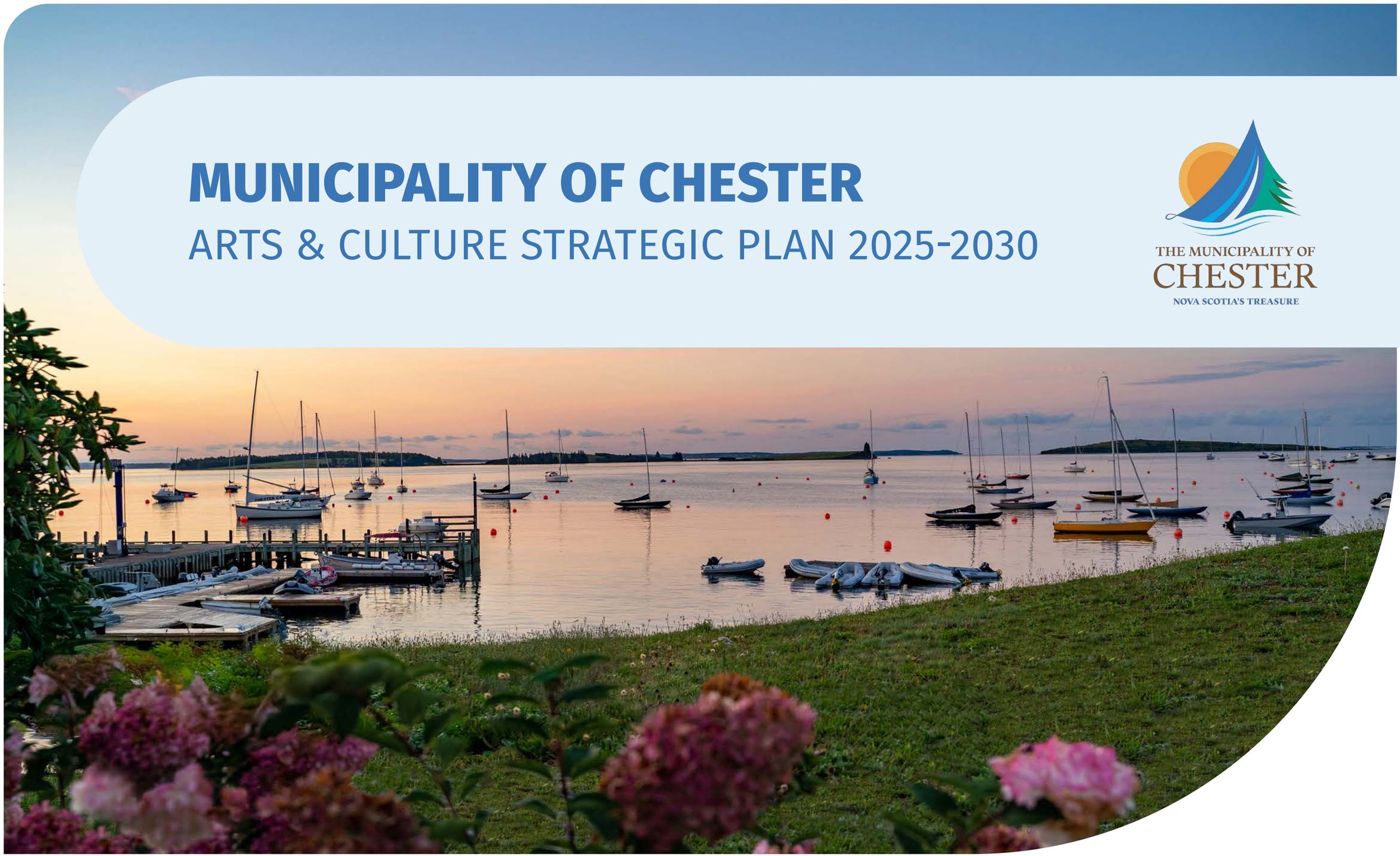
MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER

ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

THE MUNICIPALITY OF
CHESTER
NOVA SCOTIA'S TREASURE





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Municipality of the District of Chester is located in the Kespukwitk* district of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The Municipality acknowledges the Peace and Friendship Treaties signed and recognizes that we are all Treaty People. We acknowledge the responsibility to deeply engage and move forward with the work of truth, reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who played a role in creating the Arts & Culture Strategy for the Municipality of Chester.

To the amazing artists, residents, and the wider arts and culture community—your ideas, stories, and passion have truly inspired this work. To the Municipality of Chester staff, thank you for your dedication and support in making this strategy a reality.

MOC is such a special place—filled with creativity, unique talent, and a deep love for the arts. This community's spirit and commitment to culture make it truly one of a kind.

We are so grateful to have been part of this journey with you. Together, we've created a vision that will help the arts and culture thrive for years to come.

With warmest thanks,

ASBB Economics and Research Ltd.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





The Municipality of Chester (MOC) Arts and Culture Strategy focuses on celebrating the region's rich heritage, supporting local artists, and making arts and culture a central part of life for residents and visitors. With one-third of MOC's businesses connected to arts and culture, this sector plays a vital role in the local economy and community.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

This strategy aims to:

- **Celebrate MOC's heritage** by protecting its history while encouraging new creative ideas.
- **Grow the economy** by attracting visitors, supporting local businesses, and creating jobs through arts and culture.
- **Include everyone** by ensuring arts and culture are accessible to people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds.
- **Support creativity** by providing resources and opportunities for local artists and cultural groups.
- **Strengthen community** by involving residents in cultural activities and events.

WHY ARTS AND CULTURE MATTER

- **Economic Impact:** Arts and culture makes up nearly one third of the business composition of the Municipality of Chester. It is a vital part of our economy and necessary for tourism.
- **Social Impact:** Arts and culture brings people together, fosters community pride, and provides opportunities for connection and self-expression. Volunteerism is what helps the sector thrive.
- **Cultural Impact:** Arts and Culture preserve MOC's unique identity, history and heritage as well as celebrates its diversity.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- **Spaces for Arts and Culture:** Create new and improve existing spaces where people can enjoy arts and cultural activities.
- **Tourism Growth:** Attract more visitors through events, festivals, and cultural experiences.
- **Youth Engagement:** Provide opportunities for young people to learn, create, and take part in cultural activities.
- **Inclusion and Access:** Make sure arts and culture are available to everyone, no matter their background or income.
- **Partnerships:** Work with local businesses, artists, and community groups to strengthen MOC's cultural sector.

WHY NOW?

Arts & Culture is linked to quality of life, attracting and retaining new residents, and our economy. As our province continues to experience growth, many are choosing to move to communities like our Municipality. By investing in Arts & Culture, MOC can build on its strengths, attract more visitors and new residents, while supporting its existing residents and businesses.

INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN SHAPING COMMUNITIES

Arts and culture are powerful drivers of community identity, economic development, and social cohesion. Across Canada, municipalities are highlighting their cultural assets to foster vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities. From rural towns to urban centers, arts and culture strategies are central to enhancing quality of life, attracting new residents and visitors, and supporting creative economies.

The MOC recognizes the trans-formative potential of arts and culture. Approximately one-third of MOC businesses belong to the arts and culture sector, making it an important part of the municipality's economy and identity. This strategic plan aims to build on MOC's rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and creative talent to create a thriving arts and culture ecosystem. Informed by best practices from across Canada, the plan aligns with the municipality's broader objectives in economic development, recreation, and community well-being. It highlights the importance of making arts and culture accessible to all residents, regardless of socioeconomic status, while celebrating the unique identities and contributions of diverse populations.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

The strategy seeks to:

Preserve and celebrate heritage: MOC aims to protect its historical and cultural assets while integrating them with contemporary artistic expression.

Enhance economic growth: By developing its cultural economy, MOC will attract tourism, create local business growth, and job opportunities.

Promote inclusivity: The strategy emphasizes equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, ensuring arts and culture are accessible to all residents and visitors while MOC builds relationships with marginalized communities.

Foster creativity and innovation: Supporting local artists and cultural organizations will enable MOC to become a hub for artistic exploration and cultural production.

Strengthen community engagement: The strategy prioritizes collaboration among residents, artists, and stakeholders to build a shared vision for MOC's cultural future.

Key Partner: Position the MOC as a key partner in building the capacity of the arts and culture sector, fostering growth, and collaboration within the community.

WHAT IS ARTS AND CULTURE?

For the purposes of this strategy, arts and culture encompasses all creative and cultural activities such as visual and performing arts, crafts, music, writing, festivals, public art, community events, preserving and celebrating heritage and diverse cultural expression.

THE BENEFITS OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Economic Benefits:

Arts and culture generates jobs, attracts investment, and drives tourism.
With one-third of MOC's businesses rooted in arts and culture, the sector is a critical economic driver.

Example: Cape Breton's Celtic Colours International Festival contributes significantly to the local economy, supporting over 100 jobs and attracting 20,000 visitors annually.

Social Benefits:

Arts and culture builds connections, reduces social isolation, and enhances mental well-being.

Example: Programs in West Vancouver emphasize inclusivity, ensuring cultural activities are accessible to individuals of all abilities and backgrounds.

Cultural Benefits:

Cultural programming preserves heritage, amplifies diverse voices, and fosters a shared sense of identity.

Example: Annapolis Royal blends its historical significance with contemporary art to create immersive cultural experiences that resonate with both locals and tourists.

PLANNING PROCESS AND ALIGNMENT WITH MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

This strategy was developed through:

Research and Case Studies:

Insights were drawn from successful cultural strategies in Lunenburg NS, Cape Breton NS, West Vancouver BC, Portland OR, Annapolis Royal NS, Bonavista NL, and Charlottetown PEI.

Nova Scotia's Culture Plan.

Canadian/global trends.

Community Engagement:

Surveys, town halls, and community partner interviews ensure that the strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of MOC's residents.

Alignment with Municipal Objectives:

The strategy integrates with MOC's economic development, recreation, and community planning goals to ensure a cohesive approach to growth.

CULTURAL ECONOMY OF MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER AND NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia's Cultural Economy:

Contributes nearly $1.5 billion annually, with cultural tourism being a significant driver.

Examples like the Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design highlight how cultural assets can sustain rural economies.

MOC's Cultural Economy:

With one-third of MOC's businesses in the arts and culture sector, the municipality has a solid foundation to expand its cultural offerings and economic impact.

Festivals, local crafts, and cultural tourism are key pillars of MOC's economy, attracting visitors and supporting artisans.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVITY

Investing in youth ensures the long-term sustainability of MOC's cultural sector. Programs that expose young people to arts and culture foster creativity, leadership, and community pride. Ensuring that arts and culture are accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status, is vital for building an inclusive and equitable community.

REASONS WHY ARTS AND CULTURE MATTER

Tourism:

Cultural tourism is a growing sector, driving revenue and creating opportunities for local businesses.

Diverse Populations:

New residents are increasingly drawn to communities with vibrant arts and culture scenes.

Community Identity:

Arts and culture preserve heritage, amplify unique stories, and foster a sense of belonging.

THE WHY FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

This strategic plan positions arts and culture as a cornerstone of MOC's future. Inspired by case studies from across Canada, the plan highlights the economic, social, and cultural benefits of a thriving cultural ecosystem. By continuing to invest in the MOC's thriving arts and culture sector, the municipality stands to attract more tourism, support the many small businesses within the industry, and foster a lasting sense of community for generations to come.

METHODOLOGY

To develop MOC's Arts and Culture Strategy, a comprehensive methodology was employed, comprising three main approaches:

Online Public Survey:

A survey designed by ASBB Economics and Research captured public opinions on arts and culture.

It received 75 responses, providing insights into participation, perceptions, and recommendations for arts and culture in the region.

Focused Discussion Groups:

Town hall meetings were held throughout MOC and virtually with local residents to understand public behavior and priorities related to arts and culture.

Case Studies:

Comparative analysis of successful arts and culture strategies in other municipalities to identify actionable models for MOC.



BACKGROUND RESEARCH



CULTURAL ECONOMY OF NOVA SCOTIA

As part of Phase 1 research and planning, the following strategic plans and documents have been reviewed to provide further background context of the current cultural climate and position of the arts and culture sector in both MOC and Nova Scotia.

Collaboration, partnerships, capacity building, investment, economic development and cultural diversity are continuing themes between these plans.

MUNICIPAL

- MOC Strategic Priorities Framework 2021-2024;
- MOC Arts & Culture Sector Profile;
- Statistical overview of the Municipality of Chester ;
- Overview of Visitation Trends;
- Municipality of Chester Triage BR&E Report 2022;
- Municipal Profile and Financial Condition Indicator Results of 2019-2020;
- An Economic Development Strategy for the Municipality of Chester (2013) ;

PROVINCIAL

- Nova Scotia Culture Index;
- Nova Scotia Arts & Culture GDP (2017);
- Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan;
- Nova Scotia's Event Strategy;
- Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia (2015);
- Tourism NS (Statistics);

WORLD CULTURE TRENDS

- World Cities Culture Forum Trends 2024 (Culture Summit, Sao Paulo Oct 2023);
- World Cities Culture Forum Report: Creative Recovery? The Role of Cultural Policy in Shaping Post-Covid Urban Futures;
- Global Cultural Districts Network Summary Report (Annual Convening - Montreal May 2023).



MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR



MOC STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FRAMEWORK 2021-2024

The strategic priorities serve as a foundational framework for an arts and culture strategy. Understanding these priorities helps align future arts and culture initiatives with municipal goals.

This framework includes 5 Priority areas: Economic Development; Environmental Stewardship; Governance & Engagement; Healthy & Vibrant Communities; Infrastructure & Service Delivery.

The arts and culture strategy may be most relevant to Economic Development, along with its priority outcomes to help promote tourism and attract and grow business. It is important to note that arts and culture can be connected, relevant and integrated throughout the MOC's priority areas. This fosters an internal culture of cross-departmental collaboration as well as appreciation while avoiding departmental silos on key municipal projects.

For example the priority areas of:

• Governance and Engagement can be addressed with the development of an arts and culture policy framework.

• Environmental Stewardship can be approached with creative responses from diverse artists and perspectives—helping to humanize environmental issues and impacts.

• Healthy & Vibrant Communities can be promoted via ‘accessible and inclusive programs and services’ to improve quality of life for residents. Arts and Culture is increasingly linked to improving health and vibrancy of communities.

• Infrastructure & Service Delivery can be addressed through future growth of arts assets and infrastructure.

MOC ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR PROFILE

The MOC arts and culture sector profile provides an overview of the local creative economy and cultural landscape. With artist-in-residence programs, museums, farmers markets, film/tv productions, a diverse business and tourism sector, and natural beauty, this sector profile serves as a baseline to assess the current cultural markers of MOC.

Current State of Arts & Culture in MOC:

• 2 artist in residence programs (Chester Arts Centre);
• 3 Museums;
• 2 Farmers Markets with over 70 vendors;
• 13+ Film/TV productions filmed in the MOC;
• Tourism ;
• Diverse Business sector;
• Natural beauty with coastline, beaches, trails and diverse forests.

An arts and culture strategy offers an opportunity to creatively position some of the existing cultural assets and programs, and develop a sustainable expansion for them. In the next section we have the demographic overview of key participants in the MOC.



DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF MOC

As of the 2021 Census, MOC's population was recorded at 11,525, marking an increase from 10,579 in 2017. This rise indicates a modest but positive growth trend in the community's population (Statistics Canada, 2023).

The demographic profile of MOC reveals a relatively older population. The median age in MOC is 54 years, which is significantly higher than the Nova Scotia provincial average of 44.8 years. The gender distribution is fairly balanced, with 5,255 males and 5,435 females as of 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023). Breaking down the population by age groups, 9.9% are between 0-14 years, 50.7% are between 15-64 years, and a notable 39.4% are 65 years and older. This substantial proportion of older adults indicates an aging population, a common demographic trend in many rural communities (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Immigration levels in MOC are relatively low. The majority of residents are Canadian-born, with only a small fraction being immigrants from countries like the United Kingdom (1.6%) and the United States (1.1%) (Statistics Canada, 2023).

In terms of the labour force, the total number of employment income recipients aged 15 years and over was 5,510 in 2020. The median employment income for these individuals was $28,600, while the average was slightly higher at $40,400. A significant portion of the population also relies on government transfers, with 7,705 recipients receiving a median transfer of $13,100 (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Income statistics for 2020 show that the average total income for MOC residents aged 15 and over was $47,360, with a median of $34,800. After-tax income figures were slightly lower, with an average of $38,920 and a median of $31,400. The income distribution indicates that many residents earn between $20,000 to $29,999 (1,865 individuals) and $30,000 to $39,999 (1,240 individuals) annually (Statistics Canada, 2023).

These statistics from Statistics Canada provide a comprehensive overview of the demographic and economic conditions in MOC (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Understanding the demographic profile of MOC is crucial for an arts and culture strategy:

Aging Population: The MOC has a significantly older population, with 39.4% aged 65 and over, presenting a valuable opportunity to position cultural programs and activities that enhance engagement within this demographic. Engagement opportunities for seniors include accessible and interactive events and workshops tailored to their interests. Furthermore, since many seniors have ample free time and actively seek ways to give back to the community, connecting them with youth can be mutually beneficial, fostering knowledge sharing and intergenerational relationships.

Income Levels: The median income levels indicate the economic realities faced by the residents. A successful arts and culture strategy would do well to consider affordability and accessibility, ensuring that events are either free or low-cost to encourage participation from all income levels. This could involve community partnerships and sponsorships to subsidize costs.





OVERVIEW OF VISITATION TRENDS

The MOC has experienced changing tourism patterns influenced by provincial, national and global trends.

Visitation Numbers:

• In 2023, Nova Scotia welcomed 2.2 million visitors, reflecting a 14% increase from 2022. This recovery, although substantial, still lags behind pre-pandemic levels, being 6% below 2019 figures. This resurgence indicates a strong rebound in tourism, driven by increased domestic and inter-provincial travel (Tourism Nova Scotia, Visitation statistics 2024).

• MOC, as part of the South Shore region, benefits from this influx. While specific local visitor numbers for MOC are not as detailed, the general rise in provincial tourism significantly impacts local attractions and businesses.

Travel Methods:

• Road travel remains the most common method of arrival, with 1.3 million visitors in 2023, marking a 15% increase from 2022. Air travel also saw a notable rise, with 813,000 visitors, a 12% increase from the previous year. This shows a diversified mode of travel preferences among tourists, contributing to the overall tourism recovery (Tourism Nova Scotia, Visitation statistics 2024).

Accommodation Statistics:

Accommodation sales in Nova Scotia, including MOC, have shown significant improvements, reflecting increased demand for overnight stays.

• In 2023, the province recorded 3 million room nights sold, a 3% increase from 2022 and a 9% increase from 2019 levels. This upward trend indicates a robust demand for accommodations, driven by both domestic and international visitors (Tourism Nova Scotia, Accommodation statistics 2024).

• The South Shore region, saw a slight decline of 3% in room nights sold compared to 2022, suggesting regional variations in recovery and demand. This indicates a need for local strategies to attract more visitors and improve occupancy rates (Tourism Nova Scotia, Accommodation statistics 2024).

Economic Impact and Visitor Demographics:

Tourism significantly contributes to MOC's economy, supporting various local businesses from accommodations to dining and retail.

• Visitors from Ontario accounted for 29% of Nova Scotia's total visitors in 2023, emphasizing the importance of inter-provincial travel. The recovery of U.S. visitors also adds to the diversity of MOC's tourist demographic, highlighting the international appeal of the region (Tourism Nova Scotia, Visitation statistics 2024) (Nova Scotia, 2024).

Visitation Recovery:

• Nova Scotia's tourism saw a marked improvement in 2023, with significant increases in visitor numbers compared to the pandemic years. However, full recovery to pre-pandemic levels has not yet been achieved, indicating ongoing challenges and opportunities for growth in the tourism sector (Tourism Nova Scotia, Visitation statistics 2024) (Nova Scotia, 2024).

• International visitors from overseas markets increased by 5% compared to both 2022 and 2019, with 90,000 visiting Nova Scotia in 2023. This highlights the growing international interest in the province, which can be leveraged for further tourism development (Tourism Nova Scotia, Visitation statistics 2024).





TOURISM SNAPSHOT FOR MOC

Tourism in the Municipality of Chester has started to recover, particularly following the challenges brought on by the pandemic. As part of Nova Scotia's overall tourism rebound, the province welcomed 2.2 million visitors in 2023, representing a 14% increase compared to the previous year. MOC, located along Nova Scotia's scenic South Shore, plays a crucial role in attracting tourists with its unique blend of cultural, artistic, and outdoor experiences. Visitors are drawn to MOC's vibrant arts community, historic sailing events like Chester Race Week, and iconic attractions such as Oak Island and the Sensea Nordic Spa (Tourism Nova Scotia, Visitation statistics 2024).

MOC also serves as a gateway to the South Shore, contributing significantly to the region's tourism economy. The area's strong traditions, heritage, and local craftsmanship provide a rich cultural experience for visitors, who frequently explore local markets, festivals, and artistic showcases.

According to the Tourism Nova Scotia Community Report (2019 Visitor Survey), the Municipality of Chester had an 18% capture rate, meaning that 18% of all tourists visiting the South Shore region made a stop in MOC. Of these visitors, 17% were pleasure travelers, while 26% were visiting friends and family (Tourism Nova Scotia, 2019).

MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER: PUBLIC OPINION ON SUPPORTING BUSINESSES – INSIGHTS FROM THE 2022 TRIAGE BR&E REPORT

The Municipality of Chester conducted a business satisfaction survey to assess how best to support local businesses through retention and expansion (BR+E) initiatives. **Arts and culture were a part of the businesses surveyed in the report,** as a considerable portion of the business community is made up of artists. The survey was designed to capture broader business community insights and identify opportunities for growth or retention at the individual business level.



Key Targeted Sectors

The report focused on sectors with significant local economic impact and growth potential:

1. Arts, Culture, and Recreation (13%): Includes artisans, retail, sailing, and theater, wich are crucial for attracting tourists and enhancing MOC's cultural appeal.

2. Green Industry (2%): Focuses on sustainable contributions through solar and wind energy.

3. Niche and Value-Added Manufacturing (7%): Industries such as forestry, fishing, and plastics manufacturing add value to local raw materials.

4. Business Services (13%): Encompasses financial, legal, real estate, and information services, supporting Chester's broader business ecosystem.

5. Construction (25%): Covers sectors vital to infrastructure development, including electrical, plumbing, and engineering.

Other sectors (40%) include, hospitality, automotive repair, and food services.

Key Findings

Business Needs and Challenges

• Seasonal Operations: 62% of businesses operate seasonally, with only 39% open year-round. This reflects the heavy reliance on tourism during peak months. Key barriers to year-round operations include:

Summer residents returning home | Weather conditions | Insufficient off-peak tourist activity

• Housing and Staffing: A lack of affordable housing for seasonal workers and students exacerbates staffing shortages, particularly during peak tourist seasons.

• Cultural Representation: Greater efforts are needed to retain youth and highlight Indigenous communities to ensure cultural sustainability.

• Funding and Marketing: Insufficient funding and promotional efforts limit the growth of arts and cultural initiatives.

• Workforce Diversity: Only 12% of businesses employ immigrants, indicating a need for inclusive hiring policies to enrich the local workforce.

Business Health Insights

The survey identified businesses with plans for expansion and those at risk of downsizing or closure. Key metrics revealed strengths in revenue outlook and infrastructure but highlighted weaknesses in workforce attraction, retention, and amenities.



ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES IN MOC

• Arts and Culture Sector Growth: With one third of businesses in the municipality tied to arts and culture, this sector plays a key role in MOC's economy. Supporting this sector can help small businesses, improve quality of life for residents, attract tourism, and drive economic growth.

• Collaboration Across Sectors: Partnerships between arts, business services, and manufacturing can generate investments benefiting cultural initiatives.

• Addressing Seasonality: Strategies like winter festivals or cultural events can extend the tourist season, fostering economic stability for year-round businesses.

TOP ISSUES TO ADDRESS

1. Visitor Attraction: Develop year-round attractions to counteract seasonal tourism trends.
2. Affordable Housing: Increase housing availability to support seasonal workers and students.
3. Youth Engagement: Provide opportunities to retain local youth and encourage cultural participation.
4. Enhanced Marketing: Improve funding and promotional efforts for arts and cultural initiatives.
5. Inclusive Workforce Policies: Encourage diverse hiring to diversify the workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW





Nova Scotia's cultural sector plays a pivotal role in the province's economy, contributing $1.5 billion (3.9% of GDP)—a larger contribution than industries like utilities, transportation, and sports. This highlights the cultural sector's capacity to drive economic growth and community development. However, financial challenges persist for artists, with a median income of $21,500, significantly lower than the national average. The province also boasts 15,200 cultural workers (3.3% of the labour force), underscoring a robust cultural presence despite the need for better financial support. Provincial plans, such as the Culture Action Plan, Event Strategy, and Recreation Strategy, provide strategic guidance, focusing on cultural diversity, economic growth, and fostering vibrant community engagement. These frameworks can inform local strategies, including those of MOC, to align with broader provincial goals.

On a national scale, culture is a critical tool for addressing inequality, promoting inclusivity, and advancing reconciliation efforts. Policies like UNDRIP emphasize Indigenous sovereignty and the preservation of cultural heritage, while the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action encourage governments and organizations to prioritize Indigenous cultural representation and equity. Across Canada, there is a growing emphasis on dismantling systemic barriers within the arts sector and fostering diverse and inclusive cultural ecosystems.

Globally, cultural trends point to the increasing importance of creative economies in recovery efforts post-COVID-19. Key priorities include

supporting the creative workforce, safeguarding cultural infrastructure, and integrating health and cultural initiatives. Cities worldwide are investing in 24-hour cultural economies, leveraging technology to enhance creativity, and using cultural policy to address historical injustices and amplify diverse voices. Creative placemaking and innovative partnerships are also emerging as essential strategies for revitalizing public spaces and fostering economic resilience.

For MOC, these provincial, national, and global insights provide valuable direction for shaping its arts and culture strategy. By investing in creative infrastructure, supporting local artists and cultural workers, and fostering inclusivity and equity, MOC can strengthen its cultural ecosystem. Leveraging trends such as culture-driven economic recovery, collaborations with health sectors, and addressing systemic barriers can position MOC as a leader in rural cultural innovation. Aligning local initiatives with broader strategies can enhance tourism, community identity, and economic growth while ensuring a vibrant and resilient cultural sector for years to come.





MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER'S CURRENT ARTS AND CULTURE LANDSCAPE: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

The Municipality of Chester's arts and culture sector is marked by vibrant creativity and community engagement but also faces several challenges. On the positive side, MOC is home to a thriving network of artists, cultural organizations, and non-profits that contribute significantly to its unique identity and community spirit. The area has a rich history and strong ties to traditional and contemporary arts, which draw visitors and support local economic development. Events, festivals, and collaborations between local artists and organizations showcase the community's creative talents and attract broader attention.

However, the arts and culture landscape in MOC also faces challenges, including divisions and fragmentation within the sector. Collaboration and coordination between organizations, artists, and the municipality are often limited, reducing the overall impact of initiatives. Non-profits and community-driven cultural programs frequently experience volunteer burnout and capacity issues, as a small number of individuals carry a disproportionate share of responsibilities. This limits the sector's ability to sustain and scale cultural activities effectively.

Economic disparities within the community also affect participation and access to cultural opportunities. Not all residents can afford to engage in or support cultural activities, creating barriers that impact inclusivity

and representation. Additionally, the arts sector struggles to secure consistent funding and resources, further exacerbating capacity issues for smaller organizations and individual artists.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities to strengthen MOC's arts and culture ecosystem. Improved collaboration between community partners could foster greater cohesion and amplify the sector's collective impact. Investments in creative infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives, and targeted support for underrepresented groups could help address existing gaps. By leveraging MOC's unique cultural assets and addressing its challenges head-on, the municipality can create a more sustainable and inclusive arts and culture sector that benefits the entire community.



CASE STUDIES

The following section analyzes eight different case studies (Lunemburg, Cape Breton, West Vancouver, Portland, Annapolis Royal, and Bonavista Biennale). It provides a brief overview of each location, followed by an analysis of their culture strategies.

1 LUNENBURG: PRESERVING HERITAGE THROUGH ARTS AND CULTURE



OVERVIEW

Lunenburg is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, celebrated for its exceptional preservation of 18th-century British colonial architecture and rich maritime heritage. The town's vibrant waterfront, historic shipbuilding legacy, and strong community involvement create a distinctive cultural atmosphere. With a population of approximately 2.400 residents, Lunenburg's community reflects a blend of descendants from early German, British, and Acadian settlers, as well as newcomers, including retirees and artists seeking its scenic charm and creative opportunities.

WHAT MAKES LUNENBURG UNIQUE?

- **Historical Legacy:** The town's early settlers left a lasting influence on its architecture and folk traditions, making Lunenburg a living testament to its colonial roots.
- **UNESCO Recognition:** The designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site not only protects its unique architecture and history but also attracts global tourism and funding for preservation efforts.
- **Cultural Renaissance:** In recent years, an influx of artists, entrepreneurs, and retirees has brought new energy to the town, enriching its cultural fabric and creating a dynamic arts community.

KEY FEATURES OF LUNENBURG'S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Integration of Heritage and Arts:

- Cultural Events: Events like the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival, one of Canada's oldest folk festivals, and the Lunenburg Doc Fest blend storytelling, music, and history, showcasing traditional and contemporary artistic expression.
- Museums and Tours: Heritage-focused activities, including guided tours and interactive exhibits, ensure history is woven into the cultural experience.
- Galleries and Studios: Lunenburg hosts a wide range of galleries and working studios, showcasing local and international artists, alongside craftspeople specializing in woodworking, pottery, and painting.

2. Leveraging UNESCO Status:

- The UNESCO designation serves as a global brand, increasing the town's appeal to international tourists.
- Preservation policies prioritize architectural integrity while encouraging the inclusion of modern artistic elements to keep the culture vibrant and evolving.

3. Community Engagement:

- Residents actively participate in cultural preservation, from volunteering at events to contributing to local crafts and performances.
- Initiatives like the Lunenburg School of the Arts nurture emerging talent and provide opportunities for creative growth within the community.

ARTS AND CULTURAL IMPACT

- **Economic Growth:** The arts and culture sector is a key economic driver, generating millions annually through cultural tourism. Events, festivals, and galleries sustain year-round employment and business opportunities.
- **Tourism Appeal:** Visitors are drawn to the town's unique combination of art, history, and music, with cultural tourism forming a cornerstone of the local economy.
- **Creative Innovation:** By embracing both traditional crafts and contemporary arts, Lunenburg has cultivated a cultural identity that honors its past while looking to the future.

VISION AND VALUES

Lunenburg's arts and culture strategy centers around balancing the preservation of its historic identity with fostering innovation and inclusivity. Its strategic goals include:

- Leveraging authentic local culture to expand international tourism.
- Building local engagement with arts, heritage, and cultural activities.
- Fostering excellence in cultural stewardship.
- Promoting cultural inclusivity and equity.
- Establishing a foundation for long-term cultural sustainability.

WHY LUNENBURG IS A MODEL

Lunenburg exemplifies how a community can successfully balance historical preservation with dynamic cultural programming. Its integration of heritage and arts fosters a deep sense of identity, while its emphasis on community engagement ensures that residents, newcomers, and tourists all feel connected to its cultural legacy. By leveraging its UNESCO status and encouraging creative growth, Lunenburg sets a high standard for sustainable cultural tourism and community-driven arts strategies.

2 CAPE BRETON: A LEGACY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INNOVATION



OVERVIEW

Cape Breton Island, located in Nova Scotia, is renowned for its rich cultural tapestry, rooted in Mi'kmaq, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, and Acadian influences. This vibrant blend shapes the island's creative identity and fuels its arts and culture sector, which plays a vital role in the regional economy. With a population of approximately 132,000, the majority residing in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM), the island combines its historical traditions with modern artistic expression, making it a cultural beacon in Atlantic Canada.

WHAT MAKES CAPE BRETON UNIQUE?

Cape Breton's arts and culture are deeply intertwined with its rugged natural landscapes and its diverse cultural heritage. The island celebrates its traditions while embracing contemporary artistic practices, resulting in a dynamic cultural ecosystem.

KEY FEATURES OF CAPE BRETON'S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Preservation of Traditional Crafts:

- Cape Breton is home to over 500 working artists, many engaged in traditional crafts like rug hooking, pottery, weaving, and woodwork. These crafts serve as both an economic driver and a means of preserving the region's cultural heritage.

- The Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design offers workshops and mentorship programs to pass on traditional skills to younger generations and sustain these practices.

Celtic Colours International Festival:

- Held annually in October, the Celtic Colours International Festival attracts over 20,000 visitors and supports more than 100 jobs in arts-related fields.

- This festival highlights the island's Gaelic roots, showcasing music, storytelling, and traditional arts while generating significant tourism revenue.

Tourism and Cultural Economy:

- Arts and cultural tourism contribute approximately 35% of the island's total tourism revenue, with local galleries, festivals, and craft shops drawing both domestic and international visitors.

- Retail spaces and galleries provide artists with platforms to showcase and sell their work, enhancing economic sustainability for the creative sector.

Vision and Values:

- Cape Breton's arts vision emphasizes preserving its cultural heritage while fostering contemporary artistic growth.

• The Cape Breton Regional Municipality's Creative Economy Growth Plan outlines a 10-year strategy to:

▸ Recognize the creative economy as a driver of community and economic development.

▸ Promote arts, culture, and heritage to children and youth, creating pathways for future generations.

▸ Foster collaboration within the creative sector to strengthen its impact.

▸ Commit to investments in the creative economy by leveraging public and private funds.

▸ Establish supportive policies for nurturing the arts and culture sector.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Strengthening Awareness and Communication:

• Increase visibility of the arts and culture sector through improved marketing and engagement efforts.

• Highlight the importance of cultural heritage to both residents and visitors.

2. Youth Engagement:

• Introduce children and youth to career opportunities in the cultural sector through targeted programs and mentorship.

• Collaborate with schools and community organizations to integrate cultural education into curricula.

3. Policy Alignment:

• Ensure the cultural sector strategy aligns with broader municipal and regional policies to maximize its impact and sustainability.

WHY CAPE BRETON IS A MODEL

Cape Breton demonstrates how a region can successfully balance cultural preservation with economic development. By investing in traditional crafts, fostering community engagement, and leveraging cultural tourism, Cape Breton has built a thriving creative economy that honors its heritage while embracing innovation. The Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design is central to these efforts, serving as a hub for artists and craftspeople, while festivals like Celtic Colours enhance the region's global reputation.

Cape Breton's model highlights the importance of strategic investments, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and strong community connections, offering valuable insights for regions looking to strengthen their arts and culture sectors.

3 **WEST VANCOUVER:** A CULTURAL MOSAIC OF CREATIVITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND DIVERSITY.



OVERVIEW

Located on British Columbia's scenic coastline, West Vancouver is home to approximately 45,000 residents. The community's ethnic diversity is a defining feature, with 41% identifying as visible minorities, including significant representation from Asian, Indigenous, and European backgrounds. Combined with one of the highest median household incomes in Canada ($120,000+), this cultural and socio-economic richness underpins West Vancouver's thriving arts and culture scene.

WHAT MAKES WEST VANCOUVER UNIQUE?

West Vancouver's cultural identity reflects its wealth, diversity, and natural beauty, creating a creative ecosystem that prioritizes inclusivity, collaboration, and community well-being.

KEY FEATURES OF WEST VANCOUVER'S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Equity and Diversity in Programming:

- The Harmony Arts Festival highlights artists from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, ensuring representation across its visual arts, music, and performance programs.

- The West Vancouver Art Museum promotes both contemporary and historical works, featuring Indigenous artists and underrepresented voices in its exhibitions and workshops.

2. Inclusive Public Spaces:

- Public art installations and cultural programming are designed to reflect the diverse identities within the community, creating spaces where all residents feel represented and included.

- Accessibility enhancements ensure that cultural activities are available to individuals of all abilities.

3. Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):

- Collaboration with local Indigenous communities to integrate Indigenous art and narratives into public spaces and programming.

- Promotion of cross-cultural dialogue and understanding through multicultural festivals and events.

- Affordable cultural facilities to ensure economic barriers do not limit access to arts and culture.

ARTS AND CULTURAL IMPACT THROUGH AN EDI LENS

- Representation: Programs actively highlight the work of marginalized and equity-deserving groups, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion.

- Community Connection: The arts serve as a bridge between the diverse populations of West Vancouver, building mutual understanding and respect.

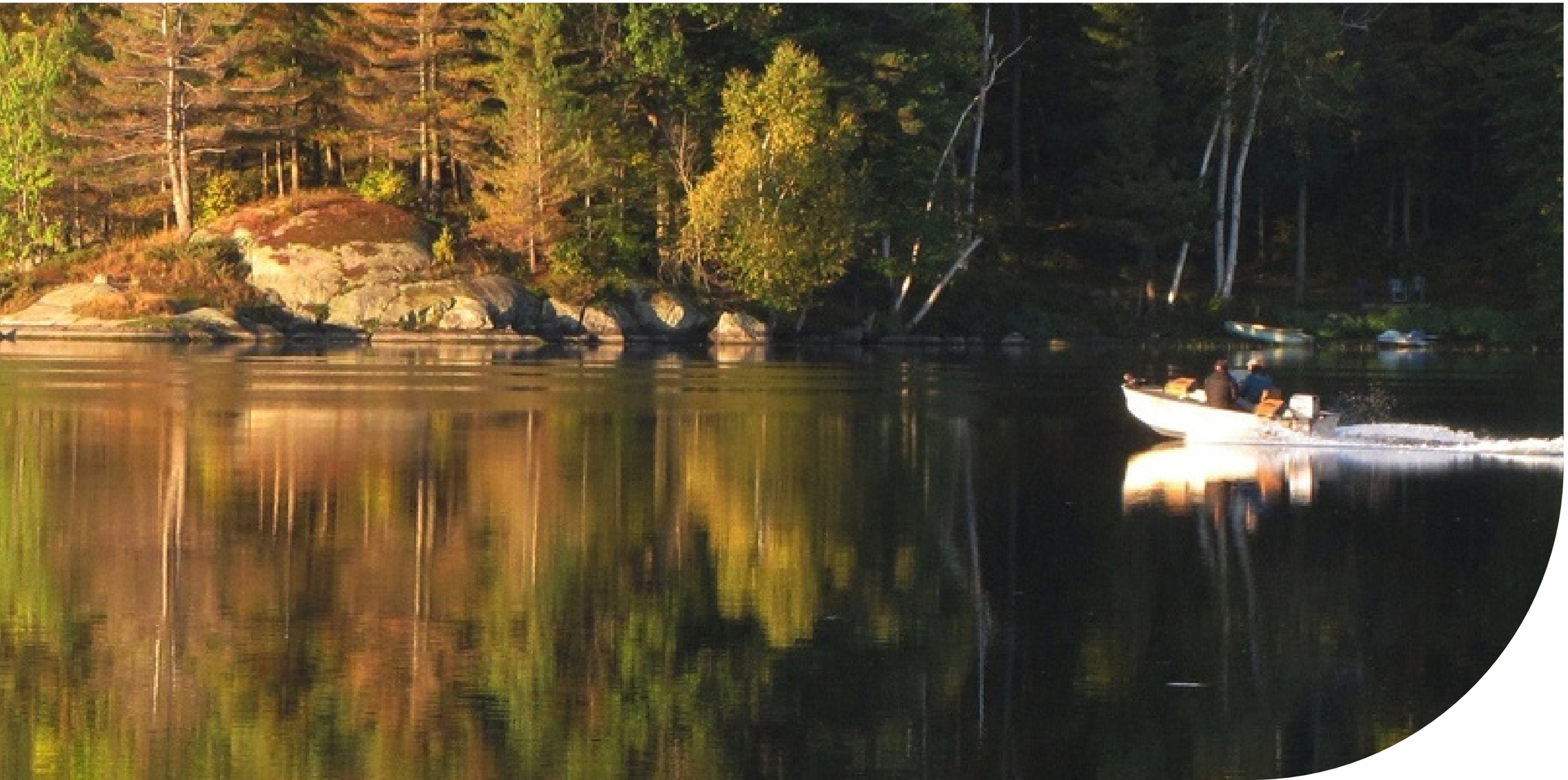
- Accessibility: The integration of affordability and physical accessibility in facilities ensures that all residents can participate in cultural activities.

WHY IT'S A MODEL

West Vancouver's commitment to equity and diversity ensures that its arts and culture sector reflects and serves its rich community. Its strategies demonstrate how inclusivity can enrich cultural offerings and strengthen social cohesion.

4

PORTLAND: CELEBRATING HERITAGE WITH A FOCUS ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION



OVERVIEW

Situated along Big Rideau Lake in Ontario, Portland is a small, rural community that blends its deep historical roots with a growing arts and culture scene. While Portland's population is predominantly older, there is an increasing number of younger families and individuals seeking its tranquil, nature-oriented lifestyle. This evolving demographic makes equity and inclusion key to Portland's cultural growth.

WHAT MAKES PORTLAND UNIQUE?

Portland's connection to the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and its strong community spirit form the foundation of its cultural identity. Its arts and culture scene incorporates the town's natural beauty and heritage while promoting inclusivity for all residents.

KEY FEATURES OF PORTLAND'S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Inclusion Through Community Engagement:

- Cultural events such as the Portland Maple Festival and Rideau Lakes Studio Tour are designed to involve all community members, encouraging participation across age groups, abilities, and backgrounds.

- Outreach efforts ensure that rural residents, including those in remote areas, have access to cultural activities.

2. Preserving and Celebrating Heritage:

- Collaboration with Indigenous communities to integrate traditional knowledge and art forms into local programming.

- Artistic initiatives that highlight the town's historical buildings and ties to the Rideau Canal, blending heritage with contemporary creative expression.

3. Support for Underrepresented Artists:

- Programs prioritize creating opportunities for emerging and equity-deserving artists, including affordable exhibition spaces and mentorship initiatives.

- Partnerships with schools and community groups aim to expose youth, including marginalized individuals, to career opportunities in the arts.

4. Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

- Promote diverse artistic voices by highlighting works from multicultural and underrepresented groups.

- Address barriers to participation by offering free or low-cost cultural activities and accessible venues.

- Celebrate the unique cultural contributions of all residents, fostering a sense of shared identity and belonging.

ARTS AND CULTURAL IMPACT THROUGH AN EDI LENS

- Cultural Representation: Programs and events reflect the diversity of the Rideau Lakes area, incorporating Indigenous, Acadian, and other cultural influences.

- Economic Inclusion: By supporting local artists and craftspeople, Portland ensures that the economic benefits of cultural tourism reach all segments of the community.

- Accessibility: Efforts to remove physical, financial, and social barriers make arts and culture a cornerstone of community life for everyone.

WHY IT'S A MODEL

Portland demonstrates how a small, rural community can prioritize equity and inclusion in its cultural initiatives. By honoring its heritage while amplifying diverse voices and removing barriers to participation, Portland creates a sustainable and welcoming arts scene for all.

5 ANNAPOLIS ROYAL: BRIDGING HERITAGE AND MODERN ART



WHAT MAKES ANNAPOLIS ROYAL UNIQUE?

Annapolis Royal is one of Canada's oldest towns, with deep historical roots and a vibrant contemporary arts scene. Its rich cultural heritage, combined with its commitment to fostering modern artistic expression, has positioned it as a cultural hub in Nova Scotia. Public art installations, galleries, and innovative programs reflect the town's unique ability to integrate history with creativity.

KEY FEATURES OF ANNAPOLIS ROYAL'S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Blending Past and Present:

- Public art installations like Elephant Grass Print creatively reinterpret historical themes, using modern techniques to engage diverse audiences.

- Events at historic sites like Fort Anne National Historic Site combine artistic programming with historical narratives, creating immersive cultural experiences.

2. Accessible Art Spaces:

- The Annapolis Region Community Arts (ARCA) organization provides affordable studio spaces and resources, supporting local artists and encouraging creative exploration.

- ArtsPlace Gallery offers exhibition opportunities for emerging and established artists, promoting inclusivity and engagement.

How Artists Utilize Infrastructure:

- Artists use affordable studio spaces to develop their craft in a supportive environment.
- Public art initiatives offer opportunities to create large-scale works that enhance the town's visual appeal while reflecting its heritage.
- Galleries and community events serve as platforms for artists to showcase and sell their work, connecting them directly with local and visiting audiences.

Tourism and Community Engagement:

- Annual events and exhibitions draw both locals and tourists, fostering cultural exchange and community pride.
- The integration of art and history attracts heritage tourism, contributing significantly to the town's economy.

WHY IT'S A MODEL

Annapolis Royal demonstrates how blending heritage with contemporary art can sustain cultural tourism, foster community pride, and support local artists. The town's investment in accessible spaces and its celebration of history through modern art exemplify how infrastructure and programming can drive cultural growth.

6 BONAVISTA BIENNALE, NEWFOUNDLAND: A RURAL ARTS TRANSFORMATION



WHAT MAKES BONAVISTA UNIQUE?

Bonavista is known for its dramatic coastal landscapes and rich historical legacy, which serve as the perfect backdrop for the Bonavista Biennale, a contemporary visual arts festival. This biennial event transforms the rural community into an international arts destination, showcasing site-specific installations and fostering cultural exchange.

KEY FEATURES OF BONAVISTA'S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Site-Specific Art:

- Artists create works that integrate seamlessly with Bonavista's historic buildings, natural sites, and landscapes, creating immersive and context-rich experiences for visitors.

- The installations highlight the region's history and environment, fostering a connection between art and place.

2. Community Involvement:

- The Biennale collaborates with local artisans, volunteers, and historians to ensure cultural authenticity and inclusivity.

- Residents are involved in the planning and execution of the event, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.

3. How Artists Utilize Infrastructure:

- Artists leverage Bonavista's historic venues, public spaces, and natural settings to create unique works that attract global attention.

- Workshops and residencies allow artists to engage with the community and contribute to the local cultural narrative.

4. Tourism-Driven Growth:

- The Biennale attracts national and international audiences, boosting seasonal revenues for local businesses and creating temporary jobs.

- Cultural tourism is further supported by the festival's connection to Bonavista's rich heritage and stunning landscapes.

WHY IT'S A MODEL

Bonavista demonstrates how rural communities can harness their natural and cultural assets to create globally recognized arts destinations. The integration of site-specific art with local heritage enhances tourism and fosters cultural pride, offering a replicable model for other rural areas.

7 CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND: A CONFEDERATION OF CULTURE



WHAT MAKES CHARLOTTETOWN UNIQUE?

As the "Birthplace of Confederation," Charlottetown blends its historical significance with a thriving arts scene to create a year-round cultural destination. Its robust programming and institutional support make it a cornerstone of Prince Edward Island's cultural and economic identity.

KEY FEATURES OF CHARLOTTETOWN'S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Cultural Institutions:

- The Confederation Centre of the Arts anchors the city's cultural scene, offering performances, exhibitions, and educational programs.
- It serves as a hub for fostering artistic talent and engaging audiences through diverse and inclusive programming.

2. Arts and Tourism Integration:

- Events such as the PEI Festival of Small Halls and the Charlottetown Film Festival align with the city's tourism goals, attracting audiences from across Canada and beyond.
- These events showcase local talent while creating significant economic impact through cultural tourism.

How Artists Utilize Infrastructure:

- Artists use facilities at the Confederation Centre and other venues to exhibit their work, host performances, and conduct workshops.

- Local organizations like CreativePEI provide grants, mentorship, and networking opportunities, empowering artists to grow their practices and connect with wider audiences.

Artist Empowerment:

- Programs focus on supporting underrepresented voices, creating opportunities for diverse artistic expression.

- Affordable studio spaces and professional development initiatives help local artists sustain their careers and contribute to the cultural fabric of the city.

WHY IT'S A MODEL

Charlottetown illustrates how leveraging historical significance and empowering artists can create a dynamic, economically vibrant cultural hub. By integrating tourism, supporting artists, and fostering inclusivity, the city sets a high standard for sustainable cultural development.

8 TOWN OF PICTOU: A HUB FOR ARTISTIC COLLABORATION AND REVITALIZATION



WHAT MAKES PICTOU UNIQUE?

Known as the “Birthplace of New Scotland,” Pictou has a rich Scottish heritage that shapes its cultural identity. This small but vibrant community has seen its arts and culture scene revitalized through initiatives like Creative Pictou County and the DeCoste Centre for Arts and Creativity, positioning the town as a hub for collaboration, creativity, and artistic expression.

KEY FEATURES OF PICTOU’S ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

1. Collaborative Framework:

- Creative Pictou County serves as a platform that unites artists, businesses, and residents to foster an interconnected ecosystem for cultural growth.
- Partnerships with schools and youth programs provide opportunities for young people to explore and develop their creative talents, ensuring future generations are engaged in the arts.

2. Venue Revitalization and Modernization:

- The DeCoste Centre for Arts and Creativity, following significant upgrades, has transformed into a vibrant, modern cultural hub. Enhancements to acoustics, lighting, seating, and accessibility have made it a premier venue for a wide range of events.
- Additional upgrades, such as state-of-the-art facilities for performers and exhibitors, have made the DeCoste Centre a preferred choice for local and touring artists.
- The venue now hosts an expanded array of programming, including concerts, art exhibitions, community workshops, theatrical performances, and literary events.

3. How Artists Utilize Upgraded Infrastructure:

- Performance Space: Musicians, theatre groups, and other performers use the DeCoste Centre's modern stage and facilities to deliver high-quality productions that attract both local and out-of-town audiences.

- Exhibition Opportunities: Visual artists leverage gallery spaces within the Centre and other venues to showcase their work, with exhibitions often drawing buyers and collaborators.

- Workshops and Collaboration: The Centre provides space for workshops, artist residencies, and collaborative projects, enabling creators to engage directly with the community and fellow artists.

- Resource Accessibility: Artists benefit from enhanced technical support, rehearsal spaces, and affordable rental options, allowing them to focus on their craft and grow their practices without significant financial strain.

Impact of Upgrading and Revitalization:

- Enhanced Artistic Expression: The modernized infrastructure provides artists with the tools and spaces they need to elevate their work, whether through better acoustics for musicians or improved lighting for visual art displays.

- Increased Audience Engagement: High-quality venues and facilities attract more attendees, broadening the audience base for artists and creating new opportunities for exposure.

• Professional Growth: By providing spaces for rehearsals, exhibitions, and performances, the infrastructure supports professional development for local and emerging artists.

• Cultural Innovation: Upgraded facilities encourage artists to experiment and innovate, knowing they have access to spaces designed to support their creative vision.

Economic and Cultural Impact:

• Investments in infrastructure have significantly boosted the local economy, as cultural events drive tourism and create demand for local businesses such as restaurants, shops, and accommodations.

• The expanded programming at the DeCoste Centre and other venues has increased year-round cultural activity, making Pictou a regional destination for arts and culture.

WHY IT'S A MODEL

Pictou demonstrates how revitalized arts infrastructure can empower artists, engage the community, and stimulate economic growth. The upgraded facilities provide artists with professional-grade spaces to create, perform, and collaborate, while attracting diverse audiences that support the local economy. By prioritizing infrastructure improvements alongside community collaboration, Pictou has built a thriving arts ecosystem that celebrates its cultural heritage and fosters innovation. This model highlights the transformative potential of investing in arts infrastructure to sustain and grow a vibrant cultural sector.

WHAT WE HEARD



A) METHODOLOGY

To develop the Municipality of Chester's Arts and Culture Strategy, a comprehensive methodology was employed, comprising three main approaches:

1. Online Public Survey:

- A survey designed by ASBB Economics and Research captured public opinions on arts and culture.
- It received 75 responses, providing insights into participation, perceptions, and recommendations for arts and culture in the region.

2. Focused Discussion Groups [2] & Community Consultations:

- We held a series of town hall meetings with local residents, artists, the arts and culture community, and marginalized groups to understand their priorities and views on arts and culture. ASBB also attended artisan events and conducted site visits to connect with the community, listen to their perspectives, and gain a detailed understanding of the sites.

3. Case Studies:

- Comparative analysis of successful arts and culture strategies in other municipalities to identify actionable models for MOC.

[2] Engagement with First Nations and other marginalized groups is ongoing. To address this, we have included suggestions related to their needs in the EDI section of the Strategic Priorities.

B) DEMOGRAPHICS AND INTERVIEWS

The report indicates that 75 responses were received from the online public survey conducted for the MOC's Arts and Culture Strategy.

Demographics:

- **Residential Status:** 92% of respondents are long-term residents, predominantly older adults.
- **Ethnicity and Gender:** The majority identify as caucasian, with diverse gender identities.
- **Education and Employment:** Most respondents have a college education, are self-employed, and earn over $100,000 annually. This suggests that the majority of survey respondents belong to a higher income bracket than the municipal average household income.
- **Accessibility:** Nearly 80% of respondents reported having no current accessibility needs. However, with an aging population, the Municipality of Chester would benefit from proactively addressing accessibility needs in the future.
- **Interviews:** Key community partners included local artists, arts organizations, accessibility coordinators, and tourism professionals. Notable voices included local artists, community and provincial arts organizations, as well as key municipal staff. These interviews highlighted challenges like limited funding, lack of diversity, accessibility barriers, and the need for greater municipal support.

C) SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

The findings reveal a vibrant arts and culture scene in MOC, supported by a close-knit community and rich local history. However, there are critical gaps in infrastructure, inclusivity, and strategic planning. While respondents value the community-building aspects of arts and culture, they also emphasize the need for better information dissemination, more diverse representation, and increased municipal investment to foster sustainability. The detailed What We Heard Report is contained in Appendix 4.

KEY FIGURES AND COMMUNITY DESIRES

Participation and Preferences:

94% of respondents want to participate in more events, particularly:

- Music and folk culture festivals.
- Heritage festivals celebrating Nova Scotia's traditions.
- Farmers' markets and seasonal fairs.
- Nighttime art installations like Nuit Blanche.

43.8% of respondents currently engage in visual arts, making it the most popular cultural activity.

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Over half of respondents noted a lack of diversity among artists and cultural performers.
- Suggested actions include showcasing equity-deserving artists and providing DEI training for staff and volunteers.

Infrastructure and Access:

- Respondents ranked indoor exhibition spaces and community arts programming spaces as the most needed infrastructure improvements.
- Additional outdoor spaces and access to specialized equipment, such as kilns and recording studios, were also highlighted as priorities.

Tourism and Economic Impact:

- 90% of respondents agreed that arts and culture positively impact the local economy, particularly through tourism.
- 50% of artists rely on online platforms to promote and sell their work, demonstrating the role of digital engagement in MOC's cultural economy.

Barriers to Participation:

- 62% of respondents identified lack of information as the primary obstacle to participating in arts and culture events.
- Affordability and accessibility were also noted as areas needing attention.

Support for Youth and Emerging Artists:

- Respondents called for more affordable and free programming for youth, expanded initiatives like Pro Kids, and performance opportunities for young artists.

The consultations outlined that MOC has significant potential to position itself as a vibrant arts and culture hub. However, gaps in infrastructure, diversity, and communication must be addressed to achieve this vision.

SWOT



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

The SWOT analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the MOC's arts and culture landscape, highlighting its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis reflects insights gathered from the community survey, town hall discussions, and community partners interviews. It offers a snapshot of what makes MOC's cultural ecosystem unique, the challenges it faces, and the potential pathways to growth.

STRENGTHS

Rich History and Scenic Geography:

- Attractions such as Rails to Trails, Ross Farm, Oak Island, and New Ross Christmas tree land contribute to the region's charm.
- Historic sites, hiking trails, golf courses, and yacht/sailing clubs enhance local cultural identity.

Community Engagement and Volunteerism:

- Strong community ties foster a sense of belonging and enable local events and initiatives.
- Volunteer-driven efforts support festivals, markets, and arts programming.

Diverse Activities and Resources:

- Programs at schools and after-school events engage youth in arts and culture.
- Venues like the Chester Playhouse host a variety of formal and informal cultural events.
- Municipal resources, including grants, newsletters, and web-based communication, help promote arts and culture activities.

Emerging Talent and Local Expertise:

- The region is home to fresh, energetic artists and entrepreneurs with innovative ideas, contributing to the local cultural ecosystem.

WEAKNESSES

Lack of Representation and Inclusivity:

- Minimal representation of Mi'kmaq heritage and history in cultural narratives.
- Gaps in diversity among artists and performers, with limited inclusivity in programming.

Insufficient Infrastructure:

- A lack of versatile, year-round venues for events, both indoor and outdoor.
- Limited studio space and inadequate access to specialized equipment for artists.
- Aging recreational facilities in need of repair.

Economic and Resource Constraints:

- Many artists struggle to sustain their livelihoods, with limited entrepreneurial support.
- Insufficient connections between artists, and limited collaboration opportunities hinder growth.
- Volunteer burnout is prevalent due to over-reliance on a small pool of community members.

Barriers to Accessibility and Awareness:

- Lack of centralized cultural information and marketing efforts results in low awareness of available events.
- Accessibility needs, though reported as minimal, may not be adequately addressed in future planning.

OPPORTUNITIES

Enhanced Collaboration:

- Build partnerships with schools, neighbouring municipalities like Lunenburg, and local businesses to create coordinated cultural efforts.
- Foster collaborations between artists and the tourism sector to boost both areas.

Youth Engagement and Development:

- Expand youth programs like Pro Kids to include arts and culture activities.
- Provide mentorship and workshops for young and emerging artists to build future talent.

Tourism and Economic Growth:

- Develop heritage tours, outdoor festivals, and cultural events aligned with tourist seasons to enhance visitor experiences.
- Increase marketing efforts and improve accommodations to attract longer tourist stays.

Infrastructure Improvements:

- Invest in additional indoor and outdoor spaces for exhibitions, performances, and festivals.
- Create affordable studio spaces and access to specialized equipment, fostering a more productive environment for local artists.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):

- Prioritize showcasing diverse artists and performers.
- Provide training for staff and volunteers on DEI practices and allocate funding for EDI initiatives.

THREATS

Housing and Transportation Challenges:

- Rising housing costs and insufficient availability of long-term rentals deter artists and visitors.
- Lack of transportation options limits accessibility for both residents and tourists.

Funding Instability:

- Limited municipal and provincial funding for arts and culture programming threatens the sustainability of initiatives.
- Insufficient financial support for public arts programs in schools and for youth engagement.

Volunteer Burnout:

- Over-reliance on volunteers, many of whom are involved in multiple community activities, risks long-term sustainability of events and programs.

Competition for Resources:

- A lack of coordinated communication and events planning across the large geographic area of MOC reduces the effectiveness of cultural efforts.

CULTURAL MAPPING





WHAT IS CULTURAL MAPPING?

The Cultural Mapping Process is an activity that focuses on identifying and celebrating the cultural assets of the community through a collaborative approach. The aim is to create a tangible, visual map that highlights the people, places, and experiences that contribute to the community's identity and vibrancy. This involves both tangible assets, such as historic sites and community centers, and intangible assets, like local traditions and stories.

This information will help inform where cultural assets and resources are currently concentrated and where the gaps are. This information can be useful for future arts and culture planning and can form a baseline of assets for the municipality to build on in the coming years.

THE PROCESS:

Introduction to Cultural Mapping:

- Participants are encouraged to view their community through the lens of a newcomer. They consider what resources—like schools, libraries, or cultural landmarks—are essential and reflect the area's character.

Resource Identification:

- Participants reflect on places they frequently visit and determine their significance. Using a provided worksheet, they categorize these resources and explain their importance to both individuals and the broader community. Resources can include physical locations (e.g., museums, theaters) and intangible elements (e.g., legends, traditions) resources identified were not restricted to Municiplaity of Chester alone.

Mapping:

- After identifying resources, participants use stickers to mark the locations of these assets on a community map. This step creates a visual representation of where cultural assets are located and highlights their distribution across the municipality.

Materials Used:

- The activity utilizes worksheets, a large map of the municipality, and stickers for marking assets, ensuring a clear, interactive, and accessible process for all participants.

Summary of Results:

- The cultural mapping exercise found 6 unique categories, which will be outlined below with the corresponding number of assets found per category. It is a starting point for the municipality and not an exhaustive list. It will be important to continuously conduct this type of analysis to update the cultural mapping accuracy.

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ASSETS IDENTIFIED
Community Cultural Organizations, Facilities and Spaces	**47**
Cultural Festivals and Events	**28**
Public Realm/Built Environment	**39**
Creative/Cultural Industry	**25**
Cultural Heritage	**21**
Hospitality	**42**

Table 1: Summary of cultural assets per category:

This table highlights a few of the cultural assets identified in each section. A complete version of the cultural mapping exercise can be found in the appendix section.

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
Community Cultural Organizations, Facilities and Spaces	Chester Playhouse	Chester	Plays and events	Additional programming, financial support for rentals
	Chester Art Center	Chester	Exhibitions, workshops, lectures	Artist talks, workshops, youth shows, outdoor space usage
Cultural Festivals and Events	Chester Farmers' & Artisan Market	Chester	Fresh food, crafts	Cooking classes, visual artist performances
	Christmas Festival	New Ross	Seasonal gatherings	Youth-focused activities
	Chester Race Week	Chester	Sailing, music	Broader community engagement

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
Public Realm/Built Environment	Graves Island	East Chester	Campsites, events	Outdoor performances, off-season festivals
	Castle Rock	East River	Hiking	Full moon hikes, murder mystery trail
	Rails to Trails	Chester	Walking, biking	Scavenger hunts, public art installations
Creative/ Cultural Industry	Village Emporium	Chester	Retail store	Support more local producers
	Black Harbour Distillers	Hubbards	Retail, tastings	Cocktail-making experiences

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
Cultural Heritage	Ross Farm Trail Network	New Ross	Outdoor trails	Ecology-focused education, seasonal events
	Zoe Valle Library	Chester	Library, garden	Botanical drawing courses, outdoor events
	Swiss Air Memorial	Bayswater	Memorial	Reflection and education activities
Hospitality	Shore Club	Hubbards	Lobster suppers, live music	Dance workshops, cultural nights
	Captain’s House	Chester	Art gallery	Artist meetups, workshops

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT





VISION

MOC will be a vibrant arts hub with a solid foundation that fosters community connections, celebrates diversity, and supports artists and creatives drawn to its quiet, natural landscape, nurturing a growing cultural economy.

MISSION

To cultivate a thriving, inclusive arts ecosystem that enhances community engagement and well-being through creative expression.

Recognizing the economic potential and social benefits of the arts and culture sector, over the next five years MOC will focus on building a strong and stable foundation so it can thrive, adapt and have long-term sustainability.

ROLE OF MUNICIPALITY

The MOC plays an essential role in developing a vibrant arts and culture sector. While the municipality currently serves as a funder and partner, it would be beneficial for the municipality to take on a greater leadership role to grow and leverage the arts and culture sector for community, tourism, and economic development.

To further strengthen the arts and culture sector, MOC will focus on policy development, capacity building and planning that not only fills gaps experienced by the sector and community, but also advocates for the cultural community and how the arts contribute significantly with social, economic and cultural benefits. By bringing together diverse community partners such as local businesses, entrepreneurs, non-profits, and artists from all disciplines the municipality can help create a cohesive network that promotes growth and sustainability in the arts.

The MOC also plays a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and eliminating barriers to participation, ensuring that arts and culture is available and accessible to all residents, regardless of socioeconomic status.

By fulfilling these roles—leader, funder, partner/facilitator, capacity builder, cultural/policy planner, and champion/advocate—MOC can create a thriving arts and culture ecosystem and economy that enriches the community and strengthens its identity.

MAJOR ROLES OF THE MUNICIPALITY

Leader/Guide: Leading efforts to bring community partners together, providing guidance on the long-term economic and creative growth of the arts & culture sector through community development and protecting it for future generations.

Funder: Investing in and providing financial support for arts & culture initiatives and programs.

Partner/Facilitator: Working with and facilitating connections between businesses, entrepreneurs, non-profits, and artists to support programs, projects, and new growth opportunities. Supporting the growth of the sector.

Capacity Builder: Facilitate training, mentorship and support for artists and organizations, while addressing volunteer burnout and fostering long-term sustainability in the arts sector.

Cultural Planner & Policy Developer: Creating supportive policies and integrating cultural planning into municipal decision-making.

Champion and Advocate: Promoting and supporting a diversity of artists and community initiatives to increase community awareness, learning opportunities and participation. Advocating for cultural development.

ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGIC PLAN





The following list of priorities, goals, objectives, and action items outlines a strategic approach for MOC, grounded in themes that have emerged through community engagement with residents. The priorities and goals reflect the community's key needs and vision, while the objectives and actions are designed to guide the municipality toward achieving these goals through a meaningful and actionable implementation plan. Together, they form a roadmap for culture sector growth, inclusivity, and long-term development.

PRIORITIES
Key themes/focus areas guiding MOC's strategic goals, objectives and actions.

GOALS
The main intentions that drive the Municipality's priorities (key focus areas).

OBJECTIVES
Specific plans / policies that will achieve the main goals.

ACTIONS
Concrete tasks required to implement the strategic objectives. Carried across the municipality and with the support of community partners.

PHASES
The implementation process to ensure realistic timelines and to adapt as needed. Phase 1 = Yr 1-2; Phase 2 = Yr 3-4; Phase 3 = Yr 5+.

PRIORITY 1

INTEGRATE & PRIORITIZE ARTS & CULTURE IN MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Integrating and prioritizing arts and culture within MOC's planning is crucial for community development and economic growth. Nova Scotia's cultural GDP highlights the powerful economic contribution of the arts and cultural sectors.

Increasing arts and culture funding, ensures the sustainability of local nonprofits, which are essential to community vibrancy. Amid Canada's 2024 nonprofit landscape, where organizations face rising costs and unstable revenues, operations funding from a variety of sources to provide stability, enabling nonprofits to deliver consistent programming.

Long-range municipal planning that prioritizes arts and culture strengthens community engagement, supports economic development, and enhances the quality of life for residents. By embedding arts and culture into municipal priorities, MOC can create a resilient cultural ecosystem, drive collaboration, and position itself as a forward-thinking leader, enriching its community for future generations.

GOAL

Acknowledge arts and culture as essential in most municipal planning to enhance community vibrancy, inclusivity and economic growth.

OBJECTIVE 1.1
Strengthen arts and culture investments through targeted funding strategies.

MOC's Roles

- Funding partner and supporter of arts and culture sector
- Funding partner and supporter of local events
- Leverage provincial and national funding opportunities

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

1. Conduct a review of current MOC grants to assess alignment with arts and culture.

a) Recommend grants and grant criteria to include both amateur and professional grant opportunities in arts and culture, ensuring language reflects this integration.

b) Evaluate funding streams and incentives for events - update criteria to prioritize cultural tourism.

c) Work with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee to ensure grants consider marginalized groups and incorporate an EDI lens. Review Arts Nova Scotia Equity Framework as a guide for grants.

2. Explore the feasibility of multi-year core operational funding options to provide sustainable support for arts and culture organizations. Engage community partners for feedback.

3. Research provincial and national funding opportunities for municipalities, aiming to enhance and grow the local arts sector and economy through new opportunities for MOC

OBJECTIVE 1.2
Embrace innovation, long-range planning and a forward-thinking approach to shape the future for arts and culture in MOC.

MOC Roles

- Review planning policies to integrate arts and culture
- Leveraging regional partnerships for joint initiatives.
- Piloting programs to encourage cross-sector collaboration.
- Policy and framework development for cross-sector resource sharing and collaboration.
- Collaborate with community partners, a future Municipal Chamber of Commerce, and a future Municipal Arts Organization.

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

5. Review current policies around housing, transportation, public spaces and future growth/ development planning. Identify gaps, opportunities, and make recommendations on integrating arts & culture opportunities into current and future planning to aid in building cultural spaces for the future (ie affordable studio spaces).

6. Identify opportunities and support cross sector, regional, and business partnerships to foster innovative approaches and resource-sharing for arts and culture planning.

MODC potential roles:

- Leveraging regional partnerships for joint initiatives.
- Piloting programs to encourage cross-sector collaboration.
- Policy and framework development for cross-sector resource sharing and collaboration.
- Involve future Chamber of Commerce, future Municipal Arts Organization, and community partners.

7. Engage with community partners to determine whether there is an organization interested in leading a feasibility study and the possible development of arts districts and/or creative innovation hubs.

PHASE 2

8. Once established, work with a sector-led MAO to develop an action plan to stay updated on the latest arts and culture local, provincial national and international conversations and trends while also considering long-term generational shifts and vision.

OBJECTIVE 1.3
Dedicate specific resources to Arts & Culture to improve internal processes and collaboration.

MOC role:

- Review MOC organizational structure and supports for arts & culture.

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

8. Review existing organizational structure and positions that have roles impacting the implementation of the Arts & Culture Strategy and Art & Culture Sector.

- Identify gaps in programs and services.
- Conduct a scan of similar municipalities - review how arts & culture is managed internally.
- Develop recommendations to ensure effective internal planning and implementation of projects impacting Arts & Culture.

PRIORITY 2

BUILD CULTURAL LEADERSHIP & CAPACITY

MOC can build cultural leadership and capacity to address the current fragmentation and lack of cohesion within the local arts sector. By fostering collaboration among cultural partners—galleries, libraries, museums, theatres, and artists— and identifying sector partners to create a Municipal Arts Organization, MOC can support a more collaborative and innovative cultural landscape. Improving cultural leadership and capacity will enhance collaboration, address volunteer burnout, foster innovation and creativity, and ensure long-term sustainability, resulting in a more vibrant and resilient community that benefits residents and attracts visitors.

GOAL

To build a strong, cohesive and collaborative arts and culture sector in MOC.

OBJECTIVE 2.1
Encourage and support the Arts & Culture Sector in improving collaboration, communication, and building capacity.

MOC Roles:

- Support capacity building, professional development and collaboration
- Increase public awareness of arts and culture activities

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

1. Facilitate regular cultural round tables to discuss key issues and relevant topics, develop networking and mentorship opportunities, artist exchanges, volunteer recruitment sessions, and professional development workshops (i.e. grant writing, marketing, board training, HR).

a) Regularly assess the needs of the arts community.

b) Bring in relevant workshops from provincial organization such as, VANS and Craft NS, as needed.

c) Facilitate hands-on skill building workshops with a focus on cross-disciplinary collaboration and generational learning.

d) Facilitate workshops and provide informational resources for artists on pay equity, labour rights, intellectual property rights and contract development.

2. Develop a communications plan to strengthen communication between MOC, cultural partners and the community with the goal to increase awareness and participation in cultural initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 2.2
Support the development of a Municipal Arts Organization (MAO) that would support local arts and culture development.

MOC Roles:

- Initiate a "call to action" with local arts organizations and artists to explore the development of a MAO.
- Host initial meetings and provide assistance establishing the MAO, if requested.
- Provide an MOC representative tasked with linking the MAO to this strategy.

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

3. Work with the local Arts & Culture Sector on the development of a Municipal Arts Organization (MAO) that would play a significant role in supporting the A&C Strategy, and the overall development of the sector, encouraging an equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility approach.

PRIORITY 3

LEVERAGE CREATIVE SECTOR FOR CULTURAL TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

MOC can boost economic growth and employment opportunities and support local artists by focusing on cultural tourism. Given MOC's largely dispersed population in its rural setting, a tailored approach—one that appeals to residents and visitors and emphasizes responsible destination management—can drive sustainable tourism, create local jobs, and support long-term economic resilience.

MOC can attract new audiences, industries and residents by building a unique arts and culture focussed destination. By collaborating with regional partners on a cultural tourism strategy, an events strategy, and improving tourism infrastructure, MOC can strengthen the creative economy and ensure sustained growth for MOC now and in the future. These efforts will boost local businesses, strengthen community pride, bring people together, and foster year-round engagement, making arts and culture central to MOC's identity.

GOAL

To offer a range of high quality, creative and cultural programs, events, products and experiences that support the attraction and retention of creative talent and drives cultural tourism for economic growth.

OBJECTIVE 3.1
Find opportunities for collaboration and marketing with tourism sector partners bringing a value-added focus on arts and culture.

MOC Roles

- Leveraging regional partnerships for joint initiatives.
- Piloting new marketing initiatives.

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

1. Explore joint marketing tools and resources such as an artist studio map, cultural tourism passport and share current transportation options to drive tourist traffic from Halifax and neighboring regions year-round (ie https://halifaxartmap.com/).

PHASE 2

2. Advocate for and partner with South Shore Tourism and Lunenburg Co Regions to develop a regional tourism plan that highlights arts & culture.

**Recommendation: tourism opportunity to market artist retreats and/or opportunities for longer stay mini-apprenticeships between arts-oriented tourists and the local arts community.*

OBJECTIVE 3.2
Celebrate and elevate local culture by creating an Events and Festivals Strategy and Action Plan exploring MOC's role in supporting cultural tourism initiatives.

MOC Roles

- Support and grow cultural tourism
- Collaborate with a Chamber of Commerce, Municipal Arts Organization, and Community Partners.

ACTIONS

PHASE 2

3. Review current events/festivals in the Municipality. Identify potential local and external partners to create/bring new events/festivals.

4. Review current incentives and support for events and festivals. Create a communication strategy to promote and an online navigational resource. Research and recommend new incentives and support for MOC groups and external event organizers to produce mid to large-scale events, fairs, and street festivals that celebrate and capitalize on MOC's unique cultures.

5. Explore event partnerships and sponsorships with community organizations and businesses.

OBJECTIVE 3.3

Review challenges in tourism infrastructure such accommodations, transportation, water access, accessibility and how these impact MOC's ability to host cultural tourism events.

MOC Role

- Plan for improvements and development of Municipal tourism infrastructure to support cultural tourism
- Communicate challenges and share development plans with local communities.

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

6. Conduct a review of current MOC tourism infrastructure, identify areas in need of improvement and gaps for future growth. Make recommendations for future planning.

PRIORITY 4

EMBED EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR PLANNING

Embedding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) in MOC's arts and culture strategy is essential to creating a welcoming environment that uplifts all voices, especially those of marginalized communities. The municipality can foster equity by working with partners to address pay disparities in the arts, where marginalized artists are often compensated even less. By prioritizing EDIA, MOC can work on relationship building with underserved communities, building trust, ensuring fair representation, and access. Arts and culture provides a powerful avenue for this transformation, offering creative spaces where healing, connection, and collaboration can flourish.

GOAL

Meaningfully include, amplify and collaborate with underrepresented voices to create safe, equitable, accessible, and barrier-free cultural opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 4.1
Respectfully engage with local First Nations (Wasoqopa'q and Sipekne'katik) on cultural planning and policy development to reflect Indigenous knowledge, heritage, and advance decolonization and reconciliation efforts.

MOC Role:

- Collaborate and learn
- Incorporate Indigenous knowledge and reconciliation into planning and policy

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

1. In relation to Arts & Culture planning - review the Municipality's outreach and engagement with local First Nation Communities (including Wasoqopa'q and Sipekne'katik). Identify communication improvements needed, focussing on relationship and trust building.

2. As part of MOC's overall grant review, research grant criteria and evaluation methods to address cultural appropriation and incorporate into recommendations.

OBJECTIVE 4.2
Build a healthy arts and culture ecosystem by emphasizing fair, equitable pay for all artists and cultural workers.

MOC Role:

- Support capacity building of the Arts & Culture Sector by incorporating fair pay into Municipal planning and projects.

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

2. Research national pay models (CARFAC, Canada Council for the Arts, Writers Guild, PACT) and bring forward recommendations for a baseline pay framework for artists into Municipal projects, services and policy. Share as best practice for the sector and business community. See Arts Nova Scotia for resources.

OBJECTIVE 4.3
Actively engage marginalized groups in decision-making processes to rebuild trust and build relationships.

MOC Role:

- In partnership with the EDI committee, Accessibility Coordinator and Anti-Racism & Diversity Coordinator, collaborate with marginalized groups.

ACTIONS

PHASE 2

3. Develop recommendations outlining tangible opportunities to partner with marginalized communities to formally celebrate their work, history, and heritage.

4. Collaborate with and support Indigenous-led, culturally sensitive frameworks and projects to ensure their perspectives and priorities guide decolonization and reconciliation efforts within the municipality's cultural planning, policies, and community programs.

5. Collaborate with local First Nations (Wasoqopa'q and Sipekne'katik), marginalized communities and cultural partners to decolonize public spaces, identifying key concerns and priorities. Incorporate storytelling, signage, renaming of spaces, acknowledgement of accurate history to reflect diverse histories in public spaces.

OBJECTIVE 4.4
Align the arts and culture strategy with accessibility, EDI, and anti-racism goals by collaborating with staff, Municipal Arts Organization and community partners.

MOC Role:

- Collaborative partner

ACTIONS

PHASE 2

5. Set up regular meetings with key staff and partners to review progress on goals, share updates, and to adjust the arts and culture strategy as needed depending on emerging issues and community needs.

6. Develop and incorporate grant evaluation criteria for anti-racism, EDI, and accessibility impact of arts & culture projects and programming. Ensure goals are applied in community proposals.

PRIORITY 5

BUILD COMMUNITY BY STRENGTHENING ARTS & CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

MOC can assess community needs and engage community partners to address gaps in current cultural offerings, ensuring a more inclusive and diverse range of opportunities for all residents. It is well documented that a vibrant arts sector is linked to increased livability, community identity and social wellbeing. Research ties the benefits of arts and cultural participation to a sense of pride and community ownership.

As identified in community consultations, engaging local youth is also critical. By partnering with schools and securing funding for arts programming, MOC can nurture young talent and ensure the arts remain a key part of MOC's future.

Reimagining artist-in-residency programs is an opportunity with local partners to bring new artists to MOC, inspire creativity, offer workshops for residents, and boost tourism. New initiatives developed with the Arts & Culture Sector focusing on community and youth engagement, cultural events for newcomers, and cross-cultural collaborations, will ensure greater accessibility and inclusion. These targeted actions will establish MOC as a cultural hub that benefits residents, attracts visitors, and strengthens its role in Nova Scotia's arts scene.

By connecting diverse communities and artists, enhanced programming can bring people together, and create a vibrant, inclusive cultural landscape.

GOAL

To improve and expand local arts programming to meet community and artist needs, encourage participation and to build community connections across a diversity of groups.

OBJECTIVE 5.1
Collaborate with sector partners to reimagine and expand artist-in-residency programs in MOC, emphasizing benefits for artists, communities, tourism and the cultural industry.

MOC Role:

- Support and collaboration with the Arts & Culture Sector

ACTIONS

PHASE 1

1. In collaboration with community partners and the Municipal Arts Organization, facilitate evaluation of current artist-in-residency programs.

2. Explore new opportunities (ie funding) and share information.

3. Identify municipally owned spaces where artists-in-residence could operate from.

OBJECTIVE 5.2
Increase youth engagement in arts and culture by encouraging and supporting partnerships and funding opportunities with Artist in the Schools programs, local artists and local schools and groups.

MOC Role

- Support for artists to undertake Arts in the Schools role
- Identify additional funding opportunities
- Information and communication support

ACTIONS

PHASE 2

2. Review how the Municipality could facilitate conversations with schools/teachers, arts & culture organizations and artists around art programming. Aid in identifying and removing barriers.

OBJECTIVE 5.3
Broaden arts and culture programming to explore diverse genres, encourage experimentation, and introduce new cultural experiences that promote community and youth engagement, understanding and brings communities and newcomers together.

MOC Role

- Support and collaborate with community partners
- Funding support
- Identify additional funding opportunities

ACTIONS

PHASE 3

3. Conduct an assessment of current cultural programming within MOC. Assess community needs/wants to identify any gaps in programming.

a) Invite the Arts & Culture sector to propose programming or events to fill these gaps.
b) Collaborating with successful proponents to develop and implement programming.
c) Review incentives/funding for programs.

PRIORITY 6

IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACES, CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS TO SPACES

Artists in MOC are seeking spaces to showcase their work. Some existing spaces remain underutilized. By partnering with cultural and private organizations, MOC can expand accessible venues for artists of all disciplines and stages, strengthening its cultural community. Additionally, by focussing on public space revitalization, MOC can boost social cohesion and connections. Public art and placemaking bring many benefits: it enriches community life, boosts tourism, and can foster reconciliation by honoring local heritage and local First Nations history in meaningful collaborative ways.

GOAL

Optimize and transform public spaces and cultural infrastructure to better support arts and culture, creating a more impactful, vibrant and inclusive cultural environment.

OBJECTIVE 6.1
Integrate cultural mapping resource data into broader community development and infrastructure projects looking at both opportunities and gaps for future planning.

MOC Role

- Incorporate arts & culture into planning processes

ACTIONS

PHASE 2

1. Develop an online searchable database that maps where arts & culture resources are located within the Municipality for public use.

PHASE 3

2. Continue with cultural mapping data collection to identify gaps and concentrations in community cultural resources.

OBJECTIVE 6.2
Work with local partners to make better use of existing spaces for community cultural and arts activities, ensuring accessible[3] venues for diverse programming and engagement.

MOC Role:

- Support and connect community partners.
- Leverage funding opportunities.

ACTIONS

PHASE 2

3. Identify under-used, adaptable spaces and potential cultural venues in the Municipality (e.g., schools, libraries, churches, businesses).

- Facilitate conversations between arts & culture community and underutilized venues. Identify what the potential spaces are appropriate for.
- Research and share potential funding sources to upgrade spaces to be more suitable for arts & culture events.

[3] For the municipal definition of accessible, refer to Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan (2021). For the purposes of this Arts and Culture Strategy accessibility is defined as venues (both private and public) being available and affordable for the usage of the Arts and Culture Sector within the municipality.

OBJECTIVE 6.3
Create vibrant, inclusive public spaces in MOC for community well-being, gathering and to strengthen community identity and connections.

MOC Role:

- Public space planning.
- Research support methods and plan for public art projects.

ACTIONS

PHASE 3

4. Review upcoming MOC-led infrastructure and planning projects where public spaces and public art can be incorporated. Research other municipalities and provide recommendations on how public art can be supported in these projects.

5. Develop a strategy for outdoor public spaces that prioritizes the creation of welcoming and vibrant places. Plans would include consideration of core placemaking elements including public art, active programming, and both temporary and permanent infrastructure and installations to attract people to linger. These spaces would serve as locations for community and industry organizations to hold events and both formal and ad-hoc arts & culture programming.

6. Develop recommendations for policies and incentives aimed at developers for incorporating public art into future private/commercial developments in MOC as a community amenity (ie community amenity contribution/percentage towards public art or cash contributions).

OBJECTIVE 6.4
Develop a plan through collaboration to preserve and manage heritage and archives while following national and provincial standards and trends ensuring an EDI lens is applied.

MOC Role:

- Collaborate and support local heritage/historical societies and First Nation Communities
- Research funding opportunities pertaining to preservation and management.
- Continued community engagement.

ACTIONS

PHASE 3

8. Collaborate with MOC Heritage/Historical Societies, local First Nations, and other key community partners to plan for the future of heritage and archives in MOC.

a) Support these efforts through a needs assessment, funding opportunities, and capacity-building initiatives, long-term planning and preservation.

b) Promote the integration of best practices into heritage planning including: prioritizing Indigenous voices, community-led narratives, acknowledging colonial histories, repatriation.

c) Share federal and provincial funding options (ie Digital Museums Canada grants) and research various models for heritage preservation from other Jurisdictions.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

EVALUATION PLAN FOR MOC ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGIC PLAN: PHASE 1 & 2

This evaluation plan outlines how progress and success in implementing the Arts & Culture Strategy will be assessed. It ensures accountability, measures impact, and provides insights for future phases.

PHASE 1 EVALUATION (YEARS 1-2)

Key Priorities for Evaluation

- Integration of Arts & Culture in Municipal Planning
- Building Cultural Leadership & Capacity
- Exploration of Joint Opportunities in Cultural Tourism
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) in Planning
- Strengthening Arts & Culture Programming

EVALUATION METRICS AND TOOLS			
PRIORITY	**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**	**METRICS**	**EVALUATION TOOLS**
PRIORITY 1: Integrate & Prioritize Arts & Culture in Municipal Planning	- Increased arts funding. - Alignment of grants with arts and culture.	- Percentage increase in arts-related funding streams. - New grant opportunities created.	- Annual financial reports. - Community Partner feedback on funding criteria and processes.
		- Community Partner engagement in planning processes.	- Meeting attendance records, surveys, and interviews.
PRIORITY 2: Build Cultural Leadership & Capacity	- Facilitate cultural roundtables. -Municipal Arts Organization	- Number of cultural roundtables held. - MOA established with diverse members.	- Committee minutes and participation data. - Roundtable attendance and outcomes summaries.
		- Number of workshops and mentorship sessions delivered.	- Post-workshop surveys and participant feedback.
PRIORITY 3: Leverage Creative Sector for Tourism	- Joint marketing tools developed.	- Artist studio maps and tourism passports created.	- Completed promotional materials. - Usage data for marketing tools.
		- Partnerships with tourism stakeholders established.	- Agreements/ MOUs with tourism organizations.

EVALUATION METRICS AND TOOLS			
PRIORITY	**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**	**METRICS**	**EVALUATION TOOLS**
PRIORITY 4: Embed EDIA in Arts & Culture Planning	- Engagement with Indigenous and marginalized communities.	- Number of consultation sessions and resulting action plans.	- Documentation of engagement efforts and community feedback.
PRIORITY 5: Strengthen Arts & Cultural Programming	- Review of artist-in-residency programs.	- Assessment report of existing programs.	- Feedback from participating artists and community members.

PHASE 2 EVALUATION (YEARS 3-4)

Key Priorities for Evaluation

1. Long-Range Planning and Policy Integration for Arts & Culture

2. Expanding Programming and Engagement Across Communities

3. Building Infrastructure for Public Spaces and Cultural Activities

EVALUATION TIMELINE		
PHASE	**EVALUATION ACTIVITY**	**TIMELINE**
PHASE 1	Conduct surveys, community partners interviews, and initial data review.	End of Year 1
	Complete grant review and feasibility studies.	Mid-Year 2
	Begin policy reviews and implement youth programs.	Mid-Year 3
PHASE 2	Launch cultural mapping database and infrastructure review.	End of Year 4

REPORTING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

1. Mid-Phase Reports: Evaluate progress at key milestones and adjust plans as needed.

2. Annual Public Updates: Share results with the community to maintain transparency.

3. Final Phase 1 and 2 Reports: Assess overall success and develop recommendations for Phase 3.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Resources:

1. Indigenous Data Sovereignty
2. Canadian Museums Association: Reports, Guidelines, Documents

APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APENDIX 2: RESOURCES & EXAMPLES FOR STRATEGIC PLAN

This apendix hilights some of the resouces and examples that were used for the strategic plan. It breaks down the resources based on the correspoidng priority which they belong and each sub-section within that priority.

PRIORITY 1 RESOURCES:

Objective 1.1:

Examples (Phase 1, Item 2)

- Arts Nova Scotia
- City of Vancouver Cultural Operating Funding-Annual (COFA) grant
- Capital Regional District (Vancouver Island) Arts Operating Annual and Multi-Year

Resources (Phase 1, Item 2)

- State of the Sector Report (IONS - Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia)
- Page 14 - Funding Landscape

Objective 1.2:

Resources (Phase 1, Item 5):

- Creative Pictou Co
- Parrsboro Creative

- Vancouver's Cultural Land Trust initiative
- Toronto's Artscape Receivership

Examples (Phase 1, Item 7):

- Halifax North End
- Wonder'neath
- Windsor Makers Studio
- Parrsboro Creative
- Truro Art Society
- Annapolis Region Community Arts Council

***Multi-stakeholder projects from Vancouver:**

- Arts & Innovation Hub
- Main Alley
- Arts Factory
- Astro Arts
- Parker Street Studios
- 221A Studios, Workspaces, Housing

Objective 1.3:

Examples (Phase 1, Item 8):

- HRM (Arts, Culture, Heritage under Parks & Recreation).
- City of Port Moody (has both Arts/Culture and EcoDev depts).
- District of Tofino (has a Culture & Events Programmer for public art, poet laureate, grants program, filming and special event permits).
- City of Toronto (Economic Development & Culture Division).
- District of Lunenburg Rec, Parks, Tourism Dep - with a Tourism and Event Development Officer and EcoDev depts).

PRIORITY 2 RESOURCES:

Objective 2.1:

- N/A

Objective 2.2:

Terms of Reference Examples (Phase 1, Item 3):

- District of Summerland Cultural Development Committee.
- St. Johns Arts & Culture Advisory Committee.
- White Rock City Public Art and Culture Committee.
- Arts & Culture Advisory Committee (City of Vancouver, BC).
- Arts, Culture, Heritage Committee (City of Port Moody, BC).

Examples of Challenges Related to Setting up As a Organization (Phase 1, Item 3):

- Burnaby Arts Council: Financial Roller Coaster.
- The Merger of Arts Network Ottawa and Ottawa Arts Council .
- Video: Problem with Public Hearings (incl new model - Residents Assembly suggested by renovatethepublichearing.ca.

Resource Reads (Phase 1, Item 3):

- Burnaby Arts Council: Financial Roller Coaster
- The Merger of Arts Network Ottawa and Ottawa Arts Council
- Video: Problem with Public Hearings (incl new model - Residents Assembly - suggested by renovatethepublichearing.ca

PRIORITY 3 RESOURCES:

Objective 3.1:

Resources (Phase 1, Item 1):

- https://halifaxartmap.com/

Resources (Phase 1, Item 2):

- VAWAA - Vacation with an Artist

PRIORITY 4 RESOURCES:

Resource:

- http://icasc.ca/resource/power-up/

Objective 4.1:

- National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation: https://nctr.ca/records/reports/

Objective 4.2:

Resources (Phase 1, Item 2):

- See Arts Nova Scotia for resources. Incorporate into MOC grant review and recommendations a baseline pay framework for artists and art administrators.

Objective 4.3:

Resources (Phase 2, Item 5):

- Example from BC: Burnaby Village Museum (municipally owned open-air re-creation of a village from 1920's)
- Diverse projects - built with long-standing relationships and multi-year commitments.
- Indigenous History Guide to Burnaby
- Creation of a Matriarch's garden
- Indigenous Learning House
- Specific exhibits and research projects on Chinese and South Asian histories in Burnaby.

PRIORITY 5 RESOURCES:

Objective 5.1:

Example (Phase 1, Item 3):

The Blue Cabin Floating Artist Residency (currently docked at Heritage Harbour near Vancouver's Maritime Museum and Museum of Vancouver).

Objective 5.2:

Examples (Phase 2, Item 2):

- City of Burnaby Art Gallery School Outreach Programs (BC).
- http://writers.ns.ca/programs/writers-in-the-schools/
- http://visualarts.ns.ca/paints/

PRIORITY 6 RESOURCES:

Objective 6.1:

Examples (Phase 3, Item 2):

- City of Abbotsford in Metro Vancouver
- Assess and document the feasibility of current and future public and private infrastructure for cultural use.

Objective 6.3:

Examples (Phase 3, Item 6):

- HRM (cash-in-lieu for incentive or bonus zoning)
- City of Burnaby (1% of hard construction costs/city has a public art reserve fund).

Objective 6.4:

Examples (Phase 3, Item 8):

- BC City of Surrey Museum, City of Burnaby Village Museum
- Heritage Burnaby(HeritageBurnaby.ca)

APPENDIX 4: CULTURAL MAP

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	Chester Playhouse	Chester	plays and display/ Chester Playhouse Events/Activies	Additional programming from other groups, may need financial support for rental fee
	Chester Art Center	Chester	Exhibtions, workshops, volunteer ops., lectures, festivals/ Chester Art Centre Activities	Additional programming from other groups and artists - artist talks, workshops, youth shows, clubs. Outside space could be used more.
	Blue Nose Coastal Action	Morton Center		charitable organistaion mandate to address environmnetal concerns,watershed management projets, awareness, community engagement
	Garden Club	New Ross		day-long festival featuring workshops on sustainable gardening, native plant sales, children's gardening activities

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	Church Halls	NA		travelling art exhibits/ Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Chester Basin Legion	Chester Basin		dance intensives with live music/ Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Fair Grounds	New Ross		Large Frestival/ Music festival, markets
	Lordly House Museum	Chester		Historical theatre/ Club, talks, intimate events
	District 1 (Blandford) Community Center)	Blandford	cultural and recreational activities/ Community events, breakfasts/dinners	More of the same! / Exhibitions, workshops, clubs, talks
	St. Stephen's Tuck Hall	Chester	Church events	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Graves Island	East Chester	Campsites, come community events	outdoor performances/classes/ Off Season Festival/ Outdoor venue for activities, weather dependent

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	Ocean Swells Commuity Center	NorthWest Cove	arts/ cultural activities and meetings/ community events	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Hubbard Barn Assocation	Hubbards	seasonal market, weddings	outdoor classes/concerts/ performances/ Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Ross Farm	New Ross	Museum, and activities in Learning Centre, Hearth Room Café	music and living history theatre/ A festival where visitors can observe the process of visual art being made (even better if old techniques are used)/ Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Captain's House	Chester	Private Art Gallery/ Gallery space	interactive traveling theatre stop/ Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Opera House	Lunenburg		expanded performing arts activity, larger audiences, more public enjoyment and new cultural tourism spin-offs
	The Fo'c'sle Tavern	Chester	Weekly music	Continue as venue for music

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	New Ross Legion	New Ross	Own events, music, social events	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	The Barn Coffee House	Mahone Bay		gift and retail opportunities, ethical and suitable coffee places,local toursim and community enagagements, coffe workshops and classes, cattering
	Hubbards Lion's Club	Hubbards	Community events, breakfasts/dinners	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	JD Shatford Library	Hubbards, HRM Side	Library, some community events	living authors series/ Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Chester Yacht Club	Chester	Music events, chester race week	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Chester Legion	Chester	own events, upstairs available to rent	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Chester Golf Club	Chester	own events, some fundraising tournaments	Clubhouse/Restaurant could be a venue for events outside golf hours

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	Old Train Station	Chester	Station 20 Shop and Oak Island Exhibit	Outside space could be used for events, weather dependent. Inside shop and exhibit need more promotion.
	NR Family Resource Center	New Ross	Daycare and afterschool program, food pantry	meet your growers educational series/ Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Legion	New Ross		space for senior citizens meetups,support groups and vertern focused services, workshops, exhibitions presentations, cultural attraction.
	NR Outdoor Rink	New Ross		Too weather dependent
	School Gym	Community Schools	community and MOC rec events	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Book mobile	Chester & New Ross & Blandford		scavenger hunt stop/ A festival where visitors can observe the process of visual art being made (even better if old techniques are used)

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	Coffee club	Chester		could host monthly morning networking session for local entrepreneurs, freelancers, and community members to exchange ideas, collaborate, and share opportunities.
	Chester Garden Club	Chester	Main some garden areas	your grandmother's garden, a study of traditional and collected plants, Plein air painting of the Garden Club members' locations
	Shatford Memorial Library	Hubbards		living authors

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	Rails to Trails	Chester; East River; Hubbards	walking/hiking	scavenger hunt local/ Public art installations
	St. Stephen's Tuck Hall	Chester	Church events	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
	Aspotogan Heritage Trust	Hubbards/ Aspotogan Penninsula	Grants for community activies and events; business development/ Meeting space	Meeting space for groups
	Zoe Valle Library	Chester	Library, Zoe Valle exhibit, Library Garden, Lightfoot Tower	garden concerts/ Venue for talks, outside events, and clubs
	Aspotogan Arts & Crafts Society	District 1	Meetings and annual exhibition /sale; website; support	Host or link to studio tours, festivals
	Heritage Handiworks Group	Blandford	Craft based "studio" group; fellowship	records and archive patterns of crafts like felting, rug, hooking, reservation for future generations

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, FACILITIES AND SPACES	Aspotogan Recreation Assoc.	Dsitrict 1	Cultural and recreational activities	Host Festivals
	Athenæum Society of Nova Scotia	Northwest Cove	Public lectures in the literature, arts, humanities, sciences, etc.; fellowship	local authors and professional enagagement,literary and historical programs
	Wishing Stones Studio & Gallery	Big Tancook Island	Studio, gallery and Island museum	historical performance
	Forties Community Centre	New Ross	Community suppers and events, available to rent	Venue for exhibitions, music, talks, theatre
CULTURAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	The Christmas Tree Festival	New Ross the Cross	Correct Name New Ross Christmas Festival	Artist submit work that encompases their idea of Christmas Trees. These works can be displayed inside local establishments if they are not weather savvy/ Needs a youth component
	Chester's Farmers Market	Chester	Correct Name Chester Farmers' & Artisan Market	cooking classes/ Invite visual artists to perform or demonstrate their craft/ selling location for artists

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CULTURAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	Hubbard's Farmers Market	Hubbard's the Barn	Located at Hubbards Barn & Community Park	selling location for artists
	Christmas Festival	New Ross		gatherings,childern's fun,visits local artisians, magical entertainments,
	Scarecrow Fest	Mahone Bay		scarecrow competetions, fundraising,part of school fair lineup,crafts, parade, paint,refreshments
	Chester Race Week	Chester	Focused at Chester Yacht Club	Could be more beneficial to wider community

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CULTURAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	County Fair	New Ross		Organize workshops or demonstrations on organic farming, beekeeping, or cheese-making.
	New Ross Fair	New Ross		venue for local enterprises,family outings,educational value for the next generation
	Bandstand Concerts	Chester		Involve more youth
	Lion's Club	Hubbards		community service, youth involvement,disaster relief and same interest clubs
	HABA	Hubbards		tourist destination through curated guides, local business promotions, and events,marketing strategies, grant application assistance, and training workshops to memebers

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CULTURAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	Astopogen Arts and Craft Exhibtion & Sale	District 1 (Blandford)		marketplace for artisans,Encourage older artisans,Host contests
	May Art Show	Chester		bring residents and visitors togeather,themed experiences
	New Year's Levee	Western Shore Legion, Chester		legion visibilty, tribute to veterns ,partner with local health organisations
	Sunday Music Events	Chester Yacht club		offers free live music every Sunday evening at 7:00 PM.
	Tuna Flat (currently not running)	Hubbards		Need volunteers to bring back
	Hubbards Parade (currently not running)	Hubbards		lets get it running! / Need volunteers to bring back
	Race Week	Chester		sailing education, attracts visitors from north america,zctivities for nonsailors

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CULTURAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	Folk Harbour Festival	Lunenburg		featuring a diverse lineup of folk music performances, workshops, and community events.Include sing-alongs, open mic sessions, and audience participation events.
	Picnic in the Park	Chester		student/teacher musical events/ Great selection of music, need more youth involved
	Aspotogan Recreation Assoc.	District 1 (Blandford) Com. Centre		Introduce yoga, aerobics, or dance sessions,Develop after-school activities, Make the space available for private events
	St. Barnabas Church	Blandofrd	Muscial concerts (Musique Royale et al)	tour of church's unique blend of Greek Revival, Romanesque, and Gothic Revival architectural styles/art exhibits, photography showcases, or historical displays
	Annual Community Dinners (x 3)	District 1 (Blandford) Com. Centre		represent and display each artist community in the MOC
	Mackerel Snappers	East Chester		Offer short cooking demonstrations, fishing skills classes

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
PUBLIC REALM /BUILT ENVIRONMENT	The Ross Farm trail network	Ross Farm, New Ross		Rails-serve as outdoor classrooms for programs focused on ecology, history, and agriculture/hiking, bird watching, and photography
	The Lido Pool	Chester		
	NR Trails	New Ross		Hiking and nature walks, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.
	Outdoor Rink Fairground	New Ross		New Ross Community Fair,venue for community fundraisers, recreational activities

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
PUBLIC REALM /BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Lion's Park	New Ross	bird watching	Host community picnics, outdoor concerts, Host “Earth Day” events.
	Ruby's Trail	New Ross		peaceful natural setting for meditation, yoga, or relaxation activities.
	Risser's	Bridgewater		ideal for swimming, sunbathing, and beachcombing. Host beach festivals, seasonal markets, or community picnics
	Lake Darling	New Ross		cast a line for local fish species,activities such as swimming, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and open lake skating
	Sherbrooke Lake	New Ross		Need public access
	Skerry Falls	Chester		Host seasonal gatherings, such as cleanup days
	Fox Point Beach	Hubbards		Highlight natural and historical aspects.
	The Barn Coffee House	Mahone Bay		Provide a quiet space with free Wi-Fi for remote workers

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
PUBLIC REALM /BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Light Foot Tower	Mahone Bay		ghost story series in the fall with cider
	Bishop's Park	Hubbards		Rent the space for professional shoots featuring its natural beauty.
	Castle Rock	East River		full moon hikes/ camp out
	Rails to Trails	Hubbards		full moon hikes
	East River Picnic Park	East River		painting workshops
	East River Beach	East River		environmental awarness and education--
	Freda's Beach	Chester		Attract enthusiasts to observe local seabirds and coastal wildlife.

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
PUBLIC REALM /BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Yacht Club	Chester		hub for fostering sailing education and youth development
	Golf Club	Chester		venue for community and corporate events
	Queens Land Beach	Hubbards		community hub for seasonal events and festivals.
	Hutt Lake	Chester		ideal for non-motorized boating activities, promote eco-friendly recreation
	Graves Island	Chester		full moon series
	Parade Square	Chester		ideal spot for fostering community engagement and attracting visitors through vibrant musical and cultural performances.
	Cove Garden	Chester		tea or wine and cheese mixer

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
PUBLIC REALM /BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Hubbards Waterfront	Hubbards		destination of community engagement such as farmers' markets, festivals, and live music performances.
	Beach	Mill Cove		destination for eco-tourism and nature-based education
	Lordly Park	Chester		hosts the "Picnic in the Park" concert series, featuring live music every Tuesday during the summer months
	Gates Beach	Blandford		venue for local festivals, outdoor concerts, and social activities
	Upper Blandford road	Walking route		ideal for promoting sustainable tourism, encouraging outdoor activities
	Highway 329 Bicycle Route	Biking, Annual Father's Day Ride		destination for organized cycling events and charity rides
	Skate Park	Chester		good graffitti workshop, community pride/ Display works of art from local schools for a short time

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
PUBLIC REALM /BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Outdoor Skating Rink	District 1 (Blandford) Com. Centre		Can we set up a sceen to cast art, even films from local artists. Perhaps there is a day to play music from local talent
	Together We Can Community Park	Western Shore		ideal for hosting farmers' markets, cultural celebrations, and family-friendly gatherings
CREATIVE/CULTURAL INDUSTRY	Chickory Blue General Store	Blockhouse	Private store for profit	host live music, workshops
	Frenchies	New Ross	Private store for profit	back to school clothing swap/ fashion show
	George and Brenda's	New Ross		local agritourism destination
	Craft Fair at School	New Ross School		Selling location for crafters
	Village Emporium	Chester	Private store for profit	supports some local producers

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CREATIVE/CULTURAL INDUSTRY	The Barn	Hubbards		Hubbards Farmers' Market selling location
	Tracy's Clothiers	Chester		showcasing locally made clothing and accessories
	Blue Bike Farm	New Ross		community-supported agriculture (CSA) provider
	Rosa Rugasa	Hubbards		Supports some local producers
	Aspotogan Ridge	Mill Cove	Golf course and dining	9-hole course, residential options, and amenities
	Lola's	Hubbards	Private store for profit	hosting events like pop-up markets, artisan showcases, or family-friendly activities
	Peasants Pantry	New Ross		Closed
	Mercantile on Duke	Chester	Private store for profit	Could have more local products
	Ocean View Garden Center	Chester		Could have more local products

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CREATIVE/CULTURAL INDUSTRY	Black Harbour Distillers	Hubbards	Private store for profit	offering tastings, cocktail experiences
	Daphne's Flower	Western Shore	Private store for profit	offering custom floral arrangements and event décor services
	ION Vintage	Blandford	Private store for profit	promote the purchase of vintage clothing and antiques,
	Spindle's Grocery	Chester	Private store for profit	community hub for local food sourcing and events
	Artist studios	through MOC	should we complie a list?	platform for local artists to collaborate and showcase their work.
	Bonsai by the Sea	Blandford	Farm	small, pesticide-free farm
	Hot Lobster	Deep Cove	Private business for profit	sustainable supplier of local seafood

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CULTURAL HERITAGE (IF HISTORICAL) OR PUBLIC REALM (IF NEW)	Rubies Trail	The Cross		used for walking, hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding.
	Ross Farm	New Ross		concert series
	Ross Farm Trail	New Ross		can educate visitors about Nova Scotia's rural history while promoting sustainable agricultural practices
	Scott Hamlin	New Ross		center for promoting artisanal craftsmanship and heritage trades.
	Trails	New Ross		community wellness and eco-tourism resource
	Bandstand	Chester		foster community engagement, enhance cultural life, and attract both residents and tourists
	Churches	Everywhere		space for outreach programs such as food banks, mental health support groups, and educational initiatives
	Zoe Valley Library	Chester		botanical drawing courses/floral history

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CULTURAL HERITAGE (IF HISTORICAL) OR PUBLIC REALM (IF NEW)	Mad Lab	Hubbards		offer hands-on educational programs, such as STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)
	Mural	Aces		draw visitors to the Arts District, enhancing the area's visibility and contributing to local tourism
	Carved Tree at the Post Office	Chester		symbol of community pride and creativity, attracting visitors and residents to appreciate the craftsmanship
	The Polar Bear	Chester Train Station		draw visitors to the area, offering a unique photo opportunity and promoting local art and history.
	Cenotaph	Chester		host annual Remembrance Day ceremonies, serve as a focal point for local history education,
	Nature Art	Croft Playground		incorporating local natural materials such as wood, stones, and plants into art installations,
	Graveyards	Chester, Blandford		ghost tours

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
CULTURAL HERITAGE (IF HISTORICAL) OR PUBLIC REALM (IF NEW)	Churches	Everywhere!		offering services such as food banks, mental health counseling, and hosting social events
	Look Off (didactic panels about whale plant, etc.)	Blandford		didactic panels is as an educational and cultural tourism site
	IOOF Lodge (now privately owned)	Blandford		host local events, art exhibitions, community meetings, and social gatherings, fostering community engagement
	Swiss Air Memorial Garden	Blandford		honor the victims of Swissair Flight 111, providing an opportunity for quiet reflection,
	Twigs House	New Ross		seasonal community attraction that fosters local tourism
HOSPITALITY	The Ross Farm	New Ross		contra dancing/ traditional music

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
HOSPITALITY	Frenchies	New Ross		Fine quality women's clothing.
	The Hearth Room Cafe	New Ross		Music/ location for clubs
	Trails	New Ross		restaurants or cafes could host events or offer picnic packages
	Community Fair	New Ross		Horse and Ox Pulling Competitions
	Trails	New Ross		Hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, and lodges could offer guided hiking or biking tours
	Hooked Rug Museum of North America	Hubbards, HRM Side	lectures/workshops	offer a new lineup of workshops and events
	Sailing Club	Chester; Hubbards		sailing programs, hosting events, and providing opportunities for environmental education
	Shore Club	Hubbards, HRM Side		Lobster Suppers,Live Music:

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
HOSPITALITY	Chester Golf Club	Chester		Special golf events themed around arts.
	Grave's Island	East Chester		Festival(s) around the theme Arts on the Isle.
	Castle Rock	East River		Murder mystery event/game.
	Mill Cove	Mill Cove		Real Estate Opportunities
	Mad Secret Lab	Brigley's Road		Unique attraction for experiential tourism.
	The Captain's House	Chester	meet the artist	Additional space for workshops

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
HOSPITALITY	Garden Club	Chester	lecture series	workshops, plant sales, and garden tours, the club can promote sustainable gardening practices
	Rope Loft	Chester		venue for hosting special events such as weddings, corporate gatherings
	Architecture Tour	Chester		historic buildings and architectural landmarks, the tour can attract tourists interested in history, architecture, and local culture.
	Free Wheeling Adventures	Hubbards		new fleet of Trek bikes, including Verve e-bikes, FX hybrids, and excellent road bikes
	Lido Pool	Chester		swimming lessons, water aerobics, and open swim times, the pool can serve as a focal point for promoting health
	Ferry Warf	Chester		By offering ferry rides or water-based excursions, it could attract tourists seeking to explore the region's coastline, nearby islands, or wildlife

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
HOSPITALITY	Oak Island	Western Shore		With all the publicity surrounding Oak Island, we can really push the pirate angle for a pirate themed festival . This would be very enticing to younger demographics. Potential exhibition location.
	The Playhouse	Chester		By hosting live performances, festivals, and community events, the Playhouse can attract tourists seeking cultural and artistic experiences
	Seaside Shanty	Chester		By offering authentic local seafood dishes in a scenic waterfront setting, it can attract food lovers and tourists seeking to experience Nova Scotia's rich maritime cuisine
	Kill Devil's Swimming	Gold River		promoting the site as a safe and scenic swimming

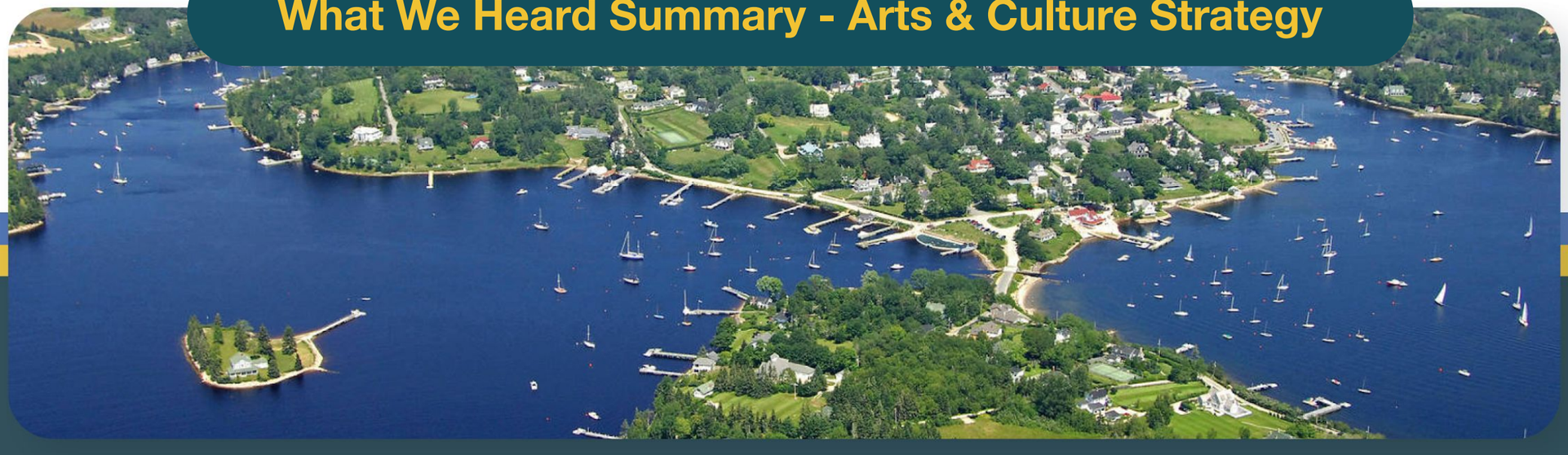
CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
HOSPITALITY	Tancook Ferry Ride	Tancook Islands		readings from Ironbound
	The Hearth Room Cafe	New Ross		ghost stories and traditional cooking classes
	Savary Plate	Hubbards		By hosting local events, themed nights, or live music, the eatery can enhance its role in the community, attract more tourists, and contribute to the local hospitality and dining scene.
	The Jib Coffee House	Chester		around the world food series
	The Fo'c'sle Tavern	Chester		"Chester's Living Room" and leverages its warm and inviting atmosphere to bring people together
	Imperfections	Chester		community gathering space for informal meetings or workshops.
	Kiwi Cafe	Chester		could host is a local art exhibition.

CATEGORY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	CURRENT USE	POTENTIAL USES
HOSPITALITY	Stretch Diner	Chester		ideal for events like "Classic Movie Nights," "Trivia Evenings," or charity dinners.
	Sea Side Shanty	Chester		"South Shore Seafood Tasting Night"
	The Focsile club	Chester		Burger and a Blonde Night.
	The Rope Loft	Chester		new ross chirtsmas festival turkey dinner
	The Deck	Blandford		bike rally
	Numerous B&Bs	Everywhere		"Nova Scotia B&B Open House Weekend"
	Hubbards Cove Rental	Hubbards		"Paddle for the Planet Day"

APPENDIX 5: WHAT WE HEARD

THE MUNICIPALITY OF
CHESTER
NOVA SCOTIA'S TREASURE

What We Heard Summary - Arts & Culture Strategy



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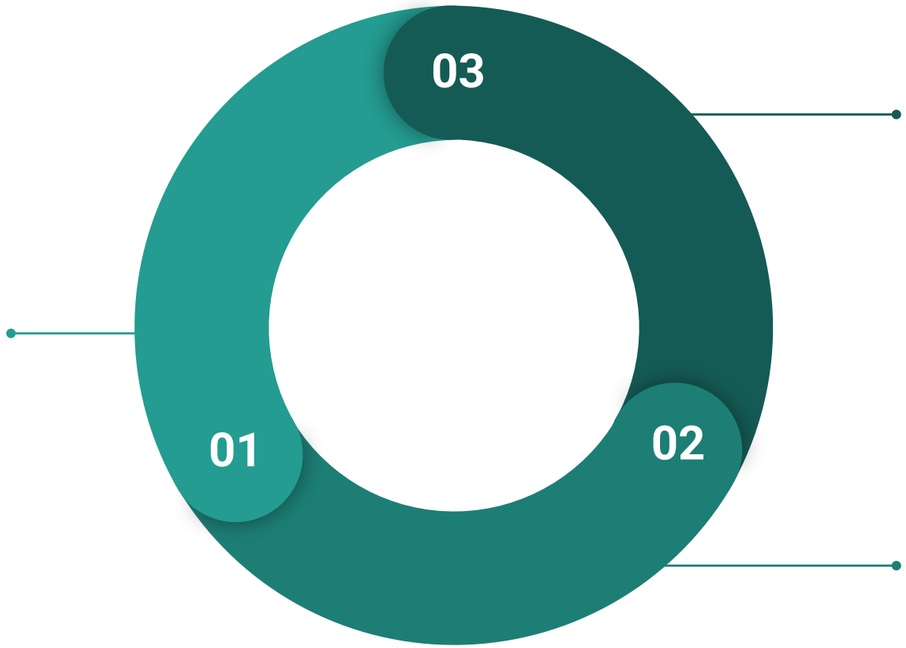
6 Town Hall Results

Methodology

How did we engage?

1. Online public survey

An online survey was created by ASBB to gauge public opinion on Arts and Culture. 75 responses were recorded which are outlined in the following slides, to create a strategy of action.



3. Case studies

Case studies were performed to understand model towns or municipalities which have successfully implemented arts and culture strategies to improve the vibrancy of their localities.

2. Focused discussion groups

A focused discussion as a town hall meeting was organised among locals in the Municipality of Chester to understand public behaviour in the arts & culture domain.

Survey Summary

Summary of the survey

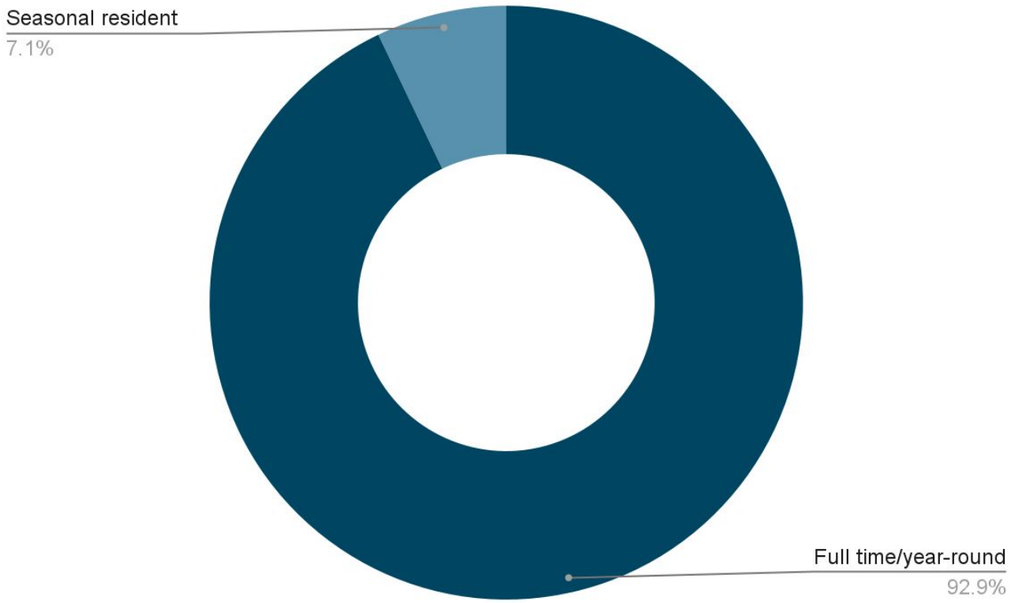
The survey for the Arts and Culture Strategy received 75 responses.

- Lack of information deters participation in cultural events; Respondents believe more information and novel, accessibly priced events, would improve participation.
- 92% of respondents are long term, older residents who are the primary consumers of arts and cultural events; the majority are white with diverse gender identities, indicating a homogenous racial makeup.
- Most respondents felt arts and culture events foster community, promote creativity and innovation, enhance locals' quality of life and contribute to the local economy.
- Most respondents have no accessibility needs and are satisfied with the MOC infrastructure but note a lack of diverse representation among artists and cultural performers and suggest improvements.
- Most respondents believe that a well-developed arts and culture strategy can foster valuable partnerships between businesses and the arts, helping to overcome challenges related to time and resource constraints.
- Most respondents believe that MOC's unique features include its strong community connections, rich history, natural environments, tourist attractions, current cultural events.

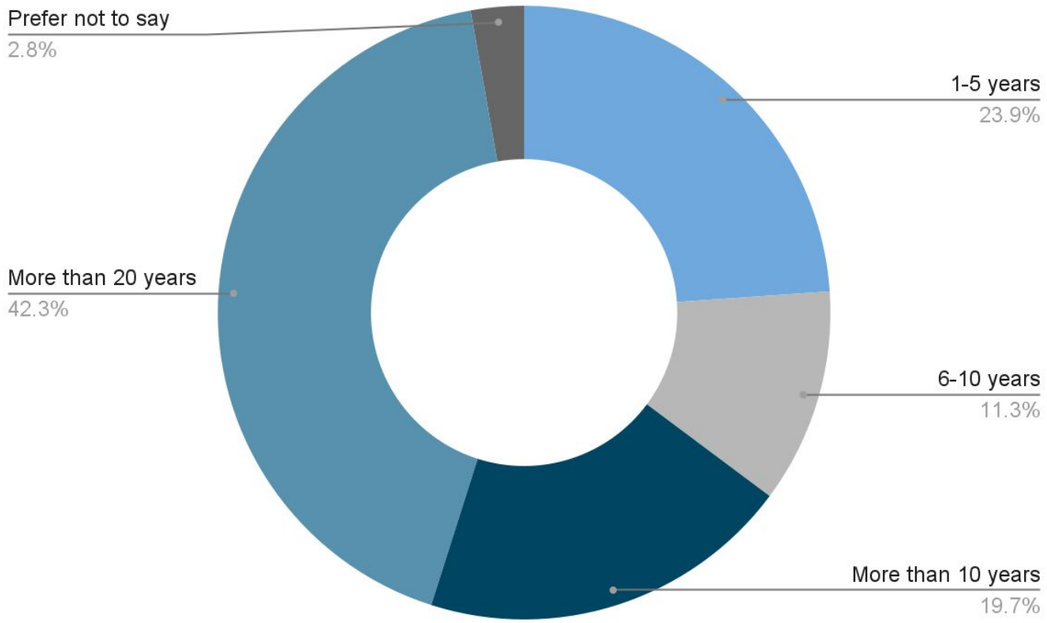
Demographics of Respondents

MOC respondents are mostly long term residents

Q19: What is the residential status of most respondents ?



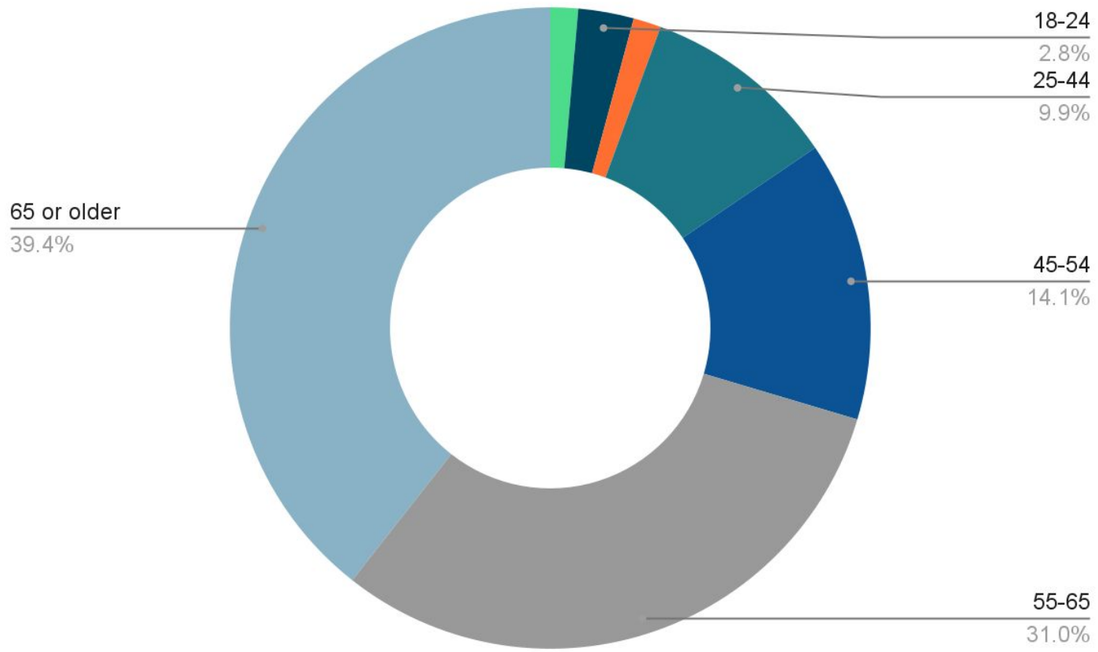
Q20: What is the length that residence lived in the MOC ?



Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers

MOC respondents are mostly long term residents

Q21: What is age of most respondents ?



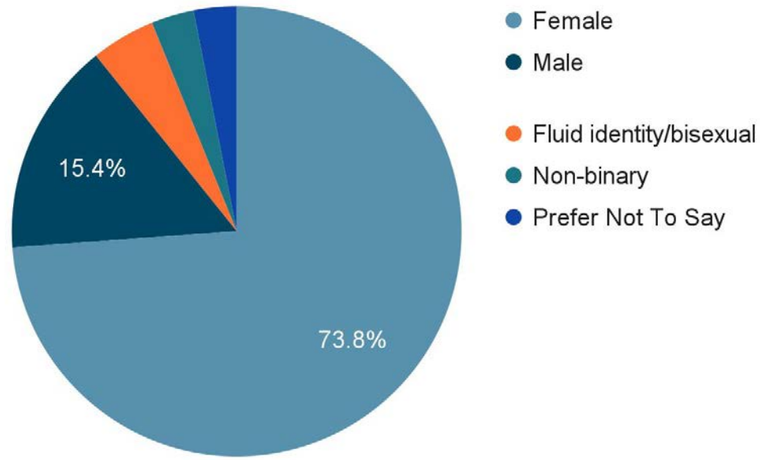
Almost 92% of respondents are long term residents of an older age group, who are the major consumers of Arts and Culture events.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers

The respondents from the Municipality of Chester identify to diverse gender identities but have a predominantly white population (written questions)

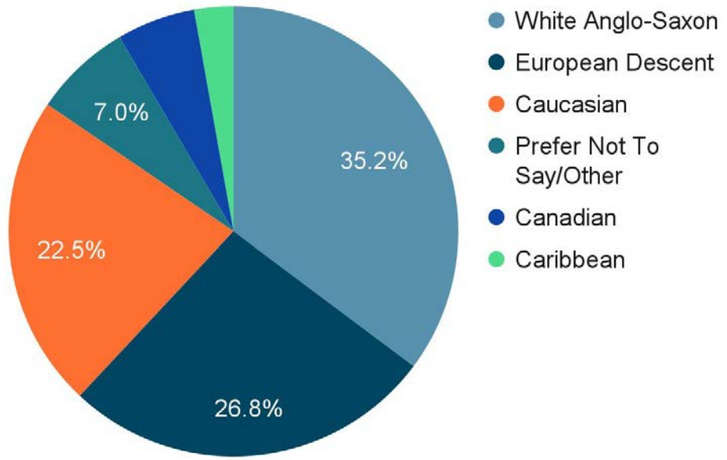
Q22: What gender do you identify with ?

*This was an optional question, which received 65 responses



Q23: What race/ethnicity do you identify with ?

*This was an optional question, which received 64 responses

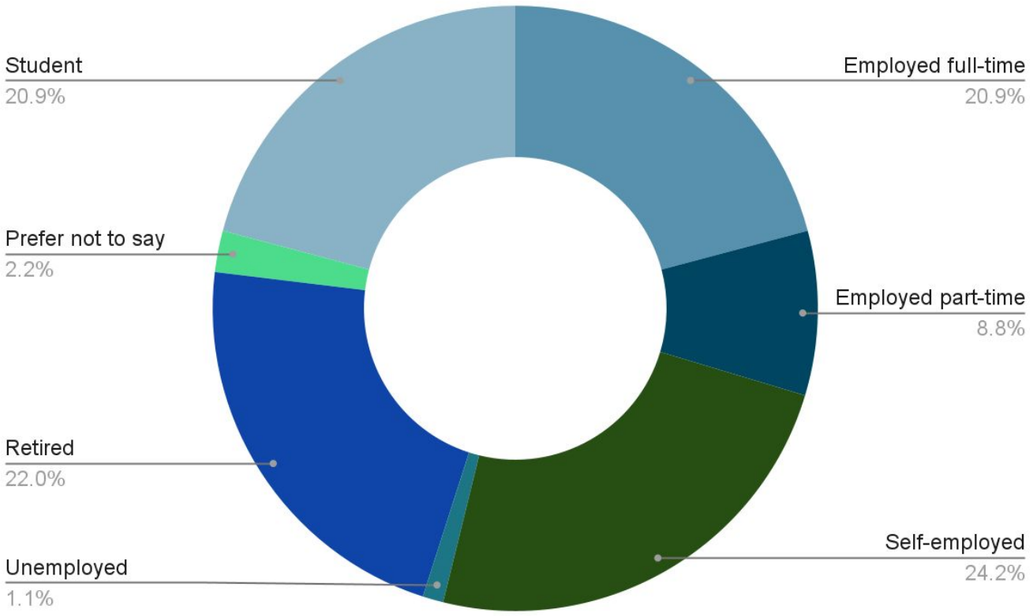


- The respondents have diverse gender identities but are mostly white, indicating a fairly homogenous racial identity among respondents. These questions in the survey helped us to identify patterns in the Arts and Culture practises and consumption habits.

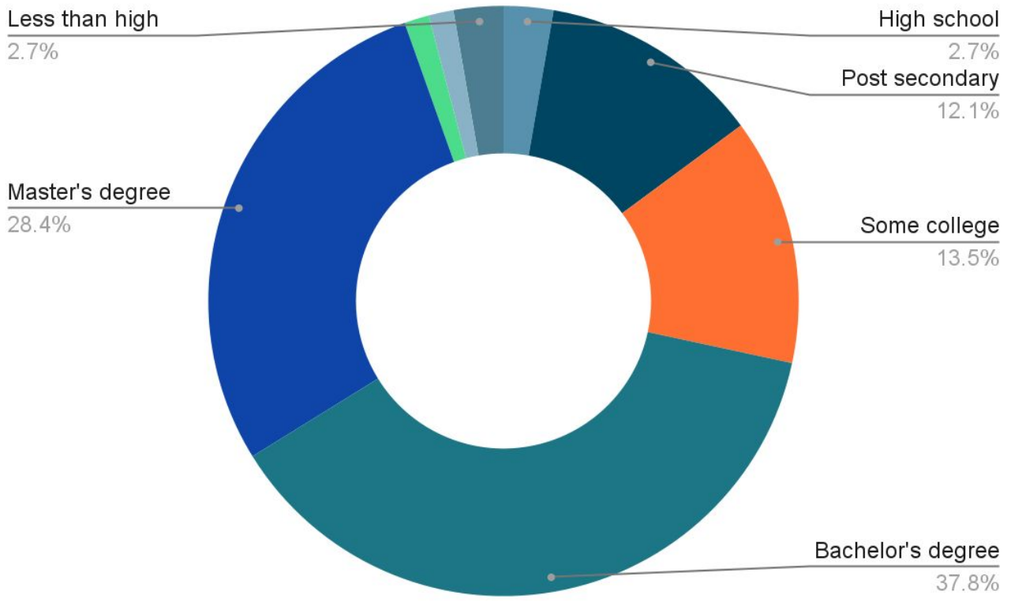
Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose short text answers or skip responses

Most respondents have college education and are self-employed

Q24: What is employment status of most respondents ?



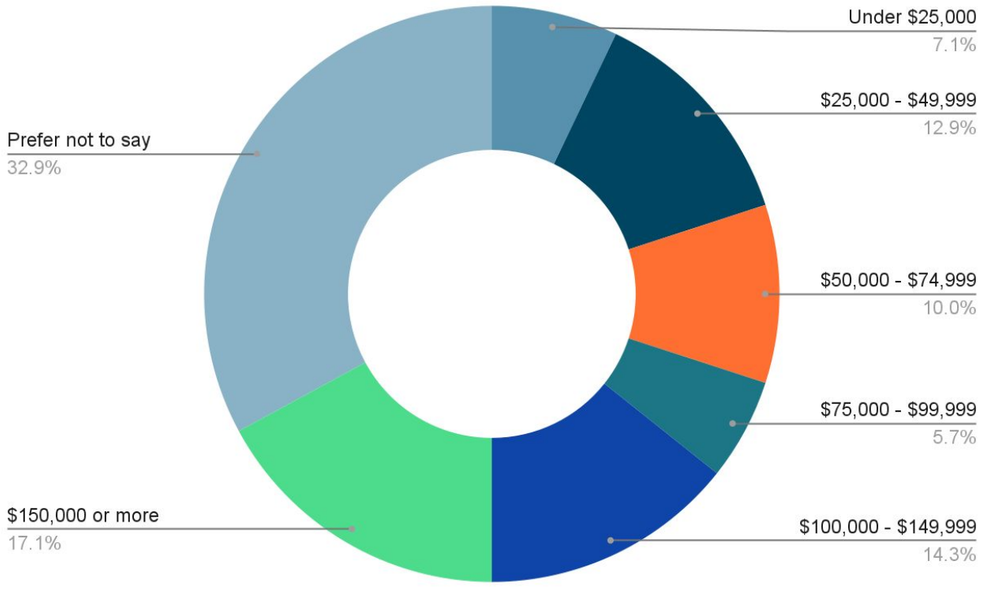
Q25: What is the educational level of respondents ?



Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers

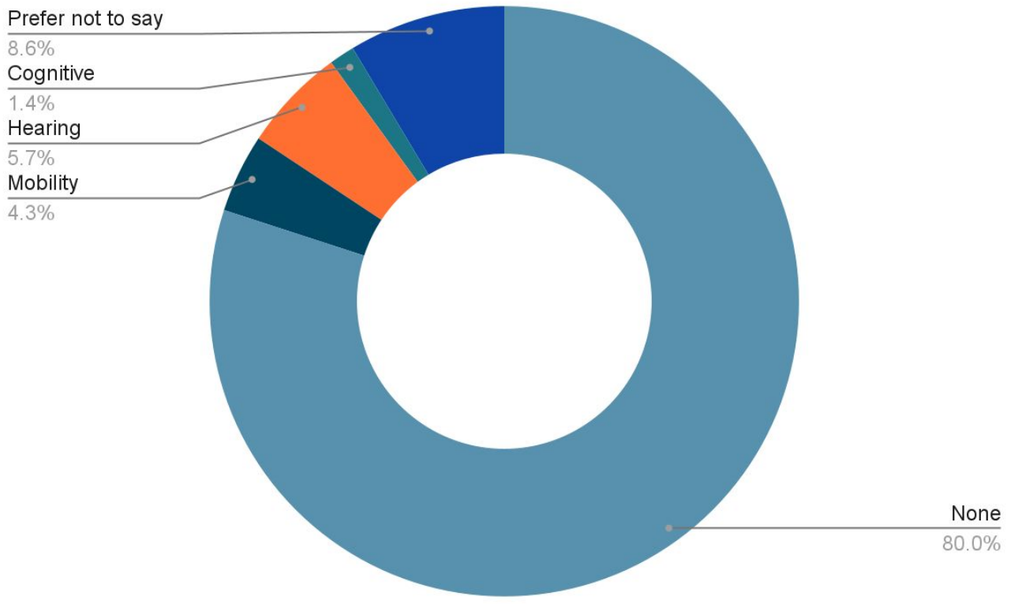
31.4% of respondents have household incomes over $100,000 and almost no respondent has accessibility needs

Q26: What is household income of most respondents ?



Most respondents in MOC are educated, self employed and high earners who may/may not require artistic endeavors to be gainfully employed.

Q27: Do respondents have any accessibility needs?

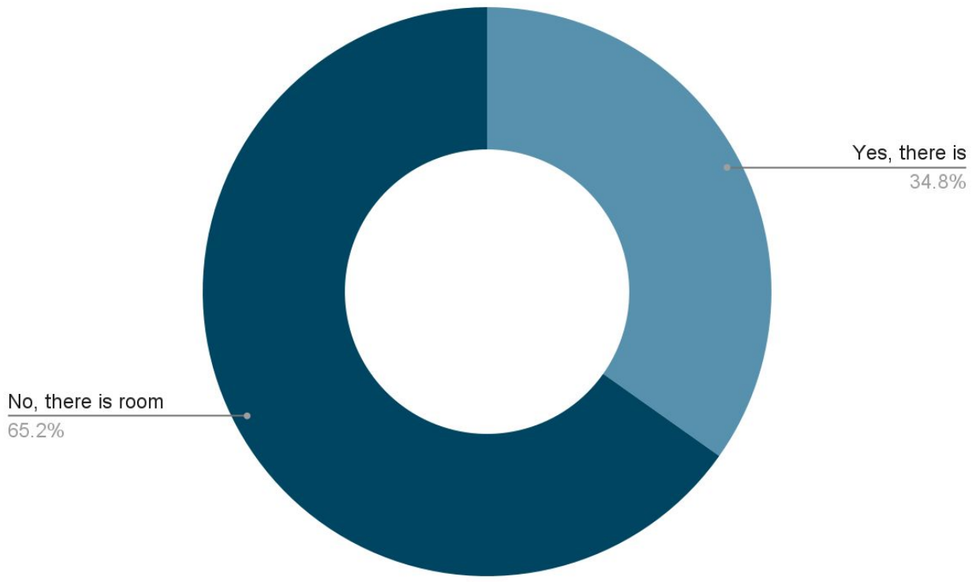


Most respondents (80%) reported they don't have any accessibility needs.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers

The Consumers of Arts & Culture in MOC feel the diversity of artists could be improved

Q28: Do you feel artists/creators/performers/cultural workers of diverse identities are adequately represented in the Municipality of Chester?



Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers or skip the question

Q29: What could be done locally to better include and amplify the voices of individuals and groups of diverse identities? (ranking in order of importance)

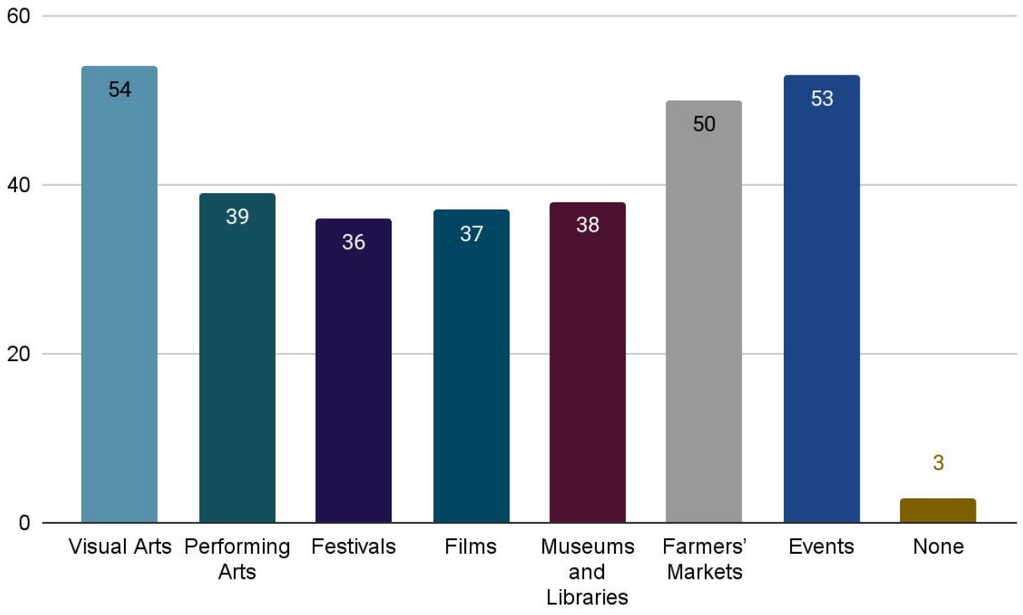
- Setting aside money for DEI initiatives
- Providing training to staff/volunteers on DEI initiatives
- Showcasing equity deserving artists and performers
- Creating opportunities for celebrating the cultures of social groups
- Ensuring venues are accessible to everyone

Respondents highlighted that they find gaps in adequate representation of diverse backgrounds of artistes/cultural performers, and suggest possible remedies.

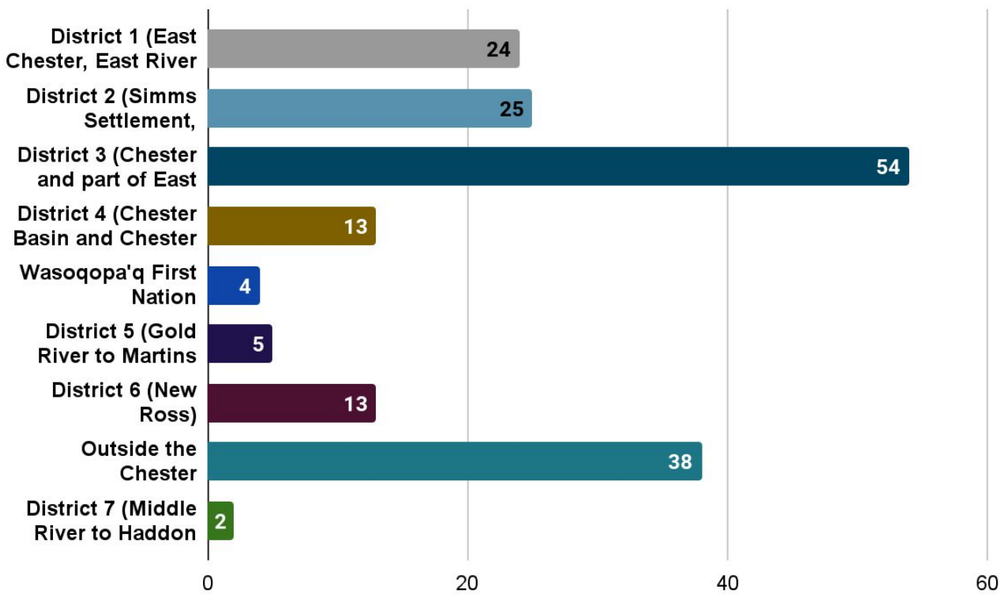
Survey Results for MOC Arts and Culture Strategy

Visual Arts are the main type of event that respondents participate in

Q1: What are the main Arts and culture events that you participate in ?



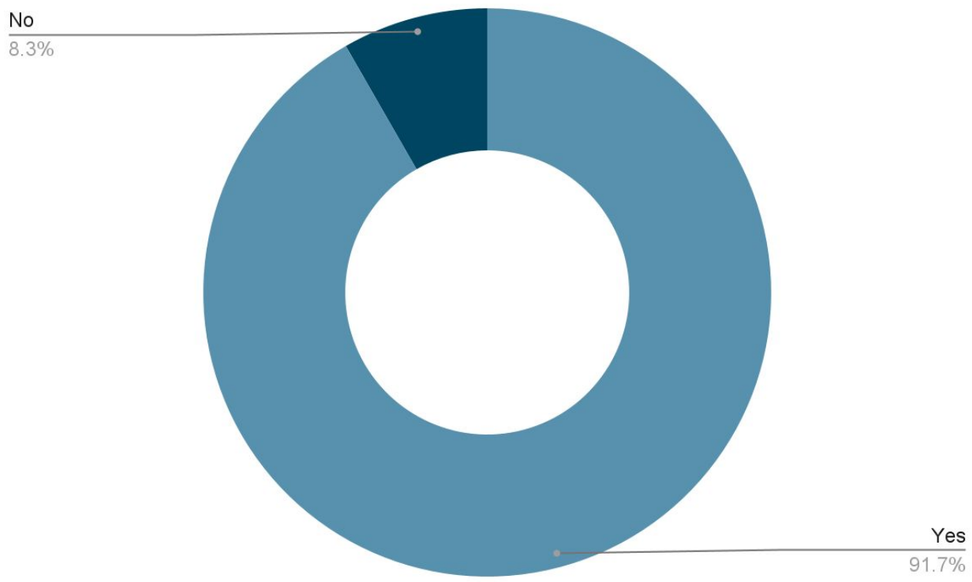
Q2: Where do you participate in the arts and culture events ?



Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose multiple answers

Most respondents want to participate in a wider variety of Arts & Culture events

Q3: Would you like to participate in more events ?



Q4: What are the types of cultural events that you would like to see in the Municipality of Chester?

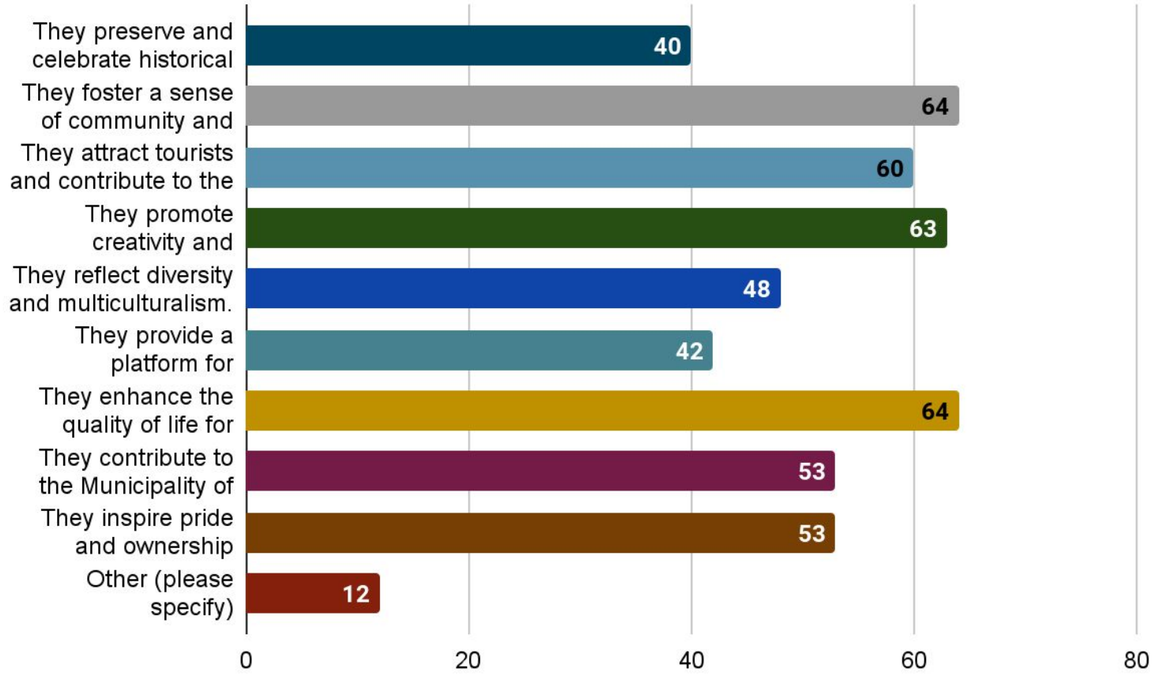
- Public Art competitions, Music and folk culture festivals
- Regular events like Canada Day, summer festivals, themed art studio visits
- Night time art installations like Nuit Blanche
- Heritage festivals to celebrate NS wooden boats like schooners and C-class
- Exhibitions to showcase local talent in music and art
- Local fairs and yearlong themed fairs/block parties and parades to celebrate local produce, food, wine etc,
- Winter activities like carnivals, christmas fairs, Old Home Week which thrived in the 70s
- Farmers markets for seasonal bounties

Almost 94% of responders would like to participate in more events if they fall within their preferences like music and art festivals, local fairs, farmers markets etc.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents provided detailed answers

Fostering community and promoting creativity are the major outcomes of a cultural activity

Q5: How do cultural events shape the identity of the Municipality of Chester ?

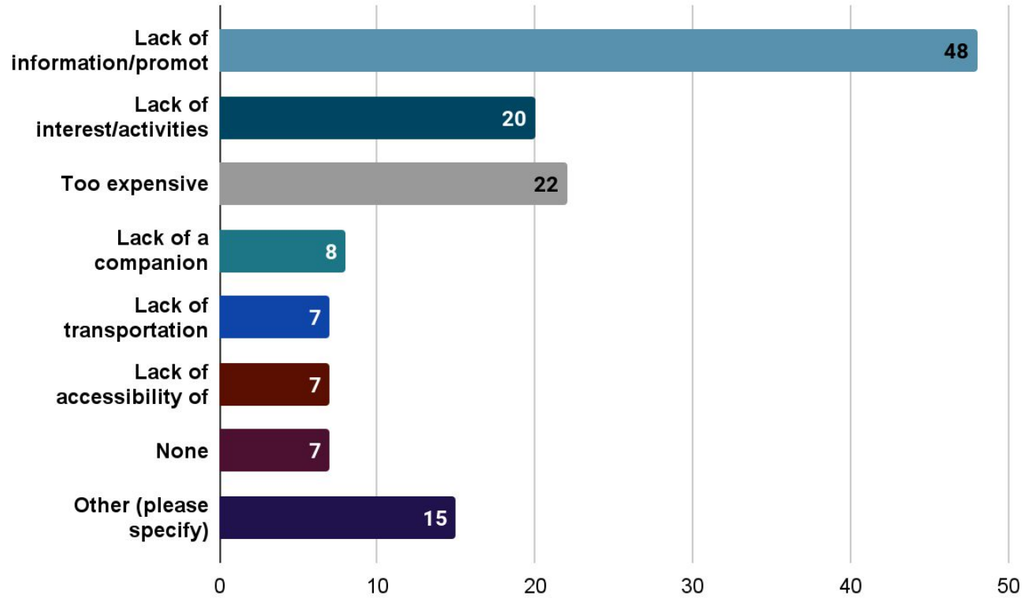


Arts and culture events foster a sense of community and promote creativity/ innovation across the Municipality of Chester. This enhances the quality of life for locals as well an contributes to the local economy.

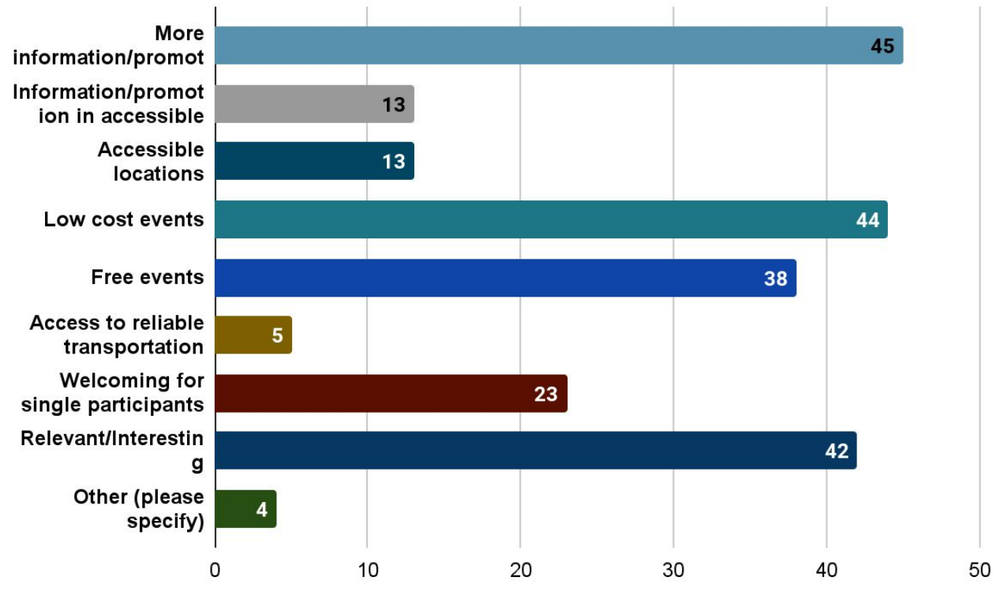
Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose multiple answers

Promoting relevant information would encourage participation

Q6: What are the largest obstacles to Arts and culture activities?



Q7: What would encourage you to take part in more activities?



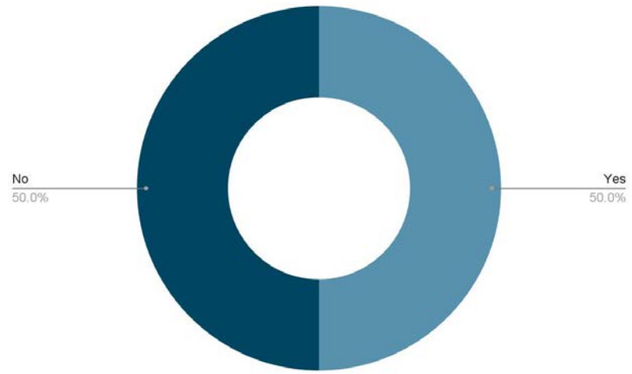
Lack of information is the major deterrent to participation in cultural events. Almost 62% of respondents feel that more information about relevant and accessible events would improve participation.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose multiple answers

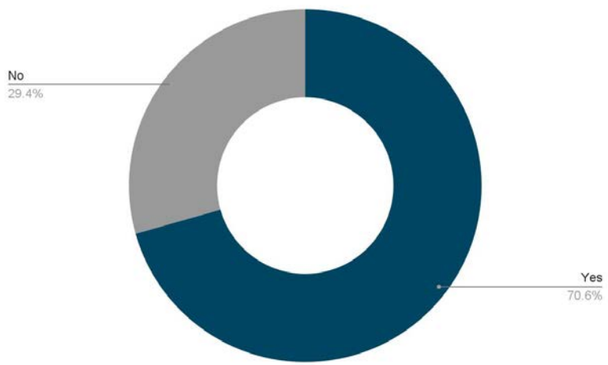
ASBB 19

The Municipality of Chester is a hub for Arts and Culture

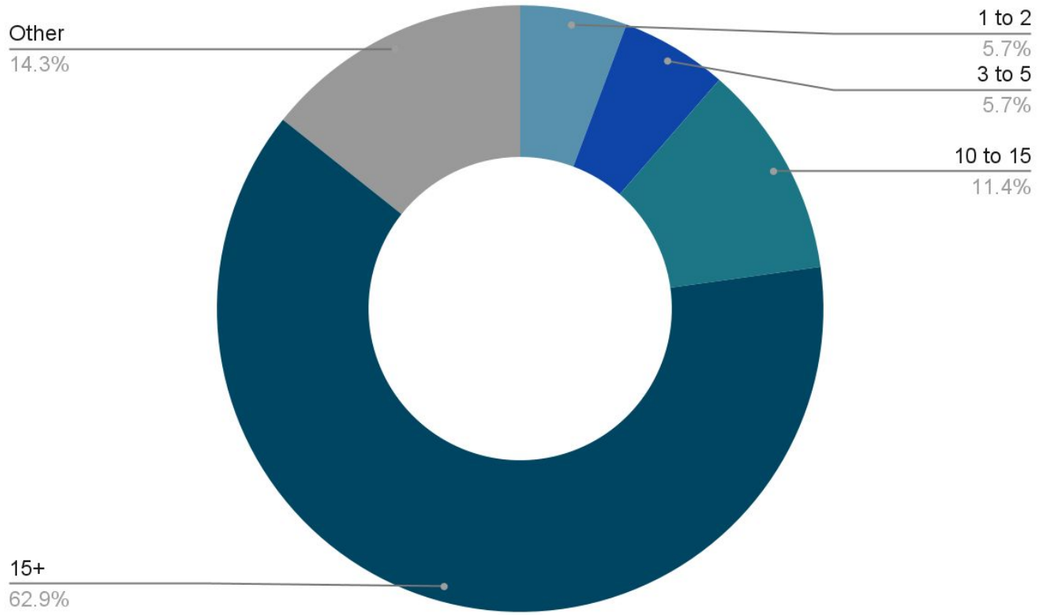
Q30 : What percent of respondents have an artistic practise?



Q32: What percent of respondents practice professionally ?



Q35: How long have you identified as a creator?



While most respondents have an artistic practice or identify as a creator, only a small fraction depend on it for professional employment.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers or skip the question

The MOC is a melting pot for a myriad of art practises with a strong community (written questions)

Q31: What is the discipline of your art ?

*This was an optional question, which received 34 responses

- Visual Arts: 43.8%
- Crafts & Design: 21.9%
- Music & Performing: 12.5%
- Other/Multidisciplinary: 21.9%

Q33: What are your thoughts about your current career trajectory?

*This was an optional question, which received 23 responses

- Established or steady: 36%
- Mid stage/ thriving: 32%
- Early stage/ expanding: 16%
- Struggling: 16%

Q34: What makes the Municipality of Chester a place where you can undertake your creative work ?

*This was an optional question, which received 30 responses

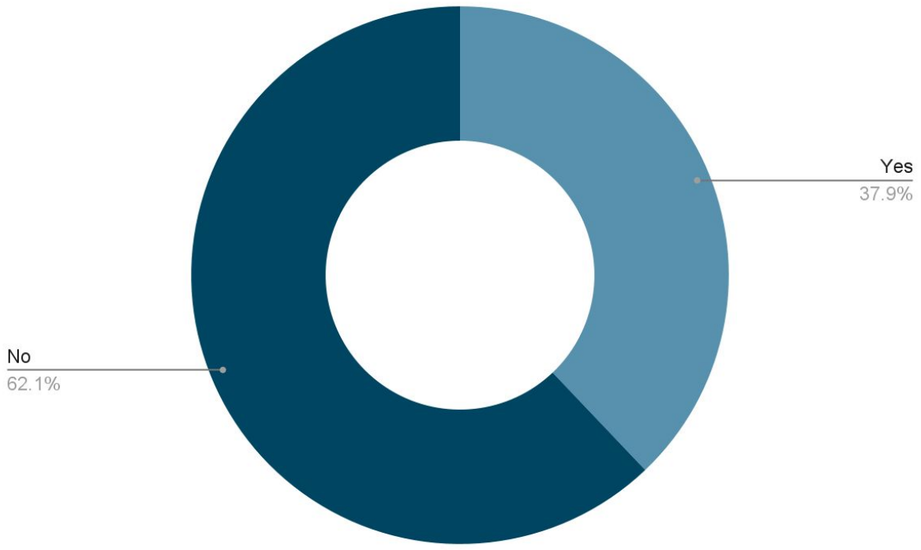
- It is their Hometown: 43%
- Abundance of creative individuals from different spheres of art: 20%
- Appreciation for an artistic culture: 13.3%
- Supportive community: 23.3%

The Municipality of Chester has diverse art and culture practises at various stages, aided by its supportive community culture.

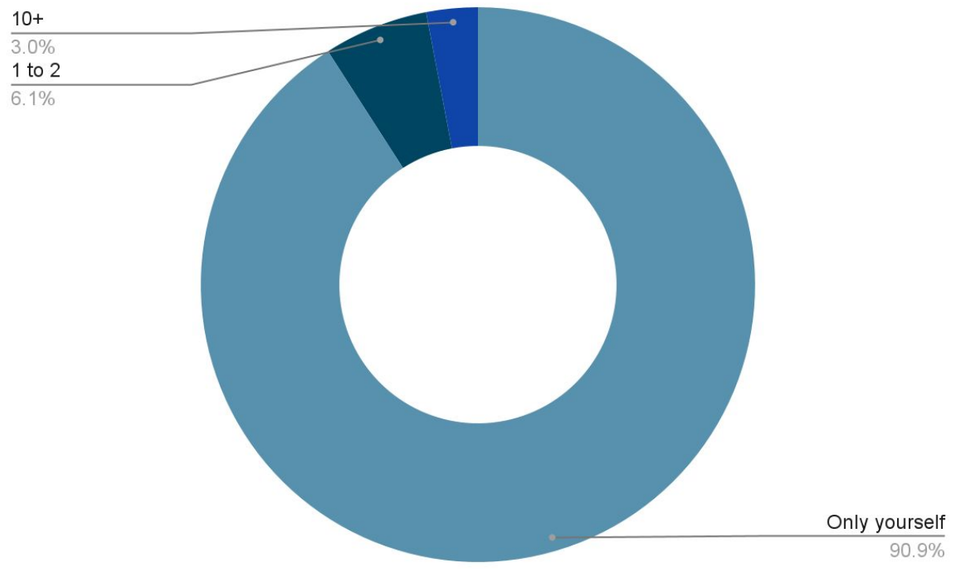
Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers or skip the question

Arts & Culture professions do not contribute to employment or job creation in the Municipality of Chester

Q36 : Is the artistic profession your primary source of income?



Q37: How many employees do you hire professionally?



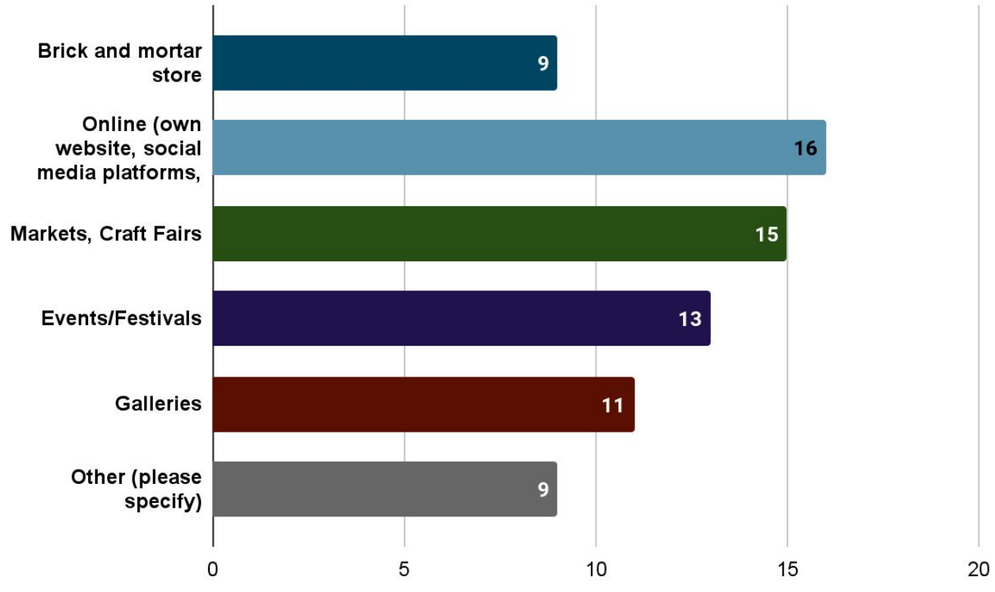
Almost 62% of artistes don’t sustain their livelihood through their art, while 90% don’t pursue it as an entrepreneurial activity.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers or skip the question(s)

ASBB 22

The majority of artists promote/sell their work online and cite tourism as good for business

Q38: How do you sell your work?



Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose multiple answers or skip the question

Q39: How does tourism impact your business?

- Creates an audience for arts and culture shows/work
- Impacts customer footfall through tourist engagement and art sale
- The number of sales for products/services related to arts & culture increase when there are more tourists, especially during summer months

Almost 50% of respondents publicise their work online and generate business revenue from it. Additionally, tourism has an overall positive impact on business by engaging more audience and improving participation.

There is need for improved Municipal support to allow growth in Arts & Culture events

Q40: What Municipal support would benefit you?

- Advertising and promotional support
- Access to education for improving business engagement
- Affordable workspace to host events
- More events to showcase local art and talent

Q41: What Arts & Culture activities/events would you prefer in future ?

- Public engagement initiatives like artists in residence programs , paint the town etc
- Multi-day festivals or cultural activities like art displays or dance, writing festivals
- Street fairs, outdoor concerts, road theatres
- Heritage tours, outdoor history festivals

Most respondents feel better advertising and hosting a variety of events could improve engagement, which can also positively impact local art and talent.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose text answers or skip the question

Better infrastructure support will help local artists benefit in their artistic endeavors

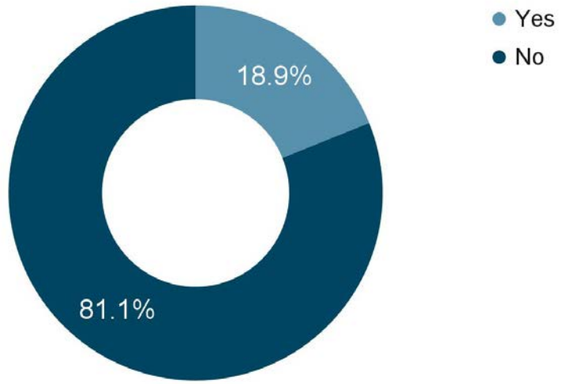
Q42: As an artist/cultural worker/performer, what infrastructure would benefit you in the next 5 years (ranked in order of preference)?
(Written Response)

OPTIONS	AVERAGE RANKING (1 - most important, 8 - least important)
Additional indoor exhibition and performance spaces	3.04
Community arts programming space	3.65
Outdoor space for art installation/public art	3.73
Access to specialized equipment like printing presses, kilns, recording studios etc	3.91
Additional outdoor spaces for festivals and performances	4.00
Access to rental studio space	4.56
Work / living space	4.58
Equipment storage	5.83

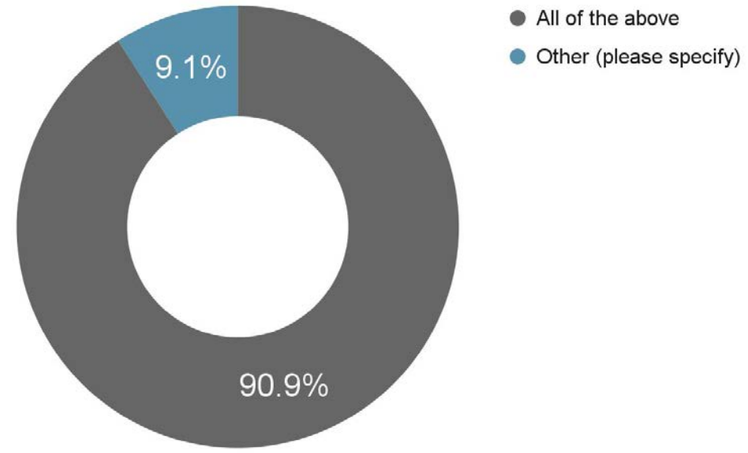
Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose essay answers or skip the question

Hospitality businesses benefit from Arts/Culture events and can provide spaces to host events

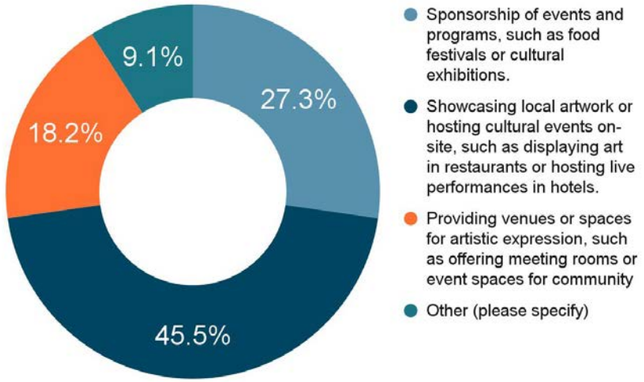
Q43: Do you own a food/accommodation/tourism-related business?



Q44: How do Arts & culture events impact the food/accommodations sector of the local economy?



Q45: How can food/accommodation/service sector businesses promote arts & culture initiatives?

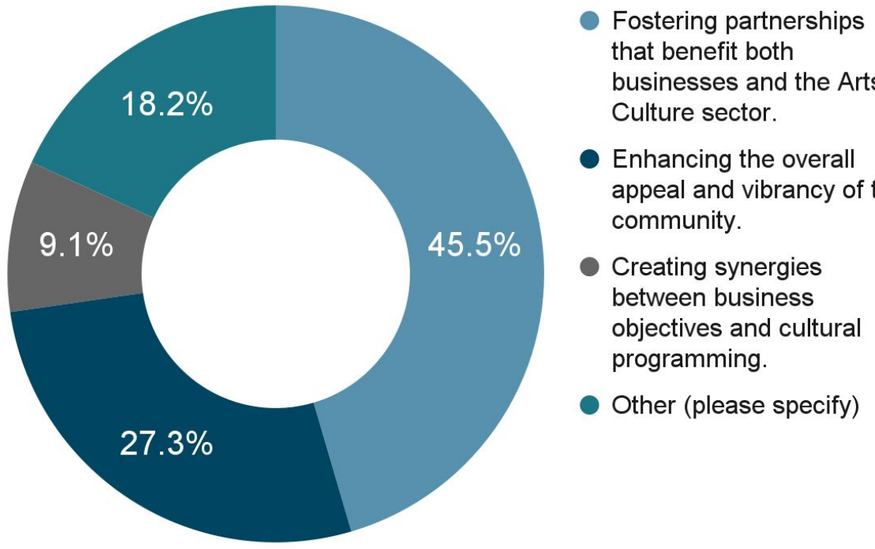


Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers or skip the question

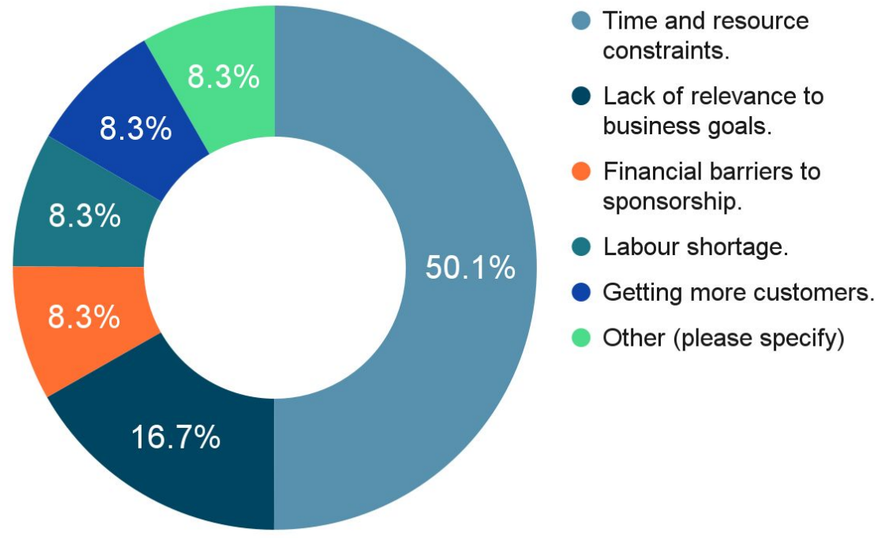
Almost 90% of respondents feel that arts and culture events are good for boosting local economic activity, while food/ accommodation and tourism sectors can also reciprocate by providing space for such initiatives.

An effective Arts & Culture strategy would foster rewarding partnerships

Q46: How could an Arts & Culture strategy align with the goals and interests of the tourism sector in the Municipality of Chester?



Q47: What challenges can be foreseeable barriers to businesses in actively supporting Arts & Culture initiatives ?



Most respondents feel that an effective arts and culture strategy will help in fostering partnerships which benefit both businesses and arts & culture practices, while alleviating the challenges arising due to time and resource constraints.

Source : Public survey for Chester Arts & culture by ASBB ; respondents could choose single answers or skip the question

Town Hall Summary

Purpose of Engagements:

- To understand what makes The Municipality of Chester unique.
- To map out the current cultural resources that are valuable for the community.
- To think about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for arts and culture in the municipality.
- To vision the future of Arts and Culture in the Municipality.

Town Hall Summary

What do you think are the distinctive features, characteristics, attractions, landmarks, and events that contribute to the uniqueness and charm of the Municipality of Chester? What does arts and culture mean to you, and how can the municipality support your vision in the next five years?

- The Municipality of Chester's charm lies in its close-knit communities, rich history, and attractions like Oak Island and New Ross' Christmas tree land. With hiking trails, golf courses, yacht/sailing clubs, live theatre, and historic sites like Ross Farm, it offers diverse activities. Festivals, markets, and art events enrich local culture.
- Strengthen communication between municipalities and local businesses, ensuring their needs are heard and addressed in a timely manner, and attract more restaurants to the area.
- Invest in youth by providing performance and employment opportunities and ensure the sustainable operation of food & beverage and, arts & culture sectors.
- Increase availability of long-term rentals over Airbnbs
- Provide resources to support a healthy non-profit and Arts & Culture sector, and remove barriers for the hospitality sector.
- Create a space directory for community use and appoint a resource person to assist with Arts & Culture groups and grants.
- Expand Pro Kids to include arts and performance activities, and develop funding strategies for youth and children's programs.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Schools provide community engagement with diverse programs and after-school events, while abundant activities and scenic geography, including Rails to Trails and water access, enhance local life.
- The area features local art exhibitions, and recreational opportunities, supported by fresh, energetic employees and rising entrepreneurs with visionary ideas.
- A welcoming communities with strong volunteerism and acceptance of new ideas fosters community-driven activities and local expertise.
- Grants and resources support preservation and development, complemented by local newsletters, web-based communication, and excellent programming such as the New Ross Family Resource Center.
- A variety of formal and informal events are hosted at the Chester Playhouse and businesses.

WEAKNESS

- No cultural information on the Mi'Kmaw community and history, and no information centre for marketing, leading to insufficient awareness.
- Need for more accommodations, shopping opportunities, and recreational facilities in need of repair. While the municipality provides many little grants, there are more opportunities for more targeted grants.
- Many artists are struggling with limited connections to other artists, a lack of studio space, and not enough places to come together and share ideas.
- Loss of architectural heritage
- Volunteer burnout is an prominent issue, with no central hub for the arts, and limited space to showcase art.
- Significant space for inclusivity in the arts community.
- Need for better health and education programs.,
- Lack of versatile spaces to host events year-round, regardless of the weather.
- Similar to the playhouse, there is opportunities for the Yacht and Golf clubs could work towards being more inclusive and bridge the gap between those who are privileged and those who are less affluent.

SWOT Analysis

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase collaboration with schools to engage young people and develop large community projects and festivals like Chester Race Week with art events.
- Attract tourists to stay longer by creating more opportunities, increasing access available to the water, and improving marketing through local fairs and word of mouth.
- Build more accommodations, lower housing prices, and develop a transportation system to support tourism growth and community needs related to the arts community.
- More collaboration with nearby jurisdictions such as Lunenburg to create coordinated efforts.
- Focusing on developing and mentoring the new generation of artists (youth).
- Improve library accessibility for all ages, enhance road infrastructure, and public facilities.
- Offer workshops in natural surroundings with affordable or free programming and maintain heritage while supporting equity.
- Foster community involvement by providing grants and support for artists, and increase the number of arts teachers and accessible programming as the population grows.
- More studio space for artists to display work.
- Tailored programming for attracting professional artists to the area.
- Create more tailored workshops for artists weather it be for running a businesses, insurance, mentorship,and other artistry.
- Creating studio maps and coordinated events and communication.

THREATS

- Municipalities housing and affordability impedes professional or new artists from moving into the area.
- A lack of adequate funding for public arts programs in schools or with youth.
- A lack of space to display and practice arts.
- More opportunities to host professional artists.
- Transportation and housing to be able to attract more artisans.
- Volunteer burnout as much of the arts community runs on volunteers who are involved in various other opportunities throughout the community and lack the time and resources for additional activities.
- A lack of coordinated communication and events across the large area that MOC covers.

Interviews

Who We Engaged

1. Teresa Bergen (Teresa Bergen Ceramics): Limited local art opportunities and insufficient tourist accommodations are a challenge which can be addressed by expanding local artist platforms and fostering a collaborative art community.

2. Sheila Woodcock (Lunenburg Foundations of the Arts): Lack of municipal recognition and Indigenous engagement are key challenges which can be improved through collaborations, addressing funding issues and enhancing community involvement.

3. Kai (Pride Lunenburg County): There are safety concerns and lack of inclusive spaces for queer artists, these can be managed by improving hate crime responses and increasing representation and pay equity.

4. Kenney Fitzpatrick (Dance Nova Scotia): Funding instability and rural isolation hinder progress they can be addressed by advocating for cultural heritage promotion, unique arts experiences, and better representations for marginalised groups.

5. Briony Carros (Arts Nova Scotia): Funding pressure and low grand success rates are barriers addressed through initiatives that integrate art into daily life, fostering regional partnerships, and tracking long-term impact.

6. Ellen Johnson (Accessibility Coordinator): Poor communication and lack of accessible planning are a challenge addressed by improving internal processes and incorporating inclusion and accessibility into projects.

7. Andrew Chandler (Chester Playhouse): Reluctance supporting experimental arts and municipal funding issues can improve with multi-year funding, youth arts education and better communication and outreach.

8. Cynthia Myers (Steering Committee/Kids Programming): Lack of outdoor spaces and transportation limit youth engagements, fixing this requires increasing outdoor venues, school partnerships, and year-round programming for youth.

9. Stephanie Miller Vincent (Visit South Shore): Problems in marketing and lack of collaboration hindering tourism are addressed through a cultural passport program, developing art-focused events, and using municipal spaces for studios.

10. Bronwyn MacFair (ED, Chester Arts Centre): Challenges in efficiency of programming organization and support for queer artists can be supported by improving communication, better transportation for artists and expanding community programs.

11. Livia Davis (Playwear): Networking and staffing issues affect her business, support in more local networking and making Chester a year-round destination will help.

12. Bryan (Doreywood Decor): Difficulty accessing home studio insurance and poor relations between professional and self-taught artists could be solved by encouraging collaboration and promoting creativity.

13. Andrew McNamara and Valerie Denn: Limited opportunities for artistic directors and focus on exporting music are concerns that can be addressed through investments in local arts programming and opportunities in Chester.

11. Municipal Staff

Key Priority Areas for Arts and Culture Strategy

01	**Build Cultural Leadership and Capacity**	• Improve collaboration and communication. • Address artist and arts leaders needs.
02	**Integrate & Prioritize Arts & Culture in Municipal Planning**	• Enable cultural policies and improve internal processes. • Embrace Arts & Culture across departments. • Municipality's role in planning future innovation arts.
03	**Leverage Creative Sector for Cultural Tourism Opportunities**	• Strategic Partnerships. • Coordinated Events Strategy. • Long term view (tourism planning/branding).
04	**Embed Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility in Arts & Culture Sector Planning**	• Align with EDI committee and work with accessibility coordinator. • Prioritize pay equity. • Building authentic relationships with local BIPOC communities. • Address colonial practices in Arts & Culture sector.
05	**Build Community by Strengthening Arts & Culture Programming**	• Address community and artist needs through stronger programming. • Programming to attract more artists in residence.
06	**Improve Public Spaces, Cultural Infrastructure & Access to Spaces for Arts & Culture Use**	• Cultural Mapping. • Creative Placemaking. • Public Art for future developments. • Better access and info for indoor spaces for arts & culture use.

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