



CREATIVE TOGETHER

A CULTURAL PLAN FOR THE CITY OF VAUGHAN

MAY 2010

AUTHENTICITY
REDISCOVER THE WEALTH OF PLACES



Glenn Bernabe, *The Portrait*, Vaughan Juried Art Exhibition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
DEFINITIONS	7
THE PLANNING CONTEXT	14
CULTURAL MAPPING FINDINGS	18
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES	20
VISION AND PRINCIPLES	22
STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS	23
STRATEGY ONE: CREATIVE ECONOMY	29
STRATEGY TWO: CREATIVE CAPACITY	37
STRATEGY THREE: CREATIVE PLACES	44
WORKING TOGETHER	51

Executive Summary

Purpose of Creative Together

Vaughan is at a pivotal moment in its history. As one of Canada's fastest growing cities, its current population of 280,000 is projected to increase to 430,000 by 2031. Acknowledging the challenges and opportunities presented by this growth, a series of major plans have been undertaken to support Vaughan in transforming itself from a growing suburban municipality to a vibrant, beautiful and sustainable city with a unique identity and a prosperous and diverse economy. *Creative Together: A Cultural Plan for Vaughan* will play a role in this transformation.

The overarching purpose of *Creative Together* is to establish an overall vision and actions to guide cultural development in Vaughan and to integrate cultural planning across municipal departments. The intention is that *Creative Together* be a living document that provides direction and builds consensus to unite people and resources across all City departments and between the municipality and its business and community partners.

Integrated Planning for Culture

In Vaughan, integrated planning for culture means integrating *Creative Together* effectively with the three components of the City's overall Growth Management Strategy:

- *Vaughan Vision 20/20* – the City's Strategic Plan;
- *Green Directions* – the Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan; and,
- *Vaughan Official Plan*.

The Cultural Plan was also informed by the *Vaughan Employment Sectors Strategy Study* and through consultations with the Economic Development Department in anticipation of a new Economic Development Strategy for Vaughan, to ensure the effective integration of *Creative Together* with the City's economic development agenda. The Plan will also inform other planning initiatives including the *Social Services Study*.

The relationship of *Creative Together* to the City's other current planning initiatives is illustrated below.

Figure 1: The Planning Context for Creative Together



The success of this more integrated approach to planning will require that the City *build capacity for integrated planning*. *Creative Together* establishes a coherent planning and policy framework and supports capacity building in integrated planning for culture by:

- Strengthening skills and understanding across-departments through pro-active learning and knowledge-building initiatives;
- Aligning responsibilities across departments – including Community Services, Planning, and Economic Development;
- Building shared understanding among the municipalities many important business and community partners, including effective aligning of efforts with York Region;
- Working toward the development of a strong suite of indicators and performance measures effective in assessing progress and outcomes across planning systems.

Increased Investment

While Vaughan has cultural facilities and programs of which it can be proud, its current level of investment relative to other municipalities remains limited. Comparative research on a range of other municipalities set out in Appendix A indicates that Vaughan is the only municipality surveyed who does not provide grant funding to the cultural sector and the City falls well below others on total per capita spending on culture. The research also confirms that Vaughan currently offers a relatively limited number of venues for cultural activity compared to other municipalities. The levels of municipal staff support for cultural planning and cultural service delivery compared to other municipalities also points to the need for increased investment.

There is a tremendous opportunity to address these shortcomings as the City moves forward to implement *Creative Together*, to address facility recommendations previously identified in *Active Together*, and to leverage opportunities for cultural facility and amenity development as established in the new Official Plan.

The Planning Process

Creative Together has been guided by a Project Advisory Committee over the past year with members drawn from Council; city staff; and culture, business and community representatives. The planning process evolved through the following steps.

- **The Planning Context** – involved a review and analysis of existing plans and strategies of the City of Vaughan. A significant part of this work involved an examination of ways in which cultural resources and cultural planning issues could be best integrated in the new Official Plan, and the soon to be developed Economic Development Strategy.
- **Cultural Mapping** – cultural mapping is a systematic approach to identifying and recording a community's tangible and intangible cultural assets. Cultural mapping completed for *Creative Together* revealed 644 tangible assets in the following categories: creative cultural industries; community cultural organizations; spaces and facilities; festivals and events, cultural heritage; natural heritage. Cultural mapping has now been identified in the new Official Plan as an essential tool to support planning and economic development. *Creative Together* has also established an ongoing cultural mapping system to continuously update and enrich cultural information in Vaughan.
- **Consultation and Engagement** – the engagement process generated ideas and built shared vision among municipal staff, external stakeholders and the broader community. The process took a number of forms: a project website; a community survey eliciting approximately 70 responses; a Community Forum on December 9, 2009; and a series of interviews with the Mayor and members of council.

Creative Together was developed in parallel with a number of other culture and heritage-related studies that informed the development of the Vaughan Official Plan: *Built Heritage and Public Art Study/Plan*, *Archaeology Study/Plan*, and *Cultural Landscape Study/Plan*. Together these plans will put Vaughan at the forefront of integrated approach to cultural planning and development.

Strategies and Actions

The planning and engagement process identified three Strategies and corresponding Actions.

- **Creative Economy** – Creativity and culture are increasingly understood as cornerstones of local economies with major contributions to make in building a diversified and prosperous economy in Vaughan. Actions in this area are aimed at expanding Vaughan’s creative cultural industries, growing festivals and cultural tourism, and leveraging Vaughan’s creative and cultural assets.
- **Creative Capacity** – Artists and creators are at the heart of the creative economy. Strengthening the cultural sector in Vaughan requires collaboration across many groups and disciplines. Actions in this Strategy focus on strengthening partnerships, developing a strategic vision for new facilities and investment, expanding awareness and developing creative capacity.
- **Creative Places** – Creativity and culture play a powerful role in enhancing the quality of place needed to attract people and investment. Culture contributes to placemaking agendas aimed at building beautiful, memorable places and an enhanced public realm. Actions in this area are aimed at adopting a ‘whole systems’ approach to cultural facility planning, leveraging land use tools to support cultural development, strengthening neighbourhood level cultural clusters and creating culturally rich public spaces across Vaughan.

Implementing Creative Together

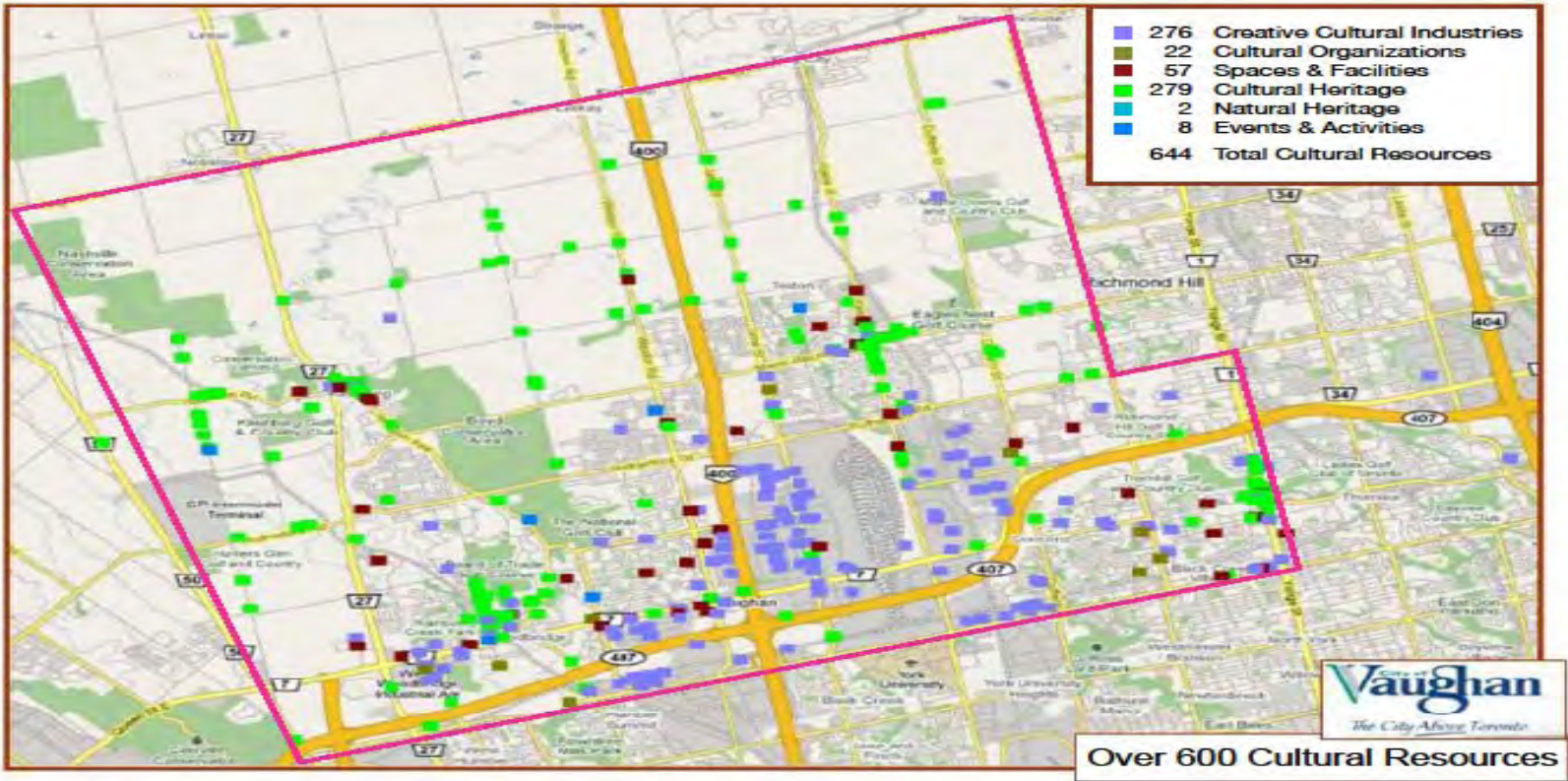
Creative Together represents a multi-year agenda for the City and its partners. All Actions have been assigned short-, medium- or longer-term timeframes and priorities. For each Action, a lead department or agency has been assigned and resource implications identified. Implementation of Actions will be integrated with annual planning and budgeting processes.

To launch the plan, the following immediate steps are recommended.

1. *Adopt the Plan in Principle* – Council should adopt the vision, principles and overall strategies set out in *Creative Together* as a framework for future action and as a signal of their endorsement of culture as a planning and policy priority.
2. *Establish An Administrative and Governance Systems* – implementing *Creative Together* calls on the City to play a stronger strategic leadership role and requires the establishment of new structures and mechanisms to support integrated planning for culture both internally (e.g. a re-mandated Culture Committee and Interdepartmental Culture Team) and externally (e.g., a cross-sectoral leadership group or Cultural Roundtable).
3. *Communicate Creative Together Internally and Across the Community* – the overall vision and direction set out in *Creative Together* should be widely communicated internally across departments and throughout the community to broaden understanding and mobilize support and engagement in implementing the plan.
4. *Establish a Cultural Mapping Partnership* – establish a coordinating body to strengthen the City’s cultural mapping systems and capacities drawing on expertise and resources across departments and with key community and business stakeholders.

Figure 2: Cultural Mapping Findings

The following map represents a composite picture of Vaughan’s cultural resources. Research/work to develop this map was funded in part by a grant received by the Department of Canadian *Heritage’s Arts and Heritage Sustainability Fund*.



"In the landscape of the 21st century, nothing looms larger than culture. It is the new infrastructure, the civic bedrock on which the most successful modern metropolises are built. Culture is to the contemporary city what roads, sewers and bridges were in the 19th and early 20th centuries."

Christopher Hume, Urban Affairs Columnist, Toronto Star

Figure 3: An Overview of Creative Together

