

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POLICY COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 9, 2015
FROM:	KATE GRAHAM DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC INNOVATION
SUBJECT:	ONTARIO CULTURAL STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER SUBMISSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Community and Economic Innovation, the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to the City of London’s submission to the Ontario Cultural Strategy Discussion Paper, entitled “*Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy Developing a Culture Strategy for Ontario*”, attached as Appendix A to this report:

- a) The City of London **BE AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE** the following report, including the attached Appendix B, “*The Ontario Cultural Framework Questionnaire Collected Responses From London*”, as its written submission to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) to be received as input for the Ontario Cultural Strategy Consultation; and,
- b) The City of London **ENDORSE THE POSITION** contained in the Creative City Network of Canada Municipal Members letter, attached as Appendix C to this report.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- London’s Cultural Prosperity Plan, Council - March 5, 2013

BACKGROUND

Ontario is seeking input from across the province to develop its first Cultural Strategy, which will set out a vision for culture in Ontario to build healthier, more vibrant and prosperous communities. The Ontario Cultural Strategy Discussion Paper entitled, “*Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy Developing a Culture Strategy for Ontario*” attached as Appendix A to this report.

This discussion paper recognizes that culture in Ontario can include everything from our heritage, creative arts including music and film, to public spaces including libraries, museums and historic sites. Culture is also continuously evolving. Changing demographics, the economy and the influence of digital technology are having a profound impact on Culture in Ontario and the new Culture Strategy will help ensure that support for culture reflects these changes.

Written submissions to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) must be submitted by December 7, 2015, so it is important that Council review and endorse this City of London submission at its November meeting to meet this deadline. MTCS will also be hosting public town hall meetings throughout Ontario in the fall of 2015, noting that London’s Provincial Town Hall will take place at Museum London on November 19, 2015 from 7:00 – 9:15 p.m. All members of the public and cultural sector organizations are invited to attend, and no registration is required.

RESPONSE TO THE ONTARIO CULTURAL STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER

London's Cultural Prosperity Plan and Profile were approved in principle by Council on March 5, 2013. The Plan provides a strategic vision and framework for culture in the future. The Plan's Strategic Directions: strengthen the economic growth of culture; support cultural programming; leverage London's cultural assets; and celebrate and promote culture are designed to elevate the role of culture as a tool for promoting economic growth. The development of this Plan was heavily supported by the City of London Culture Office, The London Arts Council and The London Heritage Council in collaboration with the Creative City Committee. It included extensive consultation with the London community throughout the year 2012 and part of 2013 and because of this consultation, excerpts from Plan have been included as part of London's response to some of the discussion questions. It appears that the Ontario Cultural Strategy aligns with London's Cultural Prosperity Plan in that they both use a broad definition of culture which includes: arts, natural and cultural heritage, tourism, diversity, libraries, post-secondary institutions, and sports.

Culture and London's Cultural Prosperity Plan and Profile are integrated into the Strategic Plan for the City of London 2015- 2019 specifically in the focus areas of:

- Strengthening our Community: amazing arts, culture and recreation experiences;
- Building a Sustainable City: beautiful places and spaces and heritage conservation;
- Growing our Economy: diverse and resilient economy, urban regeneration and diverse employment opportunities.

The City of London Culture Office has received the following responses to the questions of the Cultural Strategy Discussion Paper attached as Appendix B to this report, from: Tourism London, The London Public Library, Eldon House, The London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH), The London Heritage Council, The London Arts Council, London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP), Thomas Cermak of LondonFUSE, Adam Caplan of Web.isodes, the Planning Division, The Community and Economic Innovation Office and The City of London Operations Management Team (OMT). Other organizations and members of the public will have the opportunity to attend the Town Hall meeting at Museum London on November 19, 2015.

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO (AMO) POSITION

In discussions with MTCS on the Culture Strategy, AMO took the position that, as with every municipal government, every community is different and each has its own unique cultural values and institutions. Each will have its own viewpoint on what arts and culture means to their community. A general, high level message from AMO will not have a major impact as would the stories and insights of members who have boots on the ground, the technical expertise and can speak in depth about what culture means to them. In AMO's discussions with MTCS, they are more interested in hearing about those stories from communities and others in the cultural sector. AMO intends to facilitate, as much as possible, ways to support the Ministry so it can inform the AMO membership about these consultations.

CREATIVE CITY NETWORK OF CANADA ONTARIO MUNICIPAL MEMBERS POSITION

Creative City Network of Canada, Ontario Municipal Members have submitted a separate letter to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) attached as Appendix A to this report, which Administration is proposing The City of London endorse. It states that:

"Therefore, we strongly urge MTCS, Culture Division, to reflect the role that local governments play in Ontario's Culture Strategy. Specifically, the Ontario Culture Strategy should:

- *Emphasize the importance of local governments in the Ontario Culture Strategy Guiding Principles by recognizing that culture is different everywhere and highlighting the unique role of local governments in supporting Ontario's diverse municipalities;*

- *Invest in funding for municipalities to boost the implementation of municipal cultural plans, and strengthen the management and development of local cultural resources; and,*
- *Advance the role of local governments in fostering an environment in which arts, cultural industries, cultural heritage, and public libraries thrive in communities by partnering with relevant professional networks and organizations on the creation of new resources and tools, professional training, and knowledge sharing opportunities.”*

CONCLUSIONS

Supporting culture in the province is part of the Ontario government’s economic plan for Ontario. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Mr. Michael Coteau, has stated that *“this is an opportunity for the province to take a fresh look at how it invests in arts and culture, to build our vibrant sectors and to enrich our diverse communities.”*

Culture remains an important part of Council’s 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, and a vital part of London’s economy and the quality of life of Londoners. The Culture Office appreciates that the Province has undertaken the development of an Ontario Culture Strategy, which will hopefully align with London’s Cultural Prosperity Plan and Profile and that the City of London has an opportunity to submit a written response to this discussion paper.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been prepared with the assistance of Ben Fraser, Research Assistant, Community and Economic Innovation.

PREPARED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
ROBIN ARMISTEAD MANAGER OF CULTURE	KATE GRAHAM DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC INNOVATION

Attachments:

- Appendix A - The Ontario Cultural Strategy Discussion Paper entitled *“Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy Developing a Culture Strategy for Ontario”*
- Appendix B - *The Ontario Cultural Framework Questionnaire – Collected Responses from London*
- Appendix C - The Creative City Network of Canada Municipal Members Letter to MCSS