations developed in the report were organized around four key pillars of community development:

1. Cultural Vitality
2. Economic Growth and Diversity
3. Environmental Sustainability
4. Social Equity

One of the key recommendations of the FutureSSM report was the development of a Cultural Plan and in December 2018, the City engaged Lord Cultural Resources to develop a Community Culture Plan. The goal of this plan is to provide the City with a clear direction to plan, resource, and leverage arts, culture, and heritage, integrating them into all facets of municipal planning and operations to support the Sault's social and economic imperatives over a 5-year planning horizon.

PLANNING TEAM AND PROCESS

This Community Culture Plan is being led by a subcommittee assigned by the City of Sault Ste. Marie that includes Virginia Mcleod, Manager of Parks and Recreation, City of Sault Ste. Marie; Travis Anderson, FutureSSM Project Manager, City of Sault Ste. Marie; and Todd Fleet, Future SSM, Arts and Culture Coordinator, City of Sault Ste. Marie. The subcommittee is supported by a Steering Committee comprising leaders in Sault Ste. Marie's arts, culture, creative and entrepreneurial communities:

- Sean Meades, Director, Nordik Institute
- Russell Raven, Arts Council of Algoma
- Kathy Fisher, Director, Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic site
- Melissa Agawa, Algoma University
- Maria Parrella-Ilaria, Owner/Operator, The ArtSpeaks Project
- Carrie Suriano, Owner/Operator, Case's Music

This Community Culture Plan was developed through a three-phase approach:

Phase 1, State of Culture—the research and analysis phase during which we examined the current situation for arts, culture, and heritage in Sault Ste. Marie and comparable municipalities. The information was gathered via workshops, key informant interviews and deskside research.

Phase 2, Community Consultation—a series of stakeholder workshops and interviews with community members through "pop-up" consultations at various locations throughout Sault Ste. Marie. An online survey was also distributed to the community.

Phase 3, Draft and Final Culture Plan—this phase distills all analysis and findings into a series of strategic goals and actions to implement a roadmap for the municipality.

PLANNING CONTEXT

This Community Culture Plan has been commissioned by the City of Sault Ste. Marie for the purpose of guiding the Municipality to support, facilitate and leverage arts, culture and heritage for the community. The goals and actions of this plan will be implemented by the Municipality, fully integrated across departments, divisions, agencies and committees including Recreation and Culture, Planning and Enterprise Services, Public Works, Economic Development and others.

City-led and consultant-developed, this plan is informed by the examination of comparable municipalities and consultations with City staff and elected officials, key stakeholders, the arts, culture and heritage community and the public.

This plan was also developed within the context of other current, recently completed, and ongoing initiatives, policies and plans by the City of Sault Ste. Marie. These include a Corporate Strategic Plan, Cultural Policy 2016, the Downtown Community Improvement Plan, FutureSSM plans, strategies and initiatives and Shape the Sault, the City's new Official Plan review and planning process.

Community stakeholders participate in a Community Culture Plan Consultation session at the GFL Memorial Gardens.
Photo credit: City of Sault Ste. Marie

SAULT STE.MARIE

STATE OF CULTURE IN SAULT STE. MARIE – KEY FINDINGS

Sault College celebrates diversity
Photo credit: Sault College

2. STATE OF CULTURE IN SAULT STE. MARIE – KEY FINDINGS

Our State of Culture Report included a number of key findings that inform this plan. These findings were drawn from our background research, visioning workshops with the steering committee and a number of internal in-person and telephone interviews with City staff and elected officials. The findings are expressed as strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for arts, culture and heritage in Sault Ste. Marie.

Belly dancers perform at Downtown Block Party
Photo credit: City of Sault Ste. Marie (Randie Gregoire)

STRENGTHS

A Vibrant Arts, Culture and Heritage Community

There is a wealth of creative and artistic talent in Sault Ste. Marie at both the professional and amateur level. From visual arts to music to theatre arts, the city boasts an active and robust arts, culture and heritage community. While the legacy of the Group of Seven still looms large in Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma District, many in the city's arts, culture and heritage community would like to move beyond these legendary figures.

Cultural tourism in the city relies heavily on the Group of Seven, with tours that retrace the artists' steps throughout the beautiful and rugged landscape. Works by the Group of Seven are in the permanent collection at the Art Gallery of Algoma and much of the gallery's promotion and programming centres around their works. However important the Group of Seven is to the reputation and to the economy of the city and district, they do tend to overshadow the broader arts, culture

and heritage community. Nevertheless, the community continues to create and move forward.

Live music, theatrical performances, visual art, and other forms of cultural expression abound in the city, although they are not seen or noticed as much as they could be. Small, live music venues and clubs, artists projects and festivals provide most of the exposure, albeit limited, to the local arts scene.

Strong Volunteer Base

Sault Ste. Marie has a strong volunteer base across many sectors in the city including culture. Most of the cultural venues and organizations in Sault Ste. Marie rely on the support of volunteers at the Board and operations levels. The Arts Council of Algoma, for example, the City's and community's primary advocacy body for arts and culture is run entirely by volunteers. 180 Projects, an artists' centre, was founded and continues to operate on a volunteer basis. Relying too much on volunteerism can lead to "burnout" and is therefore not sustainable. Also, with an aging population in Sault Ste. Marie, the traditional volunteer base is diminishing. Fostering a new generation of volunteers is key to supporting cultural initiatives, organizations and institutions.

Relationship to Natural Heritage

The city distinguishes itself through its natural attributes. Located on the shore of the St. Marys River, connecting Lake Huron and Lake Superior, the city is at the heart of the Canadian Shield. Rich, lush forests of the area provide a backdrop and inspiration for creative pursuits both formally and informally. This unique natural beauty has continued to attract artists, the Group of Seven notwithstanding, to the area. It also attracts many Sault Ste. Marie "expats" back to the city and their roots.

Batchewana Pow Wow, August 2019
Photo credit: Jennifer Matthewson

Indigenous Heritage

The Anishinaabe people were the earliest inhabitants of *Baawating,* the area now known as Sault Ste. Marie. As a traditional gathering place, the area became a favoured spot

for trade and regional meetings. The Indigenous communities are foundational to the history and culture of the Sault and continue to play a vital role today. Indigenous communities are all around the Sault, with Batchewana First Nation and Garden River First Nation abutting the City.

Sault Ste. Marie is traditional Métis territory. The representative body is the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council. The Missinabie Cree First Nation is also represented in the city with an economic development and small business office. Approximately 10% of the population is considered urban Indigenous.

The NORDIK Institute, Algoma University and the Ashininabek Discovery Centre (ADC) are examples of organizations in Sault Ste. Marie that focus on Indigenous communities. The NORDIK Institute and Algoma University are not Indigenous organizations – only the Shingwauk Education Trust (the organization behind the Anishinabek Discovery Centre) is Indigenous-owned and operated. Other organizations that play a significant role in arts and culture include the Indigenous Friendship Centre, Great Lakes Culture Camps and Shingwauk Kinoomage Gamig—the educational institution that operates culture-based Anishinaabe Studies and Anishinaabemowin programs in partnership with Algoma University.

Regardless of governance, these organizations and institutions all serve as bridges to greater understanding and dialogue between Indigneous communities and the broader population of Sault Ste. Marie. Greater recognition, acceptance, and knowledge will contribute to the cultural uniqueness and sustainability of Sault Ste. Marie.

Border City

Being a border city, Sault Ste. Marie has a distinct advantage over many other cities in Canada, attracting American tourists across the St. Mary's river with relative ease.

While recreational opportunities are well promoted in the city through Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, the Province, and others, cultural experiences don't receive the same degree of attention. The abundant creativity and talent in Sault Ste. Marie presents an opportunity to develop distinctly unique cultural tourism experiences beyond museums and heritage centres. Unique and authentic experiences can be particularly attractive to the neighbours to the south.

WEAKNESSES

Cultural Infrastructure at the Municipal Level

For the City of Sault Ste. Marie, the Recreation and Culture Division resides within the Department of Community Development and Enterprise Services. This Division is responsible for all community recreational and cultural needs. However, only one permanent staff member manages both

portfolios, making it challenging to provide the attention that both require. Despite the limitations of time and funding, however, City staff are deeply invested in promoting arts & culture.

Many community stakeholders expressed the need for the municipality to "take the arts more seriously." This implies that the City must pay more attention to arts and culture and dedicate more resources to supporting the production and delivery of culture. As noted by one stakeholder, "someone at the City needs to be at the table."

In almost all comparable cities, at least one staff person is dedicated to arts and culture. These staff members, particularly in smaller communities, are the face of culture for their cities. Having personnel dedicated to culture at the municipality sends a clear signal that arts and culture is critical to the well-being and sustainability of the community.

Funding

The City of Sault Ste. Marie provided a total of $1,048,569 toward cultural funding in 2018 (plus an additional $65,000 of in-kind services). Cultural expenditure included direct annual financial allocations to the Art Gallery of Algoma, the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, the Sault Ste. Marie Museum and the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site for a total of $977,769, as well as $70,800 in arts and heritage grants.

Approximately 95% of the total municipal cultural allocation goes to support the ongoing operations of established cultural and heritage institutions, while only 5% goes to grants supporting other arts and cultural initiatives in the city.

Consistent ("apples-to-apples") comparisons for per-capita spending on arts and culture are difficult to come by, with numerous studies making comparisons on differing criteria. However, looking at cities across Canada with comparable data, we can determine that Sault Ste. Marie falls well below the median per capita spend.

According to the 2017 MBN Canada Performance Measurement Report, Sault Ste. Marie was $10/per capita lower in municipal cultural spending than the median of Calgary, Hamilton, Halifax, London, Montreal, Regina, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Windsor. Further, of the four municipalities examined for direct comparability, only Cornwall spent less per capita on culture than Sault Ste. Marie. Thunder Bay, Moncton and Peterborough spent more on grants and operations per capita.

Money is clearly an issue and there are likely avenues for increased support to augment any increased City of Sault Ste. Marie arts-and-culture spending. Sponsorship and private-sector opportunities do exist in the city but must be explored further.

Additionally, the balance of funding should be examined more closely. The ratios of funds allocated to the larger established cultural organizations versus grants varies from city to city. City size, age of infrastructure, local context and environmental issues all play a role in the varying ratios. However, none of the cities studied have the same imbalance that Sault Ste. Marie does with respect to cultural expenditure.

Community Mural by Jerry 'birdO' Rugg
Photo credit: City of Sault Ste. Marie (Randie Gregoire)

Public Art

Most cities including those we studied, dedicate some allowance to or otherwise support public art. Sault Ste. Marie does not have a standalone public art policy, but rather a provision for public art within the City's Cultural Policy whereby up to 1% of construction or renovation costs of public facilities or infrastructure projects goes to public art. An independent document (apart from the Cultural Policy) would provide greater power to enforce such policies.

FutureSSM has established a Community Art Project that initiates public art throughout the city in the form of traffic wraps, murals, and public furniture. Consider making this program more closely linked to the Municipality to secure its place in the city.

Accountability

The Municipality currently supports the city's four major cultural and heritage organizations. More than 90% of the City's total cultural expenditure goes to these institutions.

Despite the City's support for these organizations, there does not appear to be any type of analysis that measures their social or economic impact. It is unclear how these organizations account for their funding and/or what the ultimate benefit is for the community. We aren't suggesting that these organizations do not deserve their funds, but merely recommending greater accountability to allow the City to better assess the allocations and continued funding.

Siloization

Arts, culture and heritage groups and individuals in Sault Ste. Marie have been conditioned to “do their own thing” – that is work in isolation or in “silos.” While it is acknowledged that much cultural creation is a singular activity, it is important to encourage, facilitate and, support more artists and arts organization to work more collaboratively. Greater collaboration can strengthen the health of the arts community through resource sharing, joint marketing and access to a potentially larger pool of private and public funding.

Communication

Lack of communication has been a common refrain among many arts and culture stakeholders. Individual artists and arts, cultural and heritage groups are simply not aware of what others are doing. The City could play an important role as a convener or communication hub to help facilitate greater connection within the arts community. Furthermore, many in the arts and cultural community felt the City could do more to promote the arts in the community, similar to how it sells itself in other areas such as recreation.

Sault Ste. Marie Italian Festival, June 2019
Photo credit: Megan Pounder - Sault Online

Honouring our Sisters event, June 2019
Photo Credit: Taylor Jolin

OPPORTUNITIES

Downtown Revitalization

Downtown revitalization has been an important focus for the city. The Downtown Community Improvement Plan 2018-2021 outlines strategies and initiatives to reenergize the downtown. Downtown revitalization is also a major focus for the development of the City's new Official Plan. Over the last 10 years, there has been over $95 million in private-sector investment, supporting continuous streetscape improvements along Gore and Queen Streets in addition to laneway improvements.

The planning team at the City and "Shape the Sault" (the program to develop the Official Plan) is intrigued with the notion as the downtown being the "third place"—somewhere other than work or home. The downtown has all the elements of a third place but needs the means to sustain its vibrancy.

Certainly, arts, culture and heritage could play a vital role in establishing a healthy, vibrant downtown. Public space animation, local business partnerships with the arts and cultural community, tax incentives and space provision to encourage artist live/work spaces are just some of the many ways the arts, culture and heritage community can contribute to a sustainable downtown.

Private Sector Development

There is opportunity to engage more with the private sector. While the City must continue to support arts, culture and heritage they cannot and should not do it on their own. Private-sector partners can support the arts and cultural community in many ways including direct funding, in-kind contributions, and time.

Further new fundraising models need to be developed. Fundraising for arts and culture in Sault Ste. Marie should not be considered philanthropy but rather investment in the community. New and innovative ways to engage with the private sector are critical to a vibrant arts, culture and heritage community.

Developing New or Repurposing Existing spaces for Arts and Culture

Newly built or renovated gallery, studio or maker spaces should also present an opportunity for Sault Ste. Marie. Dedicated arts hubs or artist-run centres have been constructed in numerous cities across Canada. These can be facilitated and operated in many ways including partnerships with existing public organizations or institutions, or collaborations with development partners. After-hours spaces in various neighbourhoods across the city should also be considered.

Collaboration and Greater Integration with the Indigenous Community

We have already established the importance of the Indigenous community. The City should explore deeper, more meaningful collaboration with these communities through cross-cultural exchanges and knowledge sharing.

Youth Focus

More needs to be done to help stem the tide of out-migration among young people in Sault Ste. Marie. There are many factors that lead to the outflow of younger generations, but the key is to interact with youth early and through channels such as arts, culture and heritage.

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, for example, is an important vehicle for such engagement. It provides a voice for the youth of Sault Ste. Marie and advises City Council on important issues that concern younger people. One of the main goals of this Community Culture Plan should be strategies for greater youth engagement.

Sault College celebrates diversity at annual event
Photo Credit: Sault College

SAULT STE.MARIE

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Elementary and secondary students from the Algoma District School Board take an active role in the public pianos project.
Photo credit: City of Sault Ste. Marie

3. ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS AND THE COMMUNITY

The public consultation process was designed as an inclusive engagement strategy for Sault Ste. Marie residents and arts, culture and heritage community stakeholders. The intent of this engagement was to ensure a wide-ranging process providing access and opportunity to a broad-based constituency to voice their thoughts and opinions. Consultations were held at art galleries, immigration forums, at local businesses, and at events and activities across the city. We reached additional people through online surveys. The following illustrates the consultation process:

1	Online survey	31
1	Stakeholder Survey	27
2	Stakeholder Workshops	51
5	Pop-Up Public Consultations	147
1	Cultural Asset Inventory	112
17	Stakeholder Interviews	17
	TOTAL CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS	385

KEY FINDINGS FROM STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Municipal Support

It is clear from both stakeholders and the public that more support for arts and culture is needed from the City of Sault Ste. Marie. They define support in the following ways:

Funding—more operational funding is needed, in particular for smaller arts organizations. Additionally, more funding needs to be made available for arts and culture organizations for operations and projects that benefit the community economically and socially.

Value —the City must place a higher value on arts, culture and heritage not only as a means to improve quality of life but in recognition of arts and culture as an economic driver for the community. New and different metrics should be implemented to evaluate and measure impact—social and economic—of arts and culture in the Sault.

Leverage—Sault Ste. Marie has the ability to use its influence, via municipal planning tools and other means to leverage funding, create cultural spaces, and deliver programming from other public and private sources.

Communications and Awareness

There is a general lack of public awareness of the many arts, culture and heritage programs, events, and activities in the city. There needs to be new and better ways to communicate cultural offerings in the Sault.

Siloization

As stated in the *State of Culture* findings, the arts and cultural community tends to be siloed. Most arts groups and organizations as well as individual artists "do their own thing." This comment suggests that some key oganizations that serve as coordinators and/or presenters lack meaningful engagement with their target constituencies. Further, there is little communication between organizations and artists, and between artists.

There is also very little collaboration between individual artists and between arts groups and organizations. There is fear of audience fragmentation and funding cannibalization—they do not want to lose or diminish their "slice of the pie." More physical and virtual spaces—formal and informal—would provide greater opportunities for collaboration.

Focus on Youth

There is an issue of out-migration of youth in Sault Ste. Marie. Arts, culture and heritage can play a big part of an overall

strategy to keep youth engaged and support retention in the community.

Indigenous Cultures

Indigenous cultures are a strength in Sault Ste. Marie. Indigenous communities are found on all sides of the Sault with Batchewana First Nation and Garden River First Nation being adjacent to the City. Algoma University and Shingwauk Kinoomage Gamig offer the only culture-based curriculum in the country to learn about Anishinaabe history, philosophy, and worldviews.

While Indigenous cultures are considered a strength, more can be done to improve the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and between Indigenous peoples and the City, addressing the legacy and ongoing presence of racism and marginalization.

Volunteerism

While volunteerism has historically been a huge strength in Sault Ste. Marie, an aging population and net-migration has weakened the volunteer base. A strategy to develop new generations of volunteers is key to arts, culture and heritage sustainability in the community.

Diversity of Offerings

Live music is the one creative discipline that most Saultites recognize and participate in. Conversely, many residents cite a lack of diversity in cultural offerings as the reason they do not participate.

Local band plays at Rotary Fest, July 2019
Photo credit: Jennifer Mathewson

SAULT STE.MARIE

DEFINING CULTURE FOR SAULT STE. MARIE

Khushali Contractor, Sault College student, stands in front of the traffic box she designed
Photo credit: City of Sault Ste. Marie

4. DEFINING CULTURE FOR SAULT STE. MARIE

Per the City's Cultural Policy 2016, culture is defined as:

- The social production and transmission of identities, means, knowledge, beliefs, values, aspiration, memories, purposes, attitudes;
- The 'way of life' of a particular set of humans: customs, faiths and conventions; codes and manners, dress, cuisine, language, arts, science, technology, religion and rituals; norms and regulations of behaviours; traditions and institutions.

Moreover, culture is referred to as 'the arts' which include:

Performing Arts—Theatre, dance, opera, music, puppetry.

Visual Arts—Fine art and craft including painting, sculpture, printmaking, pottery, fibre and fabric art, woodworking.

Literary Arts—Prose, poetry, storytelling, novels.

Heritage Arts—heritage conservation, identification, protection and interpretation of:
i) intangible heritage (dance, music, song, story, etc.)
ii) immovable heritage (buildings, cultural heritage landscapes, natural heritage, archaeological and traditional use sites)
iii) movable property (personal property art, artifacts, documents, natural objects and specimens).

Media Arts—Photography, film, video, print, audio and/or graphics.

Local performer at Thomson Farms
Photo Credit: City of Sault Ste. Marie (Randie Gregoire)

We asked the community

WHAT "CULTURE" MEANS TO YOU?

This is what they said.

Community (connecting individuals)

Vitality, what make a community worth living in

Traditions, stories, art

Everything 'my world'

A person or community's story

New learning

Involvement city wide

Fun, enjoyment (I'm with the geek/ anime video gaming culture)

A country without art is a country without an identity

Experience – Well-rounded experiences, well planned, thought out, appealing & diversity

Bike Culture

Unifying activities & engagement

Belonging, sharing the same traditions

Inviting community

City Pride

Feeling connected to one's community

Diversity, Friendship, Community, Customs & Rituals - Flavour

Emotionally evocative experiences shared within a group or community

The heart and makeup of what makes the city

Engagement

Diversity – feeling welcome

Feeling engaged, wanting to engage others and having the chance to do so

Showcasing local talents & natural area – Advocating for local artists of all kinds

Cool old buildings or neighborhoods, music, Style – cool coffee shops, pubs.

Being part of something, that I share in common with others (i.e. Northerner, music)

Ethnic Background

Everything

Music, food, feeling connected, art, storytelling, diversity

All the little bonuses in life; not just living, living interestingly

Culture means the life of a community

Making a house a home, but on a city wide scale

Meaningful, Thoughtful & Artistic

Immersive experiences, inseparable from daily life

Expression, community, sharing, social, spiritual, respectful, resilient

The true record of history and humanity

Music, theatre, art

Showcasing our differences and celebrating our similarities

Cultural to me is not a hockey game or sports

Theatre, music, dance, storytelling, art

Culture = diversity (open acceptance of others)+inclusion for learning about it

While both the formal definition and the reference to the arts is valid, it is generic and not specific to Sault Ste. Marie. It covers a range of activities and pursuits by both formally constituted organizations such as museums and festivals, as well as individuals. While it is important to reference, we propose a broader definition that aligns more specifically to Sault Ste. Marie. Based on our research and consultations, we propose the following:

Culture in Sault Ste. Marie is the individual and collective creative and artistic expression in all its forms, as referenced in the municipal cultural policy, influenced and inspired by its diverse peoples, its industrial and social history, Indigenous heritage and natural beauty.

Batchewana Pow Wow 2018
Photo credit: Jennifer Mathewson

SAULT STE.MARIE

VISION

Local musician performs at a Mural Block Party, July 2019
Photo credit: Jennifer Mathewson

5. VISION

A vision statement describes a community's aspirations and a shared image of what they want their community to become with reference to arts, culture and heritage. The vision statement is intended to be forward-thinking and positive, communicating how the city would like to be seen from within the community as well as outside.

To build upon a thriving, liveable and resilient community by connecting people, sharing knowledge and creating experiences through the celebration, support and leveraging of arts, culture and heritage in Sault Ste. Marie.

SAULT STE.MARIE

GOALS AND ACTIONS FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Hannah Disano, 3, joins her grandfather, Nino Disano, as he plays an outdoor piano outside of the James L. McIntyre Centennial Library.
Photo credit: Maggie Kirk, Sault Star

6. GOALS AND ACTIONS FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

The following are the key goals and the actions to be carried out by the City of Sault Ste. Marie to address current challenges in the community with respect to arts, culture and heritage. These goals and actions have been developed through broad consultation with stakeholders and the community, research into Sault Ste. Marie's current arts and culture environment and in a broader context, comparables and best practices from around the country.

Research and community engagement revealed several key areas of focus. These have been synthesized into the following **six goals** for this Community Culture Plan. Each of these goals is accompanied by actions to achieve the goals.

Youth take part in a public furniture revitalization project on Gore Street
Photo credit: NORDIK Institute

GOAL #1: MUNICIPAL SUPPORT

Increase support of arts, culture and heritage through direct and indirect funding, greater advocacy and capacity building, and installation of a full-time permanent position dedicated solely to arts and culture. This goal is about the municipality taking a greater leadership position in the community not only to implement the Community Culture Plan but also to facilitate the long-term sustainability of arts and culture in the city.

Despite City staff's best intentions, existing municipal support for arts, culture and heritage is not sufficient. The City does not employ, directly or indirectly, a person dedicated solely to arts and culture—as do comparable municipalities. As one stakeholder noted, "someone at the City needs to be at the table." This view is shared by many, not just those who work in arts and culture but in the broader community.

Further, arts and culture expenditure on a per capita basis is low. The total per-capita cost to provide arts, culture and heritage services (exclusive of the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library) is $14. The municipal allocation for arts and culture grants is less than $1 per capita. Comparable cities such as Thunder Bay, Peterborough, and Moncton all spend twice as much as Sault Ste. Marie on arts and culture through direct operational funding and grants. Thunder Bay's per-capita expenditure is $27 and Peterborough's is $31. We recommend increasing the amount of municipal funding through grants and other means. Additionally, the municipality should look to leverage its existing resources to establish other funding mechanisms from public and private sectors.

Actions

1. Municipal cultural spending should be increased to be on par with comparable municipalities. The City should focus first on boosting its annual grant allocation. The current spend is less than $1/per capita, far below peer municipalities. The City should aim for at least a $5 per capita grant expenditure phased in over the five-year planning horizon of this Community Cultural Plan.

2. Revise and restructure the Cultural Financial Assistance grant program to align with the needs of smaller organizations and individuals in Sault Ste. Marie. The application process should be streamlined and more accessible to allow greater inclusivity.

3. Install at least one dedicated full-time position at the City to manage arts, culture and heritage ensuring integration into all aspects of City management. This position would also be responsible for the implementation of the Community Culture Plan. Consider the possibilities for staff reallocation as well as additional financial resources to support human resources needs.

4. Establish a formal and closer relationship between the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the Arts Council of Algoma and possibly

other similar organizations that have the will and capability to better support the arts and culture community. An appropriate form of governance such as an arms-length organizational model would have to be created to allow the Council and other organizations greater access to municipal resources and to be accountable.

5. Set consistent standards to measure and monitor expenditure on arts and culture, in particular the largest recipients of municipal cultural funding. This not only ensures greater accountability but also properly assesses the social and economic benefits to the community.

6. Support and build capacity for the arts and culture community to pursue cultural grants and funding opportunities from other levels of government and private sources, and to seek additional financing options for cultural assets, programs and services.

7. Further to Action Item #3, create and streamline municipal procedures and processes through the creation of an online resource that serves as the one-stop place for all inquiries, assistance and requests related to arts, culture and heritage development in the community.

Wheels on the Water Car Show, Rotary Fest, July 2019
Photo credit: Jennifer Mathewson

Announcement of the Great Lakes International Music Institute at Algoma University
Photo credit: Algoma University

GOAL #2: COMMUNICATIONS

Strengthen lines of communication with Sault Ste. Marie's arts, culture and heritage community, more effectively promote a greater diversity of arts and cultural events to residents and visitors. Facilitate greater dialogue between artists and other creative and cultural workers in the city.

The communications challenges in the city are threefold. First, the arts and cultural community currently has limited interaction with the City of Sault Ste. Marie. This is partly a communication and public relations challenge, but also an outreach problem. There is no dedicated arts and culture representative at the City. The perception within the community is that the City does not value the arts. As outlined in the previous goal, the City must assign at least one full time person dedicated to arts and culture.

There is also a general lack of awareness of the arts, culture and heritage community in Sault Ste. Marie, specifically arts and culture events and activities. As revealed through public consultations, the largest barrier to arts and culture participation by residents is simply not knowing when and where events take place. Better marketing and more effective messaging is needed to not only advertise events but also better position and highlight the diversity of events. Authentic cultural offerings— a signature festival or a production unique to Sault Ste. Marie, for example—not only attract local audiences but are key to successful cultural tourism.

Third, a major challenge within the arts and cultural community is that most members are not aware of what each other is doing, creating and/or presenting. This, along with other factors has led to the siloization of the arts, culture and heritage community. The City must take a more active role uniting the community and help to break down the barriers between individuals and organizations.

Actions

1. Develop a communication and marketing plan for arts, culture and heritage in Sault Ste. Marie that reaches local and broader audiences to increase participation and attendance.

2. Establish an arts, culture and heritage community-driven calendar of events to promote cultural activities throughout the city.

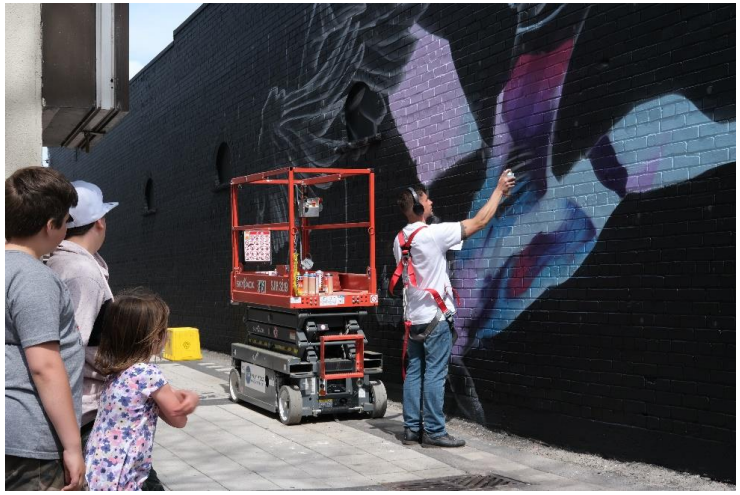
3. Via Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, develop a cultural tourism strategy that highlights the unique and authentic arts and cultural features, events and activities of the Sault including the promotion of Group of Seven, Indigenous arts and culture, and others.

4. Future SSM should continue to promote the city as an ideal destination for film and media production.

5. Make direct contact with members of the arts, culture and heritage community to encourage continual updates to the City's cultural asset inventory, and invest in an online platform to facilitate greater accessibility— in coordination with the online resources recommended in Goal #1, Action #7.

6. Acknowledge and promote, from the Municipality's perspective, the importance and contribution of arts, culture and heritage to the social and economic wellbeing of Sault Ste. Marie through ongoing communication and public relations initiatives.

7. Create an online hub that forms the nexus for ongoing dialogue to encourage greater collaboration, support and knowledge sharing.



Onlookers watch artist Alexander Bacon in action during the Downtown Mural Project.
Photo Credit: Jennifer Mathewson

The production 'Hammer' films in Sault Ste. Marie
Photo Credit: Jennifer Mathewson

African Caribbean Canadian Association of Northern Ontario (ACCANO) Gathering, June 2019
Photo Credit: Teni Araba

GOAL #3: INDIGENEITY

Establish a stronger relationship with the Indigenous communities of Sault Ste. Marie and surrounding area. Work together toward more inclusivity and access to shared cultural activity. This includes reducing barriers to participation, and proactively seeking more meaningful collaboration on cultural events, programs, and services. This goal is consistent with *FutureSSM's* priority with respect to the local Indigenous community "to advance the relationship with Indigenous peoples and to celebrate our history, natural and cultural heritage and diverse identities."

The Indigenous communities are foundational to the Sault's history and culture. They continue to play a vital role today. Indigenous communities are all around the Sault, with Batchewana First Nation and Garden River First Nation being adjacent to the City. The region is in the traditional territory of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Approximately 10% of the population is considered urban Indigenous.

Recognition and respect of the Sault's Indigenous communities is paramount. While the City has advanced this imperative with the creation of the Bawaating Advisory Circle and Nendaaswin, continued cross-cultural dialogue, exchange and knowledge sharing is the key to greater inclusivity through arts, culture and heritage.

Actions

1. Augment the mandate of the Bawaating Advisory Circle to include dialogue and communication through arts, culture, and creative expression.

2. In collaboration with the private sector, establish an Indigenous Arts and Culture Partnerships Fund. The goal of this fund would be to support the development and showcasing of new Indigenous arts and culture programs. The fund could also be expanded to include an awards program for Indigenous artists.

3. Explore the opportunity of a Municipally supported Indigenous Arts and Culture Festival in Sault Ste. Marie. This unique and authentic festival would celebrate local Indigenous culture with storytelling, dance, film, and food attracting local residents and tourists.

4. With the support of both public and private sources, provide greater opportunities for the collection and exhibition of Indigenous art.

GOAL #4: DOWNTOWN ACTIVATION

Building on its downtown revitalization efforts and the Downtown Community Improvement Plan, the City should continue with initiatives and investment in live, work and play opportunities, create greater street-level animation, and establish the downtown as a core destination for cultural activity and creative entrepreneurship.

Downtown revitalization has been important for the City and is a major focus for the new Official Plan. The team responsible for the Plan is intrigued with the notion of the downtown being the "third place"—that is, space other than work or home. Arts, culture and Heritage will play a vital role to not only attract people to live and work in the downtown but is key to its vibrancy and sustainability.

Public space animation, local business partnerships with the arts and cultural community and tax incentives are just a few examples of how the City can foster an active downtown.

Actions

1. Seek opportunities for adaptive reuse of City-owned spaces in the downtown, including buildings, parking lots, and found spaces such as laneways and other sites that are no longer useful for municipal purposes. Make them available to arts, culture and heritage groups for below-market rates.
2. Create targeted tax relief or tax cancelation policies in addition to rebate and façade programs to incentivize downtown building owners to renovate existing buildings and/or make spaces available for arts and cultural uses at below market rent.
3. Support the establishment of a Community Foundation (independent of the current discussions for a Community Foundation which proposes to cast a wider funding net) that strategically targets funds to arts, culture and heritage projects such as public art in the downtown core. Keep minimum contribution levels low to encourage the broadest range of potential donors.
4. Undertake a needs assessment and feasibility study toward the creation of a community arts and creative centre in the downtown. Both existing buildings and new builds should be considered part of the study.
5. Further to the Cultural Policy, develop a public art policy for the downtown, waterfront and throughout the city. The policy should address the maintenance needs of current murals and establish plans to expand Sault Ste. Marie's mural program in addition to other forms of art.
6. Promote, support, and encourage programming including live music, visual art and other creative expression in the streets and public spaces in the downtown.
7. Further to Action #6, establish clear and concise policies and guidelines for street and public space activation in the downtown.

GOAL #5: YOUTH

Develop greater engagement with Sault Ste. Marie's youth through arts, culture and heritage. A broad strategy should bring arts and culture to all stages of youth in Sault Ste. Marie through collaboration with the arts community and other partners.

The City already recognizes the importance of capturing the voices of youth through the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee. Arts, culture and heritage provide other avenues for self-expression, fresh ideas, and new perspectives.

Recognizing the challenge of out-migration of young people in Sault Ste. Marie, this strategy will provide opportunities for youth to access arts and culture and provide young people with skills, promote cross-cultural relationships, create positive experiences, and build connections to their community.

Actions

1. Develop mentorships between young people and artists in the community to ensure long-term benefits for arts, culture and heritage as well as for building the social capital of the community.
2. Alleviate barriers to participation—social, economic and physical—to ensure easier access to arts and cultural opportunities.
3. Establish partnerships between the arts and cultural community, social service providers, and schools to support effective, age-appropriate programs.
4. Enhance the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee to further empower young people to develop their own programming and opportunities to build skills, experience, and confidence.
5. Priority should be placed on those Cultural Financial Assistance Grant applicants who develop and deliver programs specifically for youth or whose programs are appropriate for youth.

GOAL #6: NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE

Recognize and protect Sault Ste. Marie's natural and built heritage. Sault Ste. Marie's trails and waterways (the St. Marys River and the waterfront in particular), natural landforms and unique flora and fauna are the City's most significant and cherished assets with historic and inextricable ties to the Anishinaabe and Métis people—the first inhabitants of the area.

The Sault's heritage structures, buildings and neighbourhoods represent the historical layers of the city's built environment. Like the natural environment, the conservation of the city's built heritage is critical to its sense of identity and continuity.

The City has done much to protect and responsibly manage its forests, wetlands and waterways through local agencies such as the Sault Ste. Marie Regional Conservation Authority. The City also extensively promotes the many great outdoor recreational activities throughout all four seasons, making it accessible to both residents and tourists. The City must continue to balance access and human intervention with protection and conservation of the Sault's natural assets.

Many heritage sites and historic features populate the city. Two national historic sites—Ermatinger Clergue and the Canal—and dozens of heritage houses, churches and cenotaphs are well-documented and well-maintained throughout the Sault. The City should continue to preserve its built heritage and look to protect not just buildings and structures, but neighbourhoods as well.

Actions

1. Continue efforts to beautify, animate, and activate the Waterfront west beyond Roberta Bondar Park.
2. Develop design guidelines for waterfront development.
3. Create greater connectivity from the waterfront to downtown.
4. Recognize and protect local historic neighbourhoods including Pim Hill, Simpson, Leo, Upton and MacGregor and others.
5. Codify intangible heritage and knowledge sharing as part of the City's overall conservation and protection strategy for natural and built heritage.
6. Heritage trees—those trees with rare or historical value—should be protected under similar provisions, policies, and guidelines to those of other heritage properties in the city.

SAULT STE.MARIE

IMPLEMENTATION

Youth take part in cooking classes at Sault College 'college 4 kids' program
Photo credit: Sault College

7. IMPLEMENTATION

The goals and actions are to be initiated and led by the Recreation and Culture Division and implemented by this division along with other City departments, divisions, outside agencies and municipal boards and committees. The tables below outline resources required, timelines, action initiation, and the City department and divisions, agencies and committees responsible to carry out each of the action items. Specific tasks to complete each action item will be determined by those departments/divisions responsible for the action.

Face painting at Thomson Farms

Photo Credit: City of Sault Ste. Marie (Randie Gregoire)

Legend	
Time Frame	
🕒	Within 6 months
🕒🕒	Within 7-12 months
🕒🕒🕒	Within 2-3 Years
🕒🕒🕒🕒	Within 4-5 Years
ON	Ongoing
Action Initiation (from adoption of Community Culture Plan)	
Y1	Within Year 1
Y2	Within Year 2
Y3	Within Year 3
Y4	Within Year 4
Y5	Within Year 5
Budget	
$	$0 - $ 5,000
$$	$5,000 - $25,000
$$$	$25,000 - $100,000
$$$$	$100,000 and above
City Department/Division	
OOM	Office of the Mayor
CS	Community Services
LIP	Local Immigration Partnership
PES	Planning & Enterprise Services
CC	City Clerk
F	Finance
HR	Human Resources
L	Legal (By-Laws)
PW	Public Works
ES	Engineering Services
RC	Recreation and Culture
CCOM	Corporate Communications
Agencies	
SSMEDC	Economic Development Corporation
SSMRCA	Region Conservation Authority
SSMPL	Public Library
TOURSSM	Tourism SSM
DTA	Downtown Association
MN	Métis Nation
IFC	Indian Friendship Centre
GRFN	Garden River First Nation
BFN	Batchewana First Nation
MCFN	Missanabie Cree Frist Nation
City Boards and Committees	
MYAC	Mayors Youth Advisory Committee
MHC	Municipal Heritage Committee
CAB	Cultural Advisory Board
HSB	Historic Sites Board
ADSB	Algoma District School Board
HSCDSB	Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board
CSPGNO	Le Conseil Scolaire du District du Grande Nord de l'Ontario
CSCNO	Nouvel Ontario

GOAL #1: MUNICIPAL SUPPORT

Increase support of arts, culture and heritage through direct and indirect funding, greater advocacy and capacity building, a full-time permanent position dedicated solely to arts and culture and streamlined processes and procedures. This goal is about the municipality taking a greater leadership position in the community to not only implement the Community Culture Plan, but to facilitate the long-term sustainability of arts and culture in the city.

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committees	Outside Agencies
1. Municipal cultural spending should be increased to be on par with other comparable municipalities. The City should focus first on boosting its annual grant allocation. The current spend is less than $1/per capita, far below peer municipalities. The City should aim for at least a $5 per capita grant expenditure phased in over the five-year planning horizon of this Community Culture Plan.		Y1	$$$$	RC	MHC, CAB	
2. Revise and restructure the Cultural Financial Assistance grant program to align with the needs of smaller organizations and individuals in Sault Ste. Marie. The application process should be more streamlined and more accessible to allow greater inclusivity.		Y1	$	RC	CAB	
3. Install at least one dedicated full-time position at the City to manage arts, culture and heritage, ensuring integration into all aspects of City management. This position would also be responsible for the implementation of the Community Culture Plan. Consider the possibilities for staff reallocation as well as additional financial resources to support human resources need.		Y1	$$$	RC, HR, PES		

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committees	Outside Agencies
4. Establish a formal and closer relationship between the City of Sault Ste. Marie, the Arts Council of Algoma and all other organizations that have the will and capability to better support the arts, culture and heritage community. An appropriate form of governance such as an arms length organizational model would have to be created to allow the Council and other organizations greater access to municipal resources and to be accountable.		Y1	$	RC	HSB	
5. Set consistent standards to measure and monitor expenditure on arts and culture, in particular the largest recipients of municipal cultural funding. This not only ensures greater accountability but also properly assesses the social and economic benefits to the community.		Y1	$	RC		
6. Support and build capacity for the arts and culture community to pursue cultural grants and funding opportunities from other levels of government and private sources and to seek additional financing options for cultural assets, programs and services.	ON	Y1	$	RC		

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committees	Outside Agencies
7. Further to Action Item #3 create and streamline municipal procedures and processes through the creation of an on-line resource that serves as the one-stop place for all inquiries, assistance and requests related to arts and cultural development in the community.		Y1	$$	RC		

GOAL #2: COMMUNICATIONS

Strengthen lines of communication with Sault Ste. Marie's arts and cultural community, more effectively promote greater diversity of arts and cultural events to residents and visitors, and facilitate greater dialogue between artists and other creative and cultural workers in the city.

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committees	Outside Agencies
1. Develop a communication and marketing plan for arts, culture and heritage in Sault Ste. Marie that reaches local and broader audiences to increase participation and attendance.		Y1	$	RC		TOURSSM,SSMEDC
2. Establish arts, culture, and heritage community-driven calendar of events to promote cultural activities throughout the city.		Y1	$	RC		TOURSSM
3. Via Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, develop a cultural tourism strategy that highlights the unique and authentic arts and cultural features, events and activities of the Sault including the promotion of Group of Seven, Indigenous arts and culture, and others.		Y2	$$	RC		SSMEDC, TOURSSM
4. Future SSM should continue to promote the city as an ideal destination for film and media production.	ON	Y1	$$	RC, CCOM		SSMEDC
5. Make direct contact with members of the arts, culture and heritage community to encourage continual updates of the City's cultural asset inventory and invest in an online platform to facilitate greater accessibility – in coordination		Y1	$	RC	CAB,MHC,HSB	

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committees	Outside Agencies
with the online resources recommended in Goal #1, Action #7.						
6. Acknowledge and promote, from the Municipality's perspective, the importance and contribution of arts, culture and heritage to the social and economic wellbeing of Sault Ste. Marie through ongoing communication and public relations initiatives.	ON	Y1	$$	RC, CCOM		
7. Create an online hub that forms the nexus for ongoing dialogue to encourage greater collaboration, support and knowledge sharing.		Y2	$$	RC		

GOAL #3: INDIGENEITY

Establish a greater relationship with the Indigenous communities of Sault Ste. Marie and surrounding area working together toward more inclusivity and access to shared cultural activity. This includes reducing barriers to participation, proactively seeking more meaningful collaboration on cultural events, programs and services. This goal is consistent with Future SSM's priority with respect to the local Indigenous community "to advance the relationship with Indigenous peoples and to celebrate our history, natural and cultural heritage and diverse identities."

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committee	Outside Agencies
1. Augment the mandate of the Bawaating Advisory Circle to include dialogue and communication through arts, culture and creative expression.		Y1	$	OOM, RC	MHC,CAB,HSB	
2. In collaboration with the private sector, establish an Indigenous Arts and Culture Partnerships Fund. The goal of this fund would be to support the development and showcasing of new Indigenous arts and culture programs. The fund could also be expanded to include an awards program for Indigenous artists.		Y2	$$	RC		BFN,GRFN,MCFN
3. Explore the opportunity of a Municipally supported Indigenous Arts and Culture Festival in Sault Ste. Marie. This unique and authentic festival would celebrate local Indigenous culture with storytelling, dance, film and food, attracting local residents and tourists.		Y2	$	RC		IFC,BFN,GRFN,MCFN
4. With the support of both public and private sources, provide greater opportunities for the collection and exhibition of Indigenous art.	ON	Y2	$$	RC		

GOAL #4: DOWNTOWN ACTIVATION

Building on its downtown revitalization efforts and the Downtown Community Improvement Plan, the City should continue with initiatives and investment to increase live, work and play opportunities, create greater street level animation, and establish the downtown as a core destination for cultural activity and creative entrepreneurship.

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committee	Outside Agencies
1. Seek opportunities for adaptive reuse of City-owned spaces in the downtown, including buildings, parking lots, and found spaces such as laneways and other sites that are no longer useful for municipal purposes. Make them available to arts and cultural groups for below-market rates.	ON	Y2	$	PES, F, RC		DTA
2. Create targeted tax relief or tax cancelation policies in addition to rebate and façade programs to incentivize downtown building owners to renovate existing buildings and/or make spaces available for arts and cultural uses at below-market rent.		Y2	$	F, RC. PES		
3. Support the establishment of a Community Foundation (independent of the current discussions for a Community Foundation which proposes to cast a wider funding net) that strategically targets funds to arts and culture projects, such as public art in the downtown core. Keep minimum contribution levels low to encourage the broadest range of potential donors.		Y2	$	RC, F, CC		
4. Undertake a needs assessment and feasibility study toward the creation of a community arts and creative centre in the downtown. Both existing buildings and new builds should be considered as part of the study.		Y3	$$	RC, PES		

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committee	Outside Agencies
5. Further to the Cultural Policy, develop a public art policy for the downtown, waterfront and throughout the city. The policy should address the maintenance needs of current murals and establish plans to expand Sault Ste. Marie's mural program in addition to other forms of art.		Y2	$	RC,PES		
6. Promote, support and encourage programming including live music, visual art and other creative expression in the streets and public spaces in the downtown.	ON	Y2	$$	RC		DTA
7. Further to Action #6, establish clear and concise policies and guidelines for street and public space activation in the downtown.		Y2	$	RC, PES		DTA

GOAL #5: YOUTH

Develop greater engagement with Sault Ste. Marie's youth through arts, culture and heritage. A broad strategy should be established to bring arts and culture to all stages of youth in Sault Ste. Marie through collaboration with the arts community and other community partners.

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committee	Outside Agencies
1. Develop mentorships with young people and artists in the community to ensure long term benefits for arts, culture and heritage production, as well as for building the social capital of the community.	ON	Y2	$	RC	MYAC	
2. Alleviate barriers to participation – social, economic and physical -to ensure easier access to arts and cultural opportunities.	ON	Y1	$	RC		
3. Establish partnerships between the arts and cultural community, social service providers and schools to support effective, age-appropriate programs.		Y2	$	RC	MYAC, ADSB,HSCDSB, CSPGNO,CSCNO	
4. Enhance the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee to further empower young people to develop their own programming and opportunities to build skills, experience and confidence.	ON	Y2	$$	RC	MYAC	

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committee	Outside Agencies
5. Priority should be placed on those Cultural Financial Assistance Grant applicants who develop and deliver programs specifically for youth or whose programs are appropriate for youth.		Y1	$	RC		

GOAL #6: NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE

Recognize and protect Sault Ste. Marie's natural and built heritage. Sault Ste. Marie's trails and waterways (the St. Marys River and the waterfront in particular), natural landforms and unique flora and fauna are the city's most significant and cherished assets with historic and inextricable ties to the Anishinaabe and Métis people- the first inhabitants of the area.

The Sault's heritage structures, buildings and neighbourhoods represent the historical layers of the city's built environment. Like the natural environment, the conservation of the city's built heritage is critical to its sense of identity and continuity.

Action	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Action Initiation	Estimated Costs	City Dept./Div	City Boards/ Committee	Outside Agencies
1. Continue efforts to beautify, animate and activate the waterfront to extend west beyond Roberta Bondar Park.	ON	Y2	$$$	PES, PW, ES, RC		
2. Develop design guidelines for waterfront development.		Y1	$	PES		
3. Create greater connectivity from the waterfront to the Downtown.		Y3	$$$$	PES, PW, ES, RC		
4. Recognize and protect local historic neighbourhoods including Pim Hill, Simpson, Leo, Upton and MacGregor and others.	ON	Y1	$	PES, RC	MHC	
5. Codify intangible heritage and knowledge sharing as part of the City's overall conservation and protection strategy for natural and built heritage.	ON	Y2	$$	RC,PES	MHC	
6. Heritage trees - those trees with historical value- should be protected under similar provisions, policies and guidelines to those of other heritage properties in the city.	ON	Y2	$	RC,PW,PES		

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

INTERVIEWS

Melissa	Agawa	Indigenous Events Planner, Algoma University
Rutger	Becker	Algoma Art Society
Michael	Burtch	Artist/Historian, Former Director, Art Gallery of Algoma
Kathy	Fisher	Curator, Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site
Jasmina	Jovanovic	Director, Art Gallery of Algoma
Gary	Manzo	Art Society of Algoma
Don	McConnell	Director, Planning and Enterprise Services, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Sean	Meades	Director of Research, NORDIK Insitute
Jude	Ortiz	Research Coordinator, NORDIK Institute
Maria	Parella-Ilaria	Project Developer and Coordinator, The ArtSpeaks Project
Julia	Piskiewicz	Curator, Sault Ste. Marie Museum
Russell	Raven	President, Arts Council of Algoma
Peter	Rowe	General Manager, Fringe North Festival
Robin	Sutherland	Founding Artistic Director, Thinking Rock Community Arts
Peter	Tonazzo	Planner, Planning and Enterprise Services, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Steve	Turco	Planner, Planning and Enterprise Services, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Adrian	DeVuono	Coordinator, Local Immigration Partnership, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Sandra	Hollingsworth	Councillor, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Helena	Huopalainen	Manager of Community Engagement, Sault Ste. Marie Public Library, City of Sault Ste. Marie

Lindsey	Ackland	Coordinator of Visitor and Media Relations, Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Donna	Hilsinger	Councillor, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Lisa	Vezeau-Allen	Councillor, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Elizabeth	Webkamigad	Director, Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, Algoma University

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Joseph	Bertrand	Founder, Maker North
Rick	Borean	Supervisor, Community Services, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Miranda	Bouchard	Thinking Rock Community Arts
Jessica	Boyer-Bennett	Employment and Training Coordinator, Batchewana Employment & Training
Noni	Boyle	Associate Professor, Algoma University, Visual Arts
Maegan	Brennan	Local Immigration Partnership Outreach Specialist, Local Immigration Partnership, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Michele	Cecchini	Marketing, Station Mall
Kristi	Cistaro	Board Chair, Downtown Association
Jeanette	Cowen	National Historic Sites/Visitor Experience Manager, Parks Canada
Adrian	Devuono	Coordinator, Local Immigration Partnership, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Marissa	Ditoro	Refuge 705
Maureen	Dodd	Director Stakeholder Relations and Public Affairs, United Way of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma District
Fred	Dunits	City of Sault Ste. Marie
David	Ellis	Architect, Member, Municipal Heritage Committee, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Kathy	Fisher	Curator, Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site
Dustin	Goodall	Unsalted Audio
Deane	Greenwood	Trail Coordinator-Community Liaison, Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority
Sean	Haliday	Local Immigration Partnership, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Nora Ann	Harrison	Member, Cultural Advisory Board
Tania	Hazlett	Sault College
Carolyn	Hepburn	Dean, Indigenous Education & Academic Upgrading, Sault College

Dan	Ingram	Executive Director, Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre
Josh	Ingram	Downtown Association
Mary	Jalbert	Arts Council of Algoma
Jasmina	Jovanovic	Director, Art Gallery of Algoma
Patricia	Lofstrom	Regional Advisor, Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport and Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility
David	MacLachlan	Executive Director, Destination Northern Ontario
Elia	Marini	Parks Canada
Don	McConnell	Director, Planning and Enterprise Services, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Virginia	McLeod	Manager of Recreation and Culture, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Sean	Meades	Director of Research, NORDIK Insitute
Lisa	Meschino	Manager of Operations and Communications, NORDIK Institute
Simone	Mitchell	Refuge 705
Susan	Myers	Retired City Councillor
Hilda	Odom	Algoma Fall Festival
Jude	Ortiz	Research Coordinator, NORDIK Institute
Maria	Parrella-Ilaria	Project Developer & Coordinator, The ArtSpeaks Project
Andrea	Pinheiro	Assistant Professor, Algoma University, Fine Arts
Julia	Piskiewicz	Curator, Sault Ste. Marie Museum
Russell	Raven	President, Arts Council of Algoma
Rory	Ring	Chief Executive Officer, Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce
Peter	Rowe	Fringe North Festival
Chris	Shoust	Owner/Operator L&D Gallery
Gabi	Sodies-Heydrich	Sault Community Career Centre
Carrie	Suriano	Case's Music
Edie	Suriano	Marketing and Promotions Coordinator, Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre
Jami	VanHaaften	Historic Sites Board
Adrian	Vilaca	Borderline Productions
Carly	Wetzl	Parks Canada
Sharon	Wigney	Sault Ste. Marie Public Library, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Konrad	Wojcik	Konrad Adventures/Naturally Illustrated

Graffiti Tagging and Mitigation Strategies

Agenda item 5.3
26.02.05

Dr. Jude Ortiz, NORDIK Institute

At the first meeting I provided a brief backgrounder on the scope of graffiti from tagging to mural making and what perspectives have changed in the last 10- 15 years since we delivered the Graffiti Reframed project. The presentation included some mitigation strategies referencing Kelowna BC and Toronto for their more holistic approach to graffiti management. Many sites referred to strategies including lighting, etc, vines, shrubbery, and anti-graffiti coatings.

For this meeting I am focusing on three areas: **Reporting, Removal and By-laws**
I conducted an online search of city websites using 'graffiti' in the search bar

- Timmins and Kenora: no mention of graffiti management or bylaws
- Sudbury mentions public art/legal graffiti application forms
- SSM: Cultural Vitality Graffiti Management Subcommittee and The Skate Park
- Peterborough: no mention

Reporting

In progress: call 911
Online forms

North Bay: Graffiti and Litter complaint form

Removal and By-laws

Thunder Bay

> Graffiti Guard: The City of Thunder Bay has adopted a Graffiti Management By-law to reduce the amount of graffiti found in the community. The **Graffiti Guard initiative** encourages everyone to prevent, report and remove graffiti in Thunder Bay. Call 211 or use the City's online form to **Report Graffiti**.

The City of Thunder Bay will remove graffiti from City-owned and operated property. To help remove graffiti, the City will provide financial assistance on request to residents and small businesses with an assessment value less than $400,000.

By-law to prohibit the placement of graffiti on property and to require that property be kept free of graffiti.

Barrie

Graffiti Abatement Program

The Graffiti Abatement Program combines removal, enforcement and educational initiatives to reduce the amount of graffiti in Barrie. The anti-graffiti campaign encourages the public to report graffiti, abate it quickly, and volunteer for the City's anti-graffiti efforts.

This program is funded from base operating budgets and led by the Engineering department's Right of Way Activity (ROWA) group, in coordination with operations & maintenance staff in other departments: Environmental Services; Roads, Parks & Fleet; and Facilities & Transit.

In general, the approach involves: Building close relationships with utility companies and the community. Identifying graffiti locations. Cleaning up graffiti (by utility companies within the Right of Way or by City operations & maintenance staff in parks and at facilities). Proactively painting anti-graffiti coatings and murals on surfaces prone to graffiti.

Toronto

Graffiti & Postering

The City of Toronto's Graffiti Management Plan is a proactive and cooperative approach to managing graffiti vandalism in the public realm while supporting street art in approved areas that adds artistic vibrancy to our city.

- Providing by-law enforcement for illegal graffiti
- Cleaning up graffiti in parks and public property
- Supporting murals and street art by funding legal graffiti and street art-murals is designated areas

Timelines

Graffiti on private property: Property owners are responsible for removing graffiti. If graffiti has not been addressed within a reasonable amount of time by the property owner, report online or contact 311.

- Graffiti must be removed within 72 hours.
- Hate or gang-related graffiti must be removed within 24 hours.

Graffiti By-law

Kelowna

https://www.kelowna.ca/city-services/graffiti/graffiti-management

Good Neighbour Bylaw: The bylaw makes it possible for City staff to enter a property and remove graffiti at the expense of the property owner if the property owner fails to remove graffiti in response to a formal notification from the City.

Turn in a Tagger
In partnership with Crime Stoppers, we're offering a $500 reward for tips that lead to an arrest for graffiti vandalism. Tips can be reported by calling 1-800-222-8477 or leaving a tip online at www.crimestoppers.net.

Securing Small Business Rebate Program provides small businesses with funds for vandalism repairs and preventative measures. Eligible businesses can receive up to $2,000 per year for reparative costs and up to $1,000 for preventative measures. Applications are retroactive from January 1, 2023, and will be accepted until January 31, 2025, or until program funds are fully allocated.

Free Paint Program: City staff work hard to remove graffiti on City property, and we ask that you please help remove graffiti from your neighborhood. To assist with this request, we offer a **free paint can** to help property owners take on graffiti vandalism. Please email bylaw@kelowna.ca for the form and instruction on the program.