

The Planning Context

Creative Together provides an integrated planning framework intended to bring cultural considerations into all facets of planning and decision-making. Of particular importance is integrating culture effectively with the three components of the City's overall Growth Management Strategy:

1. Vaughan Vision 20/20:the City's Strategic Plan;
2. Green Directions: The Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan;
3. Vaughan Official Plan.

1. Vaughan Vision 2020

Creative Together has been developed in the context of the City's strategic plan *Vaughan Vision 20/20* that espouses the Vision that Vaughan will be:

A city of choice that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable

Vaughan Vision 2020 identifies a series of strategic initiatives across three areas: Service Excellence, Staff Excellence, Management Excellence. The importance of culture and the commitment to the development of a cultural plan (strategy) was one initiative identified under Service Excellence: 'Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture'. The development of a Cultural Plan (Arts and Cultural Strategy) was cited as a strategic initiative in *Vaughan Vision 20/20*.

2. Green Directions

Green Directions Vaughan: The Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan serves as the City's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and influences all aspects of the City's operational and regulatory activities, including the growth management strategy. The intent of *Green Directions* is to establish the principles of sustainability, which will then be used in the development of other plans and master plans to achieve a healthy natural environment, vibrant communities and a strong economy.

Green Directions outlines six goals required to 'meet current and future needs for daily living as a complete community' and identifies the following Environmental Ethic:

"In Vaughan, we lead by example as responsible stewards of our community. Our decisions entail determining the impact of our actions on the environment; weighing the social/cultural consequences; and understanding any financial implications. Our actions will enhance both the natural and built environment."

Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSP) are mandated plans for municipalities in Ontario under an agreement between the federal government, the Province of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario as a condition for receiving Federal Gas Tax revenues. ICSPs are defined by the agreement as: "a long-term plan, developed in consultation with community members that provides direction for the community to realize sustainability objectives, including environmental, *cultural*, social and economic objectives."

3. Vaughan Official Plan

Part of the *Creative Together* process was consultation with staff and the consultants responsible for preparing the Vaughan Official Plan. The result is that Vaughan has set a new standard in Ontario for effectively integrating cultural planning and municipal Official Plans. The Official Plan sets out a strong commitment to creativity and culture at the level of overall vision and strategic themes as well as in specific policy statements found in several chapters of the Official Plans.

The Official Plan sets out a 'vision for transformation' built on eight themes. While connections to cultural planning and development exist across all eight themes, particularly strong connections are found in the italicized themes below.

1. *A Vision for Strong and Diverse Neighbourhoods* – culture and heritage help define the distinct identities of existing and developing neighbourhoods; a commitment exists to strong neighbourhoods with a full range of community services and amenities including cultural services.
2. *A Vision for a Robust and Prominent Countryside* – connections to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.
3. *A Vision for a Diverse Economy* – diversifying the local economy through new sources of employment and wealth creation, particularly in the emerging creative economy.
4. *A Vision for a Vibrant and Thriving Downtown* – a vision of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre as the City's downtown and a culture and entertainment hub.
5. *A Vision for Moving Around without a Car*.
6. *A Vision for Design Excellence and Memorable Places* – ensuring the preservation of the culture and heritage of the historic village cores, making Vaughan a beautiful place through design excellence and placemaking.
7. *A Vision for a Green and Sustainable City* – an integrated vision of sustainability that considers social, economic, environmental and cultural considerations.
8. *A Vision for Directing Growth*.

Figure 9 on the next page details how the strategies in *Creative Together* align with cultural policy directives within Vaughan's updated Official Plan *Vaughan Tomorrow*.

Figure 9: Relationship of strategies from *Creative Together* to the Vaughan Official Plan



Active Together: The Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries Master Plan

Active Together constitutes a major element of the planning context for *Creative Together*. The Master Plan recommended support of the existing cultural sector in Vaughan and see more opportunities to participate in cultural events and more arts programs. The Plan cited the emergence of the “Creative City” movement and the importance of culture and creativity in attracting and retaining the “Creative Class.” It cited a range of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits that arts, culture and heritage contribute to a community; for example, these sectors encourage social interaction, stimulate creativity and personal thought, contribute to economic development and tourism, facilitate healthy lifestyles and understanding of others, etc.

Active Together called for the development of an Arts and Culture Strategy (Cultural Plan) to assist build the capacity of, local arts and cultural groups, clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the City and its partners; establishes program, service and facility needs and delivery strategies for the arts; and identifies appropriate means for the promotion and marketing of local arts opportunities.

Among the recommendations of most direct current relevance to *Creative Together* are the following:

1. Continue to work with the arts and cultural community to optimize the utilization of existing meeting/gathering spaces for their potential to accommodate the needs of these groups.
2. Ensure that all new community centres and renovations to existing community centres have sufficient space for arts programming. Consideration should be given to accommodating local introductory-level arts and cultural needs through these spaces and flexible design for a range of programming (e.g., dance, music, painting, pottery, etc.).
3. The City should encourage the display of local arts and cultural exhibitions in indoor public spaces, including all existing and future community centres and libraries. The City should also review the potential for public gallery space in the new Civic Centre.
4. Encourage arts-based components through outdoor facility design to allow casual and programmable opportunities at civic spaces and public parks.
5. The City should complete a strategy for utilization of City-owned historical houses by the community

Vaughan Economic Development Strategy

Another major aspect of the planning context for *Creative Together* is the *Vaughan Employment Sectors Strategy Study* completed in a parallel process to the cultural plan. The Employment Sectors Strategy Study is a first step toward the development of a new Economic Development Strategy for Vaughan.

Staff of the Economic Development Department was directly involved in shaping *Creative Together* in order to ensure that it informs and supports the new Economic Development Strategy as it is developed.



Teacups by Tung Bui, Vaughan of A Kind