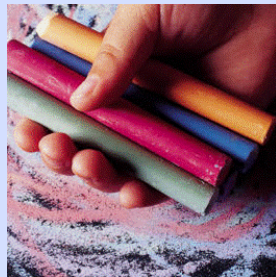




TOWN OF LAKESHORE



COMMUNITY CULTURAL MASTER PLAN



FINAL REPORT

April 2008



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Community Cultural Master Plan is a major component of the multi-faceted Town of Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan. Its key initiatives align strongly with the Vision, Mission and Principal Statements, upon which the larger plan, couched within the Town of Lakeshore Strategic Plan, is built. These fundamental statements are as follows.

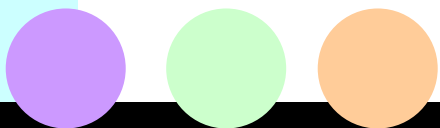
1.1 Community Services Master Plan Vision Statement

Town residents will experience a diverse array of accessible leisure opportunities and resources that improve resident health and well being, strengthen the Town's communities and encourage individual and community development.

1.2 Community Services Master Plan Mission Statement

The Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan directs the Town's achievement of a balanced array of accessible, participation-based leisure opportunities. It brings together all the community's leisure capabilities and resources that contribute to the enrichment of the quality of life for Lakeshore residents through both partnerships and direct delivery strategies that:

- ▶ **Inspire a true value for the benefits of leisure participation opportunities and encourage broad-based, active resident participation that supports improved resident health, well-being and personal development.**
- ▶ **Generate a strengthened sense of community identity, spirit and service amongst all residents.**
- ▶ **Support improved community unity and capacity, as well as positive municipal and local economic development.**



1.3 Community Services Master Plan Principles

The Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan will foster:

- ▶ **Balanced Array of Leisure Opportunities;**
- ▶ **Fair and Equitable Leisure Opportunities;**
- ▶ **Integrity and Evaluation;**
- ▶ **Maximized Utilization;**
- ▶ **Community Accessible Services;**
- ▶ **Specialized Services;**
- ▶ **Department Leadership;**
- ▶ **Conservation of Natural Resources;**
- ▶ **Corporate Alignment;**
- ▶ **Flexible and Sustainable Facilities.**

1.4 Community Services Master Plan Strategic Themes

The Community Cultural Master Plan draws upon the research and analysis of existing heritage and arts resources, features and operations submitted as a Heritage, Arts and Culture Situational Analysis Report in June 2007. A series of Strategic Themes emerged from this report as the foundation for the Community Services Master Plan. As the thrust of the Community Cultural Master Plan focuses upon a whole system approach that integrates culture across the municipal planning process, the Strategic Themes specifically related to Community Cultural Master Plan are as follows.

- ▶ The Town of Lakeshore is positioned to accommodate residential growth totaling 61,900 residents to 2031 and will need considerable investments in land, buildings, facilities, staff and programming to accommodate the parks, recreation, heritage, arts, culture and tourism interests of the community.

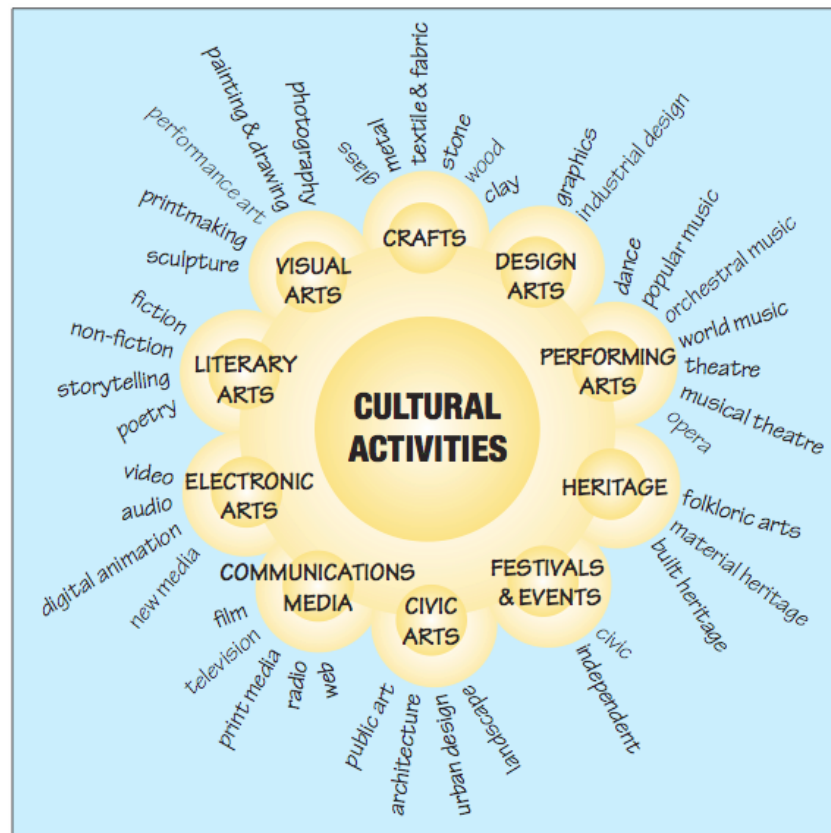
- ▶ The expected population will see an increasing proportion of senior and a steady number of youth categories. This will change the focus of community services facilities and programming to match these changing demands.
- ▶ The identity of Lakeshore is comprised of a number of communities that are strengthened through common features of Lake St. Clair and cultural history. The Community Services Master Plan should address the ability of Council in cooperation with other partner agencies to create these opportunities.
- ▶ The Town will need to protect and expand existing public access to Lake St. Clair through both the road allowances and public waterway access. This will provide opportunities for passive and active recreation opportunities related to the lakeshore.
- ▶ Opportunities to develop a non-motorized Route system connecting Lakeshore to other communities in Essex County are evident.
- ▶ The changing capacity of residents to volunteer and participate in service delivery will require a more consistent approach across the various community organizations to ensure equitable programming and standard of service across the community.
- ▶ The original Town history is significant in Ontario and Canada and provides a significant opportunity for heritage preservation and development requiring leadership from Council and the committees assigned the responsibility to undertake this work.
- ▶ There is increasing interest in the cultural and visual arts in response to the changing demographics of the community. An opportunity to develop for performing and visual arts will require Community and Council leadership.
- ▶ There are opportunities in festival, events and sport tournaments and cultural heritage attractions where Council can assist local organizations to position Lakeshore in the marketplace.

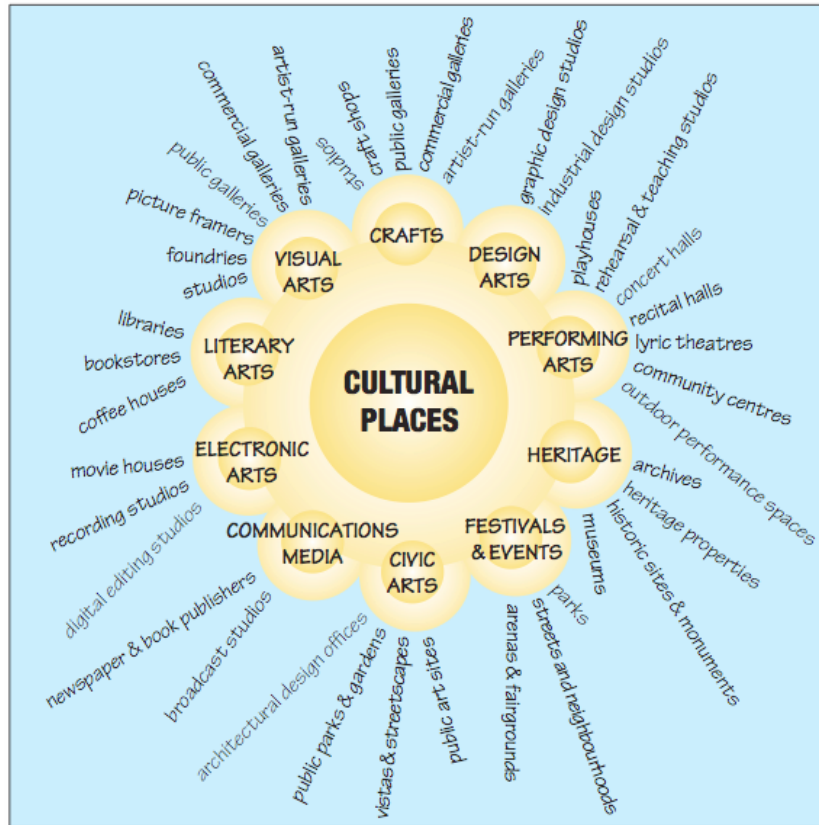


2.0 VALUE OF CULTURE IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

Cultural resources—activities and places—contribute significantly to the vibrancy and quality of life in a municipality. Creative municipalities recognize that culture and creativity are the expression of humanity, and that creative and cultural pursuits extend to all aspects of individual character, community life, governance, human expression and commercial enterprise.

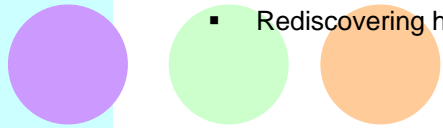
The following charts show how culture is integrated in all aspects of a community, and encompasses a wide spectrum of activities, venues and locations.





The value of supporting and fostering arts and heritage in communities has been stated by individuals, governments and organizations many times and in many ways. According to the Creative City Network, an organization of people employed by municipalities across Canada working on arts, culture and heritage policy, planning, development and support, culture-based initiatives ensure that a community’s habitat reflects who residents are and how they live. Culture contributes to:

- ▶ Urban renewal and revitalization by
 - Regenerating urban cores/main streets
 - Re-identifying stereotyped communities
 - Creating positive and nourishing urban environments
 - Rediscovering heritage landmarks and authentic land/streetscapes



- Creating permanent infrastructure for arts organizations and artists
- Increasing access to arts and heritage venues.

- ▶ Community identity and pride by
 - Facilitating social cohesion
 - Creating a unique, distinctive community vision
 - Fostering a sense of ownership, belonging and pride
 - Helping to preserve a collective memory and fostering a continuing dialogue about the past

- ▶ Economic growth by
 - Providing direct economic benefits
 - Creating job growth in the cultural sector
 - Attracting skilled workers
 - Helping a community gain a competitive advantage as a destination for cultural tourism
 - Spawning “spin-off” businesses
 - Leading to subsequent economic regeneration through urban revitalization.

- ▶ Positive community change by
 - Facilitating public dialogue through public art
 - Contributing to the development of creative learning communities
 - Creating healthy action-oriented, collaborative communities
 - Serving as a tool for community mobilization and activism



- 
- Building community capacity and leadership
 - ▶ Quality of life and place by
 - Celebrating diversity and culture difference which lead to community building and cultural association
 - Encouraging outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles
 - Encouraging learning for all ages and life long learning
 - ▶ Engagement of children and youth in education and community by
 - Creating outreach tools to engage youth
 - Enhancing general scholastic achievement
 - Building resilience and self-esteem in young people
 - Contributing to creating healthy and supporting communities for youth
 - Helping in the successful transition to adulthood and the development of job skills
 - Offering opportunities for youth leadership development

3.0 MUNICIPAL CULTURAL PLANNING – THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

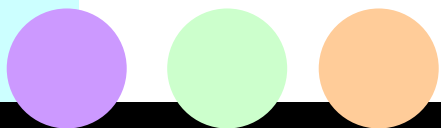
In recent years, municipal cultural planning has become an increasingly important planning tool in Canada. In 2001, the Ontario Municipal Act created 10 “spheres of jurisdiction,” including culture, parks, recreation and heritage, where municipalities can govern their affairs through the establishment of bylaws. In 2003, municipal cultural planning was identified as a priority by the Government of Ontario. Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Culture, stated that “We are encouraging municipalities to integrate cultural planning into their daily business, and emphasize local arts, culture and heritage as they plan the future of their communities.”

In 2005, the Ontario Ministry of Culture began sponsoring forums and workshops on this topic, and the Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership was established to promote cultural planning in the province. Partnership members include the ministries of Culture, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Northern Development and Mines, Citizenship and Immigration and Tourism, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the Centre of Cultural Management at the University of Waterloo.

On the federal level, the Canadian government’s 30 year vision for sustainable communities, “New Deal for Cities and Communities,” presents an integrated view of culture as one of the four foundation pillars—social, economic, environmental, cultural—upon which healthy, liveable communities grow and thrive.

Despite these ground breaking provincial and federal initiatives, the lack of a clearly articulated policy framework or legislative foundation as a powerful lever for change is considered a barrier to progress in advancing municipal cultural planning in Ontario. Although the Municipal Act, 2001 provides an enabling legislative context for strengthening municipal cultural development, it doesn’t provide direction on how this area should be addressed.

In the absence of legislation specific to implementation of municipal cultural strategies, several federal and provincial funding programs, as outlined below, are in place to provide funding and legislative support for municipalities.



3.1 Arts and Heritage Resource Management in Ontario

In Canada, heritage resource management and conservation involving non-federal lands fall under the jurisdiction of individual provincial governments. In Ontario, as the primary provincial ministry overseeing cultural affairs, the Ministry of Culture “implements strategies to promote and market Ontario’s cultural and heritage attractions to realize their full economic potential.”¹

3.1.1 HERITAGE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The 1996 Ontario Planning Act was amended to address a wide range of matters relating to municipal planning which are of provincial interest including the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest. The Planning Act provides the legislative framework for land use planning in Ontario. It allows municipalities to adopt Official Plan objectives and cultural heritage conservation policies and approval procedures.

Under the Act, the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement, was revised in 2005, the framework for broad, integrated and long term planning, provides policy direction to municipalities to make decisions on land use planning matters. Protection of built heritage, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources are addressed under Section 2.0.

The Ontario Heritage Act, administered by the Ontario Ministry of Culture, provides for the conservation, protection and preservation of heritage resources in Ontario. The Town of Lakeshore’s Municipal Heritage Committee was established in 2007 under Section 28 of this Act to assist Council on all matters relating to the legal designation and conservation of property of cultural heritage value and interest. A significant component of this Act, affecting museum operations, requires museums to meet minimum standards set out in “Standards for Community Museums in Ontario” in order to qualify for annual operating grants from the Ministry.

The Ontario Cemeteries Act (1990) regulates the development and operation of cemeteries, crematoriums, columbaria (vaults for cinerary urns), and mausoleums.

Funding for heritage resource management is available through various federal and provincial programs. As outlined in the 2007 Guide to Canadian Heritage (DOCH) Financial Support Programs,² the federal Department of Canadian Heritage offers the following funding programs which are most closely aligned with opportunities for heritage and cultural resource development in the Town of Lakeshore:



- ▶ Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program
- ▶ Cultural Spaces Canada
- ▶ Canada Travelling Exhibitions Indemnification Program
- ▶ “Celebrate Canada!” Program
- ▶ Museums Assistance Program
- ▶ Community Memories Program
- ▶ Partnerships Fund
- ▶ Virtual Museum of Canada Investment Program
- ▶ Development of Official-Language Communities Program
- ▶ Young Canada Works

A new DOCH program, announced in September 2007, includes two components under the Building Communities: Local Arts and Heritage Festivals; and Community Historical Anniversaries Programming.

Provincial heritage resource funding, through the Ministry of Culture, includes:

- ▶ Heritage Community Recognitions Program and Doors Open Ontario, both of which are administered through Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the Ministry;
- ▶ The Ontario Trillium Foundation which provides supports for arts, culture, recreation, sports, the environment, and social services;
- ▶ The Cultural Attractions Fund which provides supports for arts, heritage and cultural organizations for programming or resource preservation;
- ▶ The Community Museums Operating Grant Program.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Culture website <http://www.culture.gov.on.ca>

² Available for download through the Department of Canadian Heritage website

3.1.2 ARTS RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Ontario Arts Council (OAC), an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Culture, provides funding support to artists and arts organizations throughout the province. Priority areas for funding announced for the 2007-2008 period, with significant implications for the Town of Lakeshore's arts activities, include new organizations entering the operative fund stream, as well as a focus on Dance, Music, Visual and Media Arts and Arts Service Organizations, Francophone Arts, and Arts Education. Multi-year funding for all operating programs for the 2007-2010 period has also been introduced.

OAC grants available for arts organizations include one-time project grants, operating grants meant to cover operating expenses of established arts organizations that meet assessment criteria, and programming grants that support annual activities.³

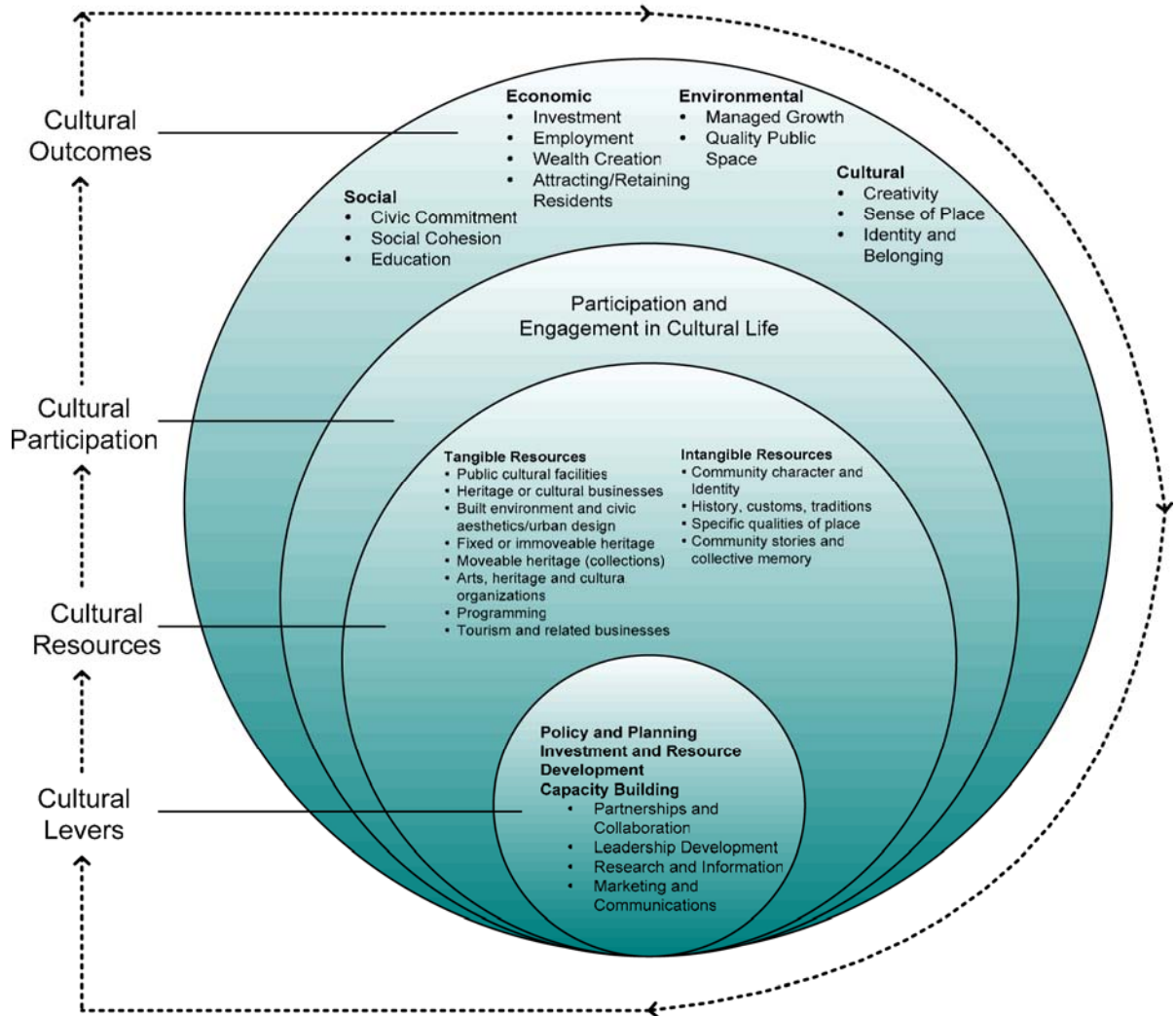
A significant step for Ontario artists, *The Status of Ontario's Artists Act, 2007*, was passed in May 2007. This legislation formally recognizes artists' economic and social contributions to Ontario's society and is described as introducing the province's first arts and culture strategic plan. Together these Provincial policies combine to form a framework for the Town's Community Cultural Plan.

3.2 The Cultural Planning Framework

"Funding culture is neither an imposition of taste nor an act of charity – it is an investment in the health of the community, in the same way that building roads and hospitals is an investment in the health of the community." Max Wyman, *The Defiant Imagination*, 2004

³Grant program guidelines are available for downloading from the Ontario Arts Council website.

Cultural Planning Framework



This diagram⁴ illustrates the underlying assumptions guiding the Town of Lakeshore Community Cultural Plan. The analysis of Lakeshore’s fragmented and fractured cultural environment indicates that, in order for a cultural plan to create positive impact in the community as well as beyond its borders, a strategic program of “cultural levers” in the form of cultural governance and policy development, resource and investment allocation, heritage resource recognition and protection, community capacity building, and cultural tourism initiatives is required to create a set of shared community values, build mutual respect among community interest groups and government, and increase participation, collaboration and communication in cultural activities.

⁴ “Economic Development Department, County of Prince Edward, Leveraging Growth and Managing Change, Prince Edward County Strategic Cultural Plan,” 2005

Capacity building is defined as “the mobilization of individual and organizational assets from the community and combining those assets with others to achieve organizational and community goals.”⁵ In Lakeshore, the mobilization and recombination of community cultural assets requires a new set of shared values and new ways of working together.

As one of the fastest growing areas in Essex County, the Town of Lakeshore is well positioned to focus upon culture as a key driver of economic and quality of life development. Attracting creative entrepreneurs and cultural industries into the community will help offset economic fluctuations in the manufacturing sector and create a critical mass of support for Lakeshore’s cultural environment.

3.2.1 TOWN OF LAKESHORE COMMUNITY CULTURAL PLAN OUTLINE

The Lakeshore Community Cultural Plan includes the following key components:

- ▶ Vision Statement
- ▶ Mission Statement
- ▶ Guiding Principles
- ▶ Recommended Actions

⁵ Ginsler & Associates Inc., *Capacity Building in Arts, Culture, and heritage Organizations: Knowledge From the Field* (Kitchener, 2005)

4.0 TOWN OF LAKESHORE COMMUNITY CULTURAL SERVICES MASTER PLAN STRATEGY – BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

4.1 Cultural Plan Terms of Reference

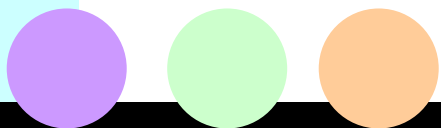
As part of the Community Services Master Plan, the Community Cultural Plan is intended to provide long term strategic directions, assign priorities and recommend the implementation of sustainable mechanisms for developing community cultural assets and delivering cultural programs. Objectives specific to the Culture Master plan include:

4.1.1 HERITAGE FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

- ▶ Identify and map heritage resources (heritage and/or archaeological sites and lands having the potential for the discovery of archaeological remains, historic structures, heritage districts, heritage/pioneer, and cultural heritage landscapes worthy of protection.
- ▶ Inventory designated heritage buildings and sites within the Town of Lakeshore.
- ▶ Identify potential buildings and areas to be designated as heritage sites.
- ▶ Recommend a process to prevent the further loss of heritage sites within the municipality, and raise awareness of the historical value of these sites.
- ▶ Identify and review the status of existing heritage organizations within Lakeshore indicating partnership opportunities where possible.
- ▶ Provide input into Official Plan and Zoning provisions for heritage sites, facilities, etc.
- ▶ Examine, analyze and make recommendations regarding staffing structure and future staffing requirements in this area.

4.1.2 ARTS AND CULTURE

- ▶ Identify existing arts and culture centers/programs within the community.
- ▶ Increase participation and access to existing arts and cultural programs and facilities.



- ▶ Recommend the process to create a Lakeshore Arts Council to better guide the cultural needs of the community as a whole.
- ▶ Develop a process to raise awareness and the profile of local artists and performers.
- ▶ Recommend venues for festivals, arts and cultural events.
- ▶ Review partnership/facilities opportunities in this area with the two boards of education, both of which are constructing new state of the art facilities.
- ▶ Review the opportunity and requirements necessary to develop and maintain an outdoor amphitheatre for major public events.
- ▶ Examine, analyze and make recommendations regarding staffing structure and future staffing requirements in this area.

4.2 Cultural Planning Study Process

A detailed outline of the cultural planning study process was included in the Situational Analysis Report submitted earlier. It details the following research and inventory activities:

- ▶ Documents review (local history, demographic studies, municipal policies and studies, online database inventories of heritage arts and cultural resources, federal and provincial policy, legislation and funding programs)
- ▶ Public consultation and interviews
 - 24 interviews were conducted, either face-to-face or by telephone with municipal staff, local heritage arts and culture groups, Essex County heritage representatives, and provincial heritage consultants.
 - Three focus groups were arranged with heritage and arts related individuals and groups.
 - Six site visits and interviews were conducted with local museums, arts and cultural organizations and individuals.
- ▶ Mapping and Inventory of heritage and cultural features, sites and areas
 - Four days of “windshield” surveys of local heritage and cultural features were conducted and documented. Two of these were conducted in the company of two

knowledgeable local residents/historians. As a result of these surveys, 15 inventories and maps, organized according to type of heritage/cultural feature, were created. The maps and inventory are included in the Situational Analysis Report, Supplementary Appendices. These maps did not include archaeological features other than non-Native cemetery sites. Inventories included the following features:

- Architecture - agricultural
- Architecture – churches
- Architecture – community sites
- Architecture – residential
- Architecture – schools
- Cemeteries (non-Native)
- Cultural landscapes
- Industrial sites
- Museums/archives sites
- Natural history sites
- Public monuments
- Ethnic 18th and 19th century settlement areas
- Transportation arteries

4.3 Situational Analysis

4.3.1 THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT – ARTS AND HERITAGE AND CULTURE IN THE WINDSOR ESSEX COUNTY REGION

The Town of Lakeshore is located within the historically and culturally rich area of south western Ontario, also known as the Windsor Essex County region. Ontario Tourism calls this area, which is Canada’s southern most area and reaches the latitude of northern California, the “Sun Parlour” District. With its close proximity to the U.S. border, the area serves as a throughway and hub for American and Canadian markets, employment and travel.

4.3.2 NATURAL HISTORY CONTEXT

This extreme south western region of Ontario contains examples of Carolinian forest and features plants and animals found nowhere else in Canada. Examples of these, found in the Town of Lakeshore, include 20 hectares of upland oak-hickory woodland in the Maidstone Conservation Area, and isolated remnant freshwater marshes found along the St. Clair shoreline in the Tremblay Beach and Ruscom Shores Conservation Areas. Lakeshore’s conservation areas, managed by the Essex Region Conservation Authorities, are considered vital staging areas and habitats for the support of spring and fall waterfowl migrations.

4.3.3 THE LAKESHORE-WINDSOR RELATIONSHIP

Lakeshore's historical relationship with the City of Windsor, which is the major metropolitan centre in this region, is known to date back to the 18th century with the expansion of French settlement in to the south shore area of Lake St. Clair. Today, Windsor is a significant employment area for Lakeshore residents. Of the 81% of residents who commute to work outside of Lakeshore, almost 70% work in Windsor.⁶ Information from interviewees and focus group participants indicates that Lakeshore residents regularly travel to Windsor for shopping and cultural reasons. French heritage focus group participants described close ties between Windsor and Lakeshore Francophone groups. The 2001 tercentennial celebrations commemorating the founding of Windsor were significant events for Lakeshore's French community. One of their members was President of the Tercentenary Committee, and spearheaded the publication of a commemorative volume of writings celebrating this event.

4.3.4 LAKESHORE'S FOUNDING FRENCH LINK

Essex County's western edge, comprising Windsor and the Town of Lakeshore, constitutes Ontario's oldest settlement area and the establishment of its oldest French community. A settlement of disbanded French settlers in Fort Ponchartrain (Detroit) established a foundation for settlement on the Canadian side of the Detroit River in 1747 in what would become Windsor. When prime river frontage was no longer available, settlement proceeded towards the southern shore of Lake St. Clair. By the late 1700s, French settlers had settled in the present day areas of Belle River, Rochester and Pointe-aux-Roches. Today, these communities still have a large Francophone population.

4.3.5 THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD LINK

Historic links between Lakeshore and the surrounding communities of Detroit, Windsor, Amherstburg, Dresden, Buxton, and Chatham stem from the famous Detroit River route of the "Underground Railroad," one of several escape routes followed by Black slaves in the mid-19th century. One of Lakeshore's best known cultural attractions, the John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum. It is a museum and cemetery located in a block of land originally purchased in Maidstone Township by the Refugee Home Society in 1854 to provide homes for escaped slaves from the United States. In 1861, 375 Black residents were living in this area. The Walls site is one of 29 Underground Railroad sites located along the Black Heritage Route stretching from Windsor, north to Owen Sound and east to Oakville. This tourist route is one of the region's most significant cultural and heritage assets.

⁶ McSweeney & Associates, "Town of Lakeshore Situation Analysis Report, 2006 Draft," p. 32

4.3.6 SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO HERITAGE COUNCIL

The Southwestern Ontario Heritage Council membership list includes 41 members representing museums, heritage, arts and cultural organizations in the Windsor Essex County region in addition to representatives from the City of Windsor and the Ontario Ministry of Culture. Three Lakeshore museums (John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum, Comber Historical Society and Museum, and Maidstone Bicentennial Museum) are members. The council, formed in 2002 to provide an informal opportunity for area cultural organizations to network and exchange information, meets four times per year. Major events held in the past include the Ontario Museums Association Conference (1996) and a Heritage Fair (2005).

Southwestern Ontario Heritage Council members *outside* of Lakeshore include:

- ▶ Amherstburg
 - Fort Malden National Historic Site
 - North American Black Historical Museum
 - Gibson Gallery
 - Malden community & Cultural Centre
 - Marsh Collection Society
 - Park House
 - Project H.M.S. Detroit and Gordon House

- ▶ Chatham
 - Chatham-Kent Museum & Milner House

- ▶ Detroit
 - Motor Cities-Automobile National Heritage Area

- ▶ Essex County
 - Essex County Black Historical Association
 - Essex County Historical Cemeteries
 - Essex County Historical Society

- ▶ Essex
 - Heritage Essex/Essex Railway Station

- ▶ Harrow
 - John R. Park Homestead
 - H.E.I.R.S. (Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society)



- ▶ Kingsville
 - Heritage Village
 - Kingsville Historical Park
 - Kingsville Train Station
 - Save Ontario Shipwrecks
- ▶ Leamington
 - Erie Quest Marine Heritage
 - Leamington & Mersea Historical society
- ▶ McGregor
 - Essex County Steam & Gas Engine Museum
- ▶ Ontario
 - Ministry of Culture Regional Advisor, Windsor Office
- ▶ Pelee Island
 - Pelee Island Heritage Centre
- ▶ Ridgetown
 - Ridge House Museum
- ▶ Sandwich
 - Olde Sandwich South and Area Historical Society
- ▶ Tecumseh
 - Tecumseh Area Historical Society
- ▶ Windsor
 - University of Windsor Anthropology Museum
 - Centre Afro-Canadien
 - City of Windsor Heritage and Culture Development
 - City of Windsor Heritage Planner
 - Ontario Archaeological Society, Windsor Chapter
 - Sandwich First Baptist Church National Historic Site
 - Serbian Heritage Museum
 - The Friends of the Court, Mackenzie Hall Cultural Centre
 - Windsor Municipal Archives
 - Windsor's Community Museum
 - Windsor Historical Society
 - Windsor Woodcarving Museum

4.3.7 ARTS COUNCIL - WINDSOR & REGION

The Arts Council - Windsor & Region was incorporated in 1979. It is an umbrella arts organization representing and promoting artistic endeavour within Windsor and Essex County with 349 members

representing business, non-profit groups and individuals. The Council's notable accomplishments include saving Windsor's historic Capitol Theatre (now one of the City's landmark performing arts centre) from demolition, creating the Windsor Endowment for the Arts, and founding the Sandwich Festival held annually each September. The festival celebrates the historic Sandwich Town area of Windsor, its War of 1812 and Underground Railroad history with fireworks, ghost tours, a talent show, a church service, and live entertainment. Council activities include arts advocacy, arts promotion, live arts radio programming, a website, a newsletter, a gallery and meeting space, and an information service.

4.4 A Profile of Cultural Resources

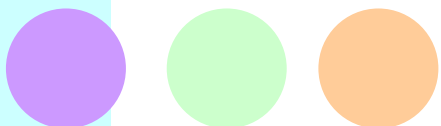
4.4.1 TOWARD A DEFINITION OF CULTURE

"Rather than seeing culture as something that merely adds spice to life, it should, once again, be perceived as the air we breathe. And investment in culture, whether from government or private sources, should not be perceived as some kind of worthy effort to make life more pleasant, or even as the search for more and better ways to kill time and overcome boredom, but rather as a way of enhancing everything that seeks to give meaning to our lives." Václav Havel, "Ethics turning profit into culture," *Walrus* (February/March 2004)

This quotation by Václav Havel introduces a broadly-based definition of culture reaching across all aspects of municipal life. It can be worded as the shared beliefs, customs, rituals, artifacts and values of a people in a given place and at a given time.

This definition recognizes that culture reaches into many aspects of the Town of Lakeshore's community life and planning—beyond the areas of arts and heritage which are commonly considered to constitute the cultural life of a community. It cannot be removed or separated from the daily lives of residents. It is contained and reflected in residents' actions, views and habits. Culture is reflected in the places that people live in—in streetscapes, transportation routes, public spaces, views, historic sites and buildings, and community organizations. The people of Lakeshore are all generators of culture by what they choose to be, to see, to do, to say, and to buy.

While a wider definition of culture is valuable to provide a context for a new way of thinking, the Community Culture Master Plan focuses upon the more manageable areas of cultural resources. Cultural resources are all the elements—both tangible and intangible—that combine to define the unique cultural identity of the Town of Lakeshore. The mapping survey and research completed for the Situational Report, shows that Lakeshore's cultural resources include:



Tangible resources: ethnic settlement areas, architecture (agricultural, churches, community sites, residential, schools, museums and archives and their collections), non-Native cemeteries, transportation arteries, Native and non-Native archaeological sites, businesses.

Intangible resources: community characteristics, languages, customs and traditions, festivals and events, theatrical and musical performances, symbols, quality of life attributes, stories.

An analysis of opportunities and challenges, based on Lakeshore's cultural resources not only provides a profile of the Town's contemporary culture, but also points the way to developing a cultural planning framework that includes a vision statement, a mission statement, guiding principles, goals and recommended activities.

4.4.2 CULTURAL RESOURCE OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Lakeshore's Native history is partly visible as evidenced by:
 - The routes of roads (St. Clair Road, Tecumseh Road, French Line) which follow trails originally used by First Nations groups.

- ▶ Lakeshore's founding French history is still dramatically and highly visible as evidenced by:
 - Built heritage which includes cemeteries, schools, buildings used for community, commercial, residential and religious purposes, and two of Lakeshore's most dramatic churches in Pointe-aux-Roches (Church of the Annunciation - 1905) and St. Joachim (1882). The St. Joachim church was the genesis of the St. Joachim village that developed on lots laid out in 1883. As described in the Situational Report, the village falls under the definition of a cultural landscape as defined by the Provincial Policy Statement of the Planning Act 2.6.1. The St. Joachim church spire, which can be seen for many miles from the surrounding countryside, is a symbol of the area's French heritage.
 - Many streets, roads, and communities throughout Lakeshore have French names.
 - Almost 20% of Lakeshore residents are bilingual French.
 - Archives managed by the Société Franco-Ontarienne d'histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor-Essex. These archives, presently housed in the St. Simon & St. Jude Roman Catholic Church in Belle River, are the only French archives in the south western Ontario area. They consist of 5,000 books plus documents, and are

managed by volunteers. The Society's mandate is to assist Franco-Ontarians to discover their heritage. The Windsor-Essex Division serves the Windsor, Essex, Ridgetown, and Amherstberg areas, as well as American researchers.

- In addition to the Société Franco-Ontarienne d'histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor-Essex, three other active Francophone cultural groups are in existence in Lakeshore. They include S.O.S. Églises (formed to stave off demolition of the Pointe-aux-Roches and St. Joachim churches), Centre Culturel St. Cyr, and Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises. None of these groups has building headquarters. The Centre Culturel St. Cyr used to operate out the Church of the Annunciation in Pointe-aux-Roches prior to its closing in 1998.

- ▶ Lakeshore's links to the Underground Railroad movement are highly visible and known as evidenced by:
 - The John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum is located in the land block purchased by the Refugee Home Society in 1854 to provide homes for escaped slaves from the United States. The museum interprets the Underground Railroad movement as well as aspects of Essex County history. The museum is a highly promoted site on the Black Heritage Route and has the highest visitation, with 300 tour buses visiting annually, of any museum in Lakeshore.
 - Built heritage features found within the historic boundaries of the Refugee Home Society block include a Black Methodist Episcopal (BME) cemetery containing the grave of Lewis Jackson, a former slave from Kentucky, and the First Baptist Church Puce.
 - The Lakeshore Black Heritage Committee has been established as a result of collaboration between the John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum and the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum.
 - In 2007, the Ontario Heritage Trust and the Lakeshore Black Heritage Committee unveiled a provincial plaque at the site of the BME cemetery commemorating the founding of the Puce River Black community.

- ▶ Lakeshore's 19th century ethnic (Irish, Scottish, German) immigration history is still known, and in some cases, is visible as evidenced by:

- The names of roads (e.g. O'Brien Side Road) in the southern and western areas of Lakeshore
 - Published and unpublished documents describing this history
 - The living memories of older Lakeshore residents who are still able to identify buildings and former builders and owners.

- ▶ Lakeshore's 19th and early 20th century distinctive agricultural history is still visible and known as evidenced by:
 - The central downtown area of the 19th century village of Comber still displays evidence of its former role as a significant agricultural and industrial centre, and meets the definition of a cultural landscape as defined by the Provincial Policy Statement of the Planning Act 2.6.1. It retains historically significant buildings including an 1880 designated railway station.
 - The collection of significant agricultural artifacts and archival documents located in the Comber Museum and Historical Society building
 - Published and unpublished documents describing this history
 - Standing agricultural features such as corn cribs, barns, milk houses, windmills, residences, tree windbreaks, and drainage features.
 - Recognizable examples of buildings such as rural schools, despite changes due to reuse and renovation
 - The living memories of older Lakeshore residents who are still able to identify buildings, remember former builders and owners, and recount stories of early 20th century agricultural and social history.

- ▶ Lakeshore's marine history is visible and known as evidenced by:
 - The designated early 19th century lighthouse standing at the mouth of the Thames River
 - The continued existence of Belle River Harbour and local history sources which describe its former industrial function
 - Published and unpublished documents describing this history

- ▶ Lakeshore's natural history is visible as evidenced by:
 - 20 hectares of upland oak-hickory Carolinian woodland and containing at least one oak tree dating back three centuries in the Maidstone Conservation Area
 - Three conservation areas deemed to be critical migratory bird passageways
 - Two conservation areas providing access to the Lake St. Clair shore line and containing protect marshes vital for the support of migratory waterfowl and many rare, vulnerable and endangered species of birds and animals

- ▶ The Town of Lakeshore has taken the following significant steps to respond to the challenges of amalgamation and to manage growth:
 - A Municipal Heritage Committee has been established under Section 28 of the Ontario Heritage Act to oversee the conservation of historically and architecturally significant properties
 - A series of studies and strategies have been commissioned and completed including an Economic Development Strategy (2006), the Town of Lakeshore Strategic Plan (2007), and the Town of Lakeshore Official Plan (2007 Draft). Each of these studies has implications for the Cultural Plan. The Essex County Library Facility Study (2007) commissioned by the Essex County Library Board also impacts the Cultural Plan.

- ▶ Lakeshore's cultural organizations have access to an established mechanism, the Southwestern Ontario Heritage Council, for networking, communication, collaboration and partnership opportunities with regional groups and provincial ministry officials.

- ▶ Municipal leadership in the newly created Town of Lakeshore has an opportunity to write a new page in the history of this area—to undertake a unifying and supportive role for the organizations struggling to preserve and present its history.

- ▶ Members of *The Space*, the only not-for-profit performing arts school and theatre company for children in Lakeshore, are enthusiastic about what they see as opportunities for the performing arts in Lakeshore which they view as a growing area.

- ▶ Opportunities to extend and improve places where culture happens in the Town include:



- Lakeview Park in Belle River has the potential to offer a waterfront venue for festivals and events.
- Depending upon the outcome of the Conservation Review Board hearings regarding the Roman Catholic churches at St. Joachim and Point-aux-Roches, these facilities could be considered for adaptive reuse as cultural community/performing arts centres.
- Two museums, the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum and the John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum, are located within fairly close proximity to one another. This could present a locational advantage in developing a clustering of historical attractions.
- The Essex County Library Facility Planning Study (2007) has recommended the development of a new centralized branch to replace the present library and with opportunities to develop the new branch as part of a proposed multi-used recreation complex.
- The completion of two new schools in Lakeshore may impact opportunities for locations for performances and other cultural activities.

4.4.3 CULTURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGES

- ▶ Late 20th century development activities have affected Lakeshore's built heritage adversely. Much of it exists, but in a heavily disguised/hidden manner which has undervalued it as a basis for community focus, identity and pride.
- ▶ The rise of suburban development along the Lake St. Clair shoreline from the 1940s onward has restricted public access to the lake with the exception of key locations such as Belle River, Lakeview Park, Tremblay Beach, Ruscom Shores and Lighthouse Conservation Areas.
- ▶ The pressures of shifting demographics and amalgamation have created a serious rift between the Town's French community and municipal government over the future of two prominent historic French Roman Catholic churches.
- ▶ Lakeshore's cultural activities, in the form of museums, historical societies and cultural organizations, represent interests and loyalties established prior to the amalgamation of the former Town of Belle River and the Townships of Maidstone, Rochester, Tilbury

North and Tilbury West in 1999. As a result, these organizations are still generally working independently of each other with little collaboration.

- ▶ Awareness of cultural facilities, specifically museums, by residents is low. Of residents surveyed for the Community Services Master Plan, only one-quarter to one-third were aware of the area's museums.
- ▶ A community venue for the performing and visual arts is lacking. The promotion of the arts has been left to individuals and groups who are struggling to establish an arts presence in Lakeshore.
- ▶ Cultural businesses related to arts, entertainment and recreation constitute only 1.55% of the Town's commercial sector.
- ▶ The commuting activities of 81% of Lakeshore residents have drawn attention away from the Town and towards Windsor as a shopping, cultural and entertainment destination.



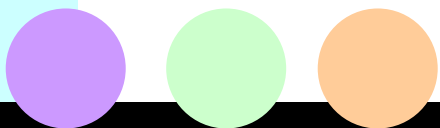
5.0 COMMUNITY CULTURAL MASTER PLAN

5.1 Cultural Master Plan Vision Statement

Recommendation – Vision Statement

Culture is one of the four pillars—social, economic, environmental, cultural—upon which the Lakeshore community stands. Citizens and local government work together to promote, develop and maintain the Town’s cultural assets in conditions in which they can thrive, prosper and be accessed and enjoyed by residents and visitors of all ages, abilities and interests.

The Vision for the Cultural Services Master Plan positions culture as an integral component of the community, essential to maintaining and improving the quality life of life enjoyed by residents and visitors—a perspective that forms the basis of federal policy at the Department of Infrastructure and Community. This view was also at the heart of the vision of Canadian cities developed by the federal 2004 External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities. It emphasizes collaboration between local government, citizens and community groups as a key strategy for cultural development.



5.2 Cultural Master Plan Mission Statement

Recommendation – Statement of Principles

The Mission Statement outlines the strategies to be used to accomplish the recommended Cultural Master Plan Initiatives.

The Lakeshore Community Cultural Master Plan directs the Town’s achievement of a dynamic, visible program of cultural initiatives based upon:

- ▶ Strong cultural governance
- ▶ Managed growth to protect cultural resources and ensure quality of place
- ▶ The identification, improvement and maintenance of locations and facilities for cultural groups and activities
- ▶ Positive community change through communication, participation and shared values
- ▶ Expanded opportunities for tourism and economic development

5.3 Cultural Services Master Plan Initiatives

5.3.1 BUILD COMMUNITY CULTURAL CAPACITY WITH STRONG CULTURAL GOVERNANCE

The development, support and promotion of cultural resources as one of the four pillars of Lakeshore’s sustainable community requires strong municipal and community leadership in the areas of policy development, staff development and education, funding investments, communications, and community mobilization.

5.3.2 DEVELOP A GUIDING CULTURAL POLICY FOR THE TOWN OF LAKESHORE

Policy development is a critical first step in the affirmation of cultural resources and services as essential community components. The policy framework outlines the definition of culture and cultural services unique to the Town of Lakeshore upon which a foundation of shared values will be



based, the role of municipal government in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of cultural services, and areas of intersection between the Town, residents, and external groups and municipalities. Once completed and approved, a comprehensive Community Cultural Services Policy will assume the role of a guiding master document for the Town’s cultural planning initiatives and procedures.

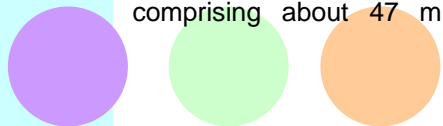
Recommendation - Community Cultural Services Policy

A Community Cultural Services Policy should be established and should include the following content components:

- ▶ **Policy rationale and need**
- ▶ **Policy principles/foundation**
- ▶ **Policy statement and content**
- ▶ **Linkages to regulatory and/or statutory acts or legislation, regulations and/or Town policies**
- ▶ **Implementation and monitoring procedures**
- ▶ **Mandatory policy review date**
- ▶ **Amendment tracking component**

5.3.3 ESTABLISH A DEDICATED STAFF POSITION TO PROVIDE CONSISTENCY AND LEADERSHIP

The establishment of a dedicated permanent staff position, the Cultural Services Coordinator, will provide consistency and leadership in the development of cultural community relations. Reporting to the Director of Community Services, the Cultural Services Coordinator will act as staff liaison with the Town of Lakeshore Arts and Culture Council, the Museums Lakeshore Board of Governance, and the Arts Centre Task force. The Coordinator will liaise with the Municipal Heritage Committee, the Youth Council, the Seniors Council, tourism, and other committees/groups/departments as required, and will participate in the Southwestern Ontario Heritage Council, a regional group comprising about 47 museums, archives and heritage groups from Essex County, as a



representative of the Town. This position will act as project facilitator for proposed cultural projects such as museum or cultural centre feasibility projects, and/or archaeological master plans.

Recommendation - Cultural Services Coordinator

The Cultural Services Coordinator should be established as a dedicated staff position to develop, implement and administer the Town's cultural policies, programs and services.

5.3.4 ESTABLISH THE TOWN OF LAKESHORE COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURE COUNCIL

The establishment of a Town of Lakeshore Community Arts and Culture Council as a municipal partner to oversee arts and cultural activities will increase active community participation and decision-making in projects that create positive community change, facilitate social cohesion, create a unique community vision, foster a sense of ownership, belonging and pride, and access funding opportunities through the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) which distributes \$39.9 million to individual artists and arts groups.

Priority areas for OAC funding announced for the 2007-2008 period, with significant implications for the Town of Lakeshore's arts activities, include new organizations entering the operative fund stream, as well as a focus on Dance, Music, Visual and Media Arts and Arts Service Organizations, Francophone Arts, and Arts Education. Multi-year funding for all operating programs for the 2007-2010 period has also been introduced.

The arts council model, promoted by the Ontario Arts Council as an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Culture, promotes community arts councils as umbrella organizations for local arts groups and activities and as resources for local arts information. Services can include advocacy, communication, education, consultation, networking, grant distribution.

The presence of the Arts Council – Windsor & Region offers the Town of Lakeshore Community Arts Council an opportunity for close collaboration, resources sharing and partnership initiatives with an established, experienced sister organization.



Recommendation – Town of Lakeshore Community Arts and Culture Council

Create a Town of Lakeshore Community Arts and Culture Council as a not-for-profit charitable organization whose primary purpose is to advise Council on all matters concerning the artistic life of the community. Include representatives from museums, arts, French heritage, Museums Lakeshore, business community, Chamber of Commerce, Belle River BIA, Youth Council, Seniors Council and one member of the Municipal Heritage Committee of Council.

5.3.5 CREATIVE CITY NETWORK OF CANADA MEMBERSHIP

The recent upsurge in municipal cultural planning has led to the creation of support groups and an information explosion on this topic enabling municipalities to access a network of peers undergoing similar challenges, and an increasingly sophisticated tool kit. The establishment of the Creative City Network of Canada reflects the increasing role of municipalities in the development of arts, culture and heritage in Canada. It is an organization of people employed by municipalities across Canada working on arts, culture and heritage policy, planning, development and support. Membership is available to staff employed by Canadian municipalities who work on arts, culture and heritage. One membership fee covers all staff members.

Recommendation – Creative City Network of Canada Membership

The Town of Lakeshore should join the Creative City Network of Canada as a municipal member and be represented by the Manager of Cultural Services.

5.3.6 INCREASE CULTURAL FUNDING INVESTMENT

Culture is acknowledged as an important contributor to economic growth. Statistics Canada 2003 figures show that culture industries contributed approximately \$43.2 billion to the Canadian economy, accounting for approximately 3.8% of GDP. In Ontario the culture sector contributed 4.2% of the GDP.

Investment in culture by Ontario municipalities in 2003 equaled \$72 in per capita spending. In the Town of Lakeshore, 2006 spending on recreation and culture was considerably lower at \$50.1 per capita (based on a 2006 population estimate of 33,000 and excluding building costs and \$10,000 rated funding for the Comber and District Museum). The majority of this spending was on recreation



activities and facilities. In 2006, museums and cultural groups received \$25,525 (equaling \$.77 per capita) in project funding through the Community Partnerships Fund, the sole funding program operated by the Town of Lakeshore. Under the broadest interpretation of culture, the total funding received by all community groups that applied for funding in 2006 under the Community Partnerships Fund equaled \$86,110 (\$2.60 per capita spending). In 2007 this amount increased to \$98,369 (2.98 per capita spending). In either case, cultural funding by the Town of Lakeshore is substantially below the per capita norm in Ontario. As a relatively new municipality, the Town has not yet had the chance to reap the dynamic benefits of investment in its cultural resources.

Recommendation - Community Partnership Funding Program

Review, reposition and expand the Community Partnership Funding Program as the Community Partnership and Investment Fund as an alternative to direct delivery and to sustain a broader mix/spectrum of leisure services, including cultural services, as described in the Leisure Services Delivery Strategies section of the Community Services Master Plan.

5.3.7 MANAGE GROWTH TO PROTECT HERITAGE RESOURCES AND LAKESHORE'S QUALITY OF PLACE

Overview

Although a clearly articulated policy framework or legislative foundation for municipal cultural planning implementation does not presently exist in Ontario, federal and provincial studies have shown that, in municipalities where successful work with cultural planning was accomplished, culture was integrated across the municipal planning program and was part of a unified strategic direction for the municipality as whole.

Ensure that Culture is Integrated into the Strategic Municipal Planning Process

The Town of Lakeshore is a relatively new municipality, created from five amalgamated entities in 1999. Since its creation, it has been striving to develop a strong planning foundation with the completion of the Economic Development Plan and the Community Strategic Plan. Youth and seniors advisory committees have been established as a result of the Strategic Plan. A draft Official Plan is presently under review. A Municipal Heritage Committee, established under Section 28 of the Ontario Heritage Act, was formed in 2007.

Integration of culture in municipal planning should encompass the Town's major strategic planning initiatives, including the Official Plan, Strategic Plan, Land Use, Economic Development, Tourism, and Social Services.

Recommendation – Integration of Cultural Planning in Municipal Planning Strategies

Ensure that culture is included as an essential pillar of community life and is included in the Town planning strategy documents including:

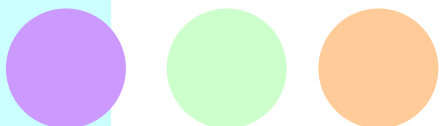
- ▶ **Strategic Plan**
- ▶ **Official Plan**
- ▶ **Economic Development Strategy**
- ▶ **Tourism Plan**
- ▶ **Ensure culture is a consideration in any review and update of Town planning and strategy documents.**

5.3.8 ESTABLISH A MUNICIPAL HERITAGE REGISTER BY COMPLETING NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE INVENTORIES

The inventory of cultural heritage resources, created as part of the Situational Analysis Report, forms a foundation for the development a Municipal Heritage Register of culturally and historically significant sites as part of the mandate of the Town of Lakeshore Municipal Heritage Committee. Under subsection 27(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act, the municipal clerk is required to keep a current register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest situated in the municipality. The register must include all designated properties, as well as those that municipal Council believes to be of cultural heritage value.

Listing a property of cultural heritage value or interest is the first step a municipality should take in the identification and evaluation of a property that may warrant some form of heritage conservation, recognition an/or long-term protection such as designation. The value of a municipal register of cultural heritage also goes beyond individual property protection as it:

- ▶ Recognizes properties of heritage value in a community
- ▶ Fosters civic identity and pride by drawing attention to the heritage and development of a community



- ▶ Promotes knowledge and enhances an understanding of a community's cultural heritage
- ▶ Provides easily accessible information about cultural heritage value for land-use planners, property owners, developers, the tourism industry, educators and the general public
- ▶ Maps local cultural resources that can then be leveraged for economic development and community building.

Recommendation – Municipal Heritage Register of Non-Archaeological Heritage Resources

Develop the Municipal Heritage Register as a first step towards:

- ▶ **Advising and assisting Council relative to Part IV (designation of individual properties) and Part V (designation of heritage conservation districts) of the Ontario Heritage Act;**
- ▶ **Informing and advising Town Council, administration, the development community and the public of their responsibilities relative to the preservation of built heritage resources.**

5.3.9 ESTABLISH A INVENTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

Under the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2005) 2.6.2, municipalities are to incorporate more detailed archaeological conservation objective and policies reflecting local archaeological resources and areas of archaeological potential into their official plans, land use planning documents and related development approval processes. The PPS, 2005 defines archaeological resources as including “artifacts, archaeological sites, and marine archaeological sites. The identification and evaluation of such resources are based upon archaeological fieldwork undertaken in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act.”

The identification of Archaeological resources is based on archaeological assessment by a licensed professional archaeologist. Archaeological licensing and reporting are governed by the Ontario Heritage Act and its regulations. Licensed archaeologists must comply with Ministry of Culture standards and guidelines when carrying out and reporting on archaeological fieldwork. The Ontario Heritage Act prohibits anyone from disturbing an archaeological site with a licence. The Ministry of Culture maintains a database of archaeological site locations and a register of archaeological

fieldwork reports. A municipality or approval authority may obtain site locations and mapping for land use planning purposes, after a data sharing agreement with the province is ratified.

The identification of areas of archaeological potential is based on provincial criteria. An archaeological master plan containing geographical information system (GIS) of known archaeological resource locations and areas of archaeological potential can define these areas even more precisely within municipal boundaries. A master plan is an efficient and effective way of ensuring significant archaeological resources are conserved during land use planning and development activities.

In Lakeshore's rapid growth environment, the identification, mitigation and preservation of archaeological sites is significant concern. Apart from cemeteries, information regarding archaeological sites is scarce. An archaeological master plan should be undertaken by an archaeological specialist consultant to determine the extent and nature of these resources.

Recommendation – Archaeological Master Plan

Initiate an archaeological master plan to:

- ▶ **Identify and map areas containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential;**
- ▶ **Develop appropriate policies and procedures to fulfill the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act and the Ontario Cemeteries Act;**
- ▶ **Develop appropriate policies and procedures for implementing and utilizing the master plan when assessing the requirements for archaeological review during the development approval process;**
- ▶ **To inform and advise Town Council, administration, the development community and the public of their responsibilities relative to the preservation of archaeological resources through the subdivision process.**

5.3.10 ENSURE ACCESS TO SPECIALIST RESOURCES

Stewardship of the area's cultural heritage resources presently falls under the purview of the Municipal Heritage Committee and several small, under funded volunteer groups. The challenges of historic building adaptation in a rapid growth environment require expert assistance from a

consultant or staff planner with knowledge of this specialized area to work in the Development Services division. This specialist consultant or planner will focus upon developing, implementing and administering the Town’s planning policies, and services related to built heritage issues. He/she will act as staff liaison with the Municipal Heritage Committee, provide expert advice to Committee members and the public, and liaise with the Cultural Advisory Committee and other committees/groups/departments as required. He/she will act as project manager for downtown/streetscape revitalization projects, and will assist the Manager of Cultural Services to successfully complete proposed cultural projects such as museum or cultural heritage centre feasibility projects, and/or archaeological master plans as a member of the project steering committee.

Recommendation – Access to Specialist Resources

That the Town have access to resources such as a planner/consultant with specialization in built heritage to advise Town Council, administrator, and community groups on heritage-related land use planning issues.

5.3.11 IDENTIFICATION, IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES FOR CULTURAL GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

Overview

The stewardship and promotion of Lakeshore’s historical, arts and cultural resources are presently in the hands of voluntary museum, arts, community, and French heritage groups who are generally working independently of each other and lack adequate resources and venues for interpretive and research activities and collections. Three distinct cultural groups can be identified in terms of needs and activities:

1. **Museums.** The Town’s three local museums—Comber and District Historical Museum, John Freeman Walls Historical Site & Underground Railroad Museum, and the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum—are stewards of Lakeshore’s invaluable material culture collections and historical content. All are chronically under funded, have no permanent paid staff, have little training in collections management, are generally working independently of each other, and lack suitable conditions for their collections and interpretive activities. In two cases, mandates are poorly defined or not adhered to, and are focused upon outdated (pre-amalgamation) geographic constructs. Programming and exhibitry is object-based and meaningful only to a very small audience.



None of the museums participate in the Ontario Community Museums Operating Grant Program which requires that minimal standards be met in order to gain access to a portion of annual operating funding. Present funding patterns vary according to the individual museum. Most project funds are raised through grant programs such as the Town of Lakeshore's Community Partnership Fund and the Trillium Foundation. Operating funds are raised through donations and events. The Comber and District Historical Museum has been receiving a yearly stipend of \$10,000, a situation which ends in 2007.

2. **French Heritage.** Lakeshore has our French heritage groups, all run by volunteers. They include Société Franco-Ontarienne d'Histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor-Essex which holds and maintains archives in small overcrowded facilities in the St. Simon & St. Jude Roman Catholic Church in Belle River, S.O.S. Églises, a citizen's group formed in 2001 to protest the planned demolition of the St. Joachim Roman Catholic Church and the Church of the Annunciation in Point-aux-Roches, the Centre Culture St. Cyr, founded in 1973 as a cultural group dedicated to the promotion of French cultural activities, and the Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises, a charitable organization of Francophone women who fundraise on behalf of third world countries, needy families and French schools. Apart from Société Franco-Ontarienne d'Histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor-Essex, none of these groups has facility headquarters.
3. **Performing Arts.** Apart from school drama classes, only one performing arts group exists in Lakeshore. *The Space* is a not-for-profit performing arts school and theatre company for children founded in 2005 and operating out of a storefront space in a west end mall. Funding is self generated. The school relies on tuition fees and performance revenue. The school has applied for Trillium funds for staffing support. *The Space* was founded and run by Karen Mossman whose background includes 12 years as a drama teacher at Belle River District High School. The school, which has two hired staff, runs acting programs year round for about 80 students and actively collaborates with area musicians, graphic designers and schools to promote performing arts in Lakeshore.

Set against this scenario of dedicated groups of volunteers working in isolated, often substandard conditions are a number of existing underutilized facilities and locations which could offer headquarters for these groups while strengthening community identity and raising pride.



5.3.12 MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATING STRATEGY

Three museums operate within the Municipality. The John Freeman Walls Historical Site Underground Railway Museum and the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum are located in the central-eastern area of the Municipality. The third museum, the Comber and District Historical Museum, is located at the west end of the Municipality.

The Maidstone Museum, which is located in the former 1914 Maidstone Township office, is operated by the Maidstone Area Historical Society. It has established a native plants garden on one acre of grounds in partnership with the Essex Region Conservation Authority. The Museum occasionally collaborates with the adjacent John Freeman Walls site, located about 5 kms. north, and has established a Black Heritage Committee, in partnership with the Essex County Historical Cemeteries Preservation Society, to preserve and research the British Methodist Episcopal cemetery on County Road 42. Recently, this committee and the Ontario Heritage Trust unveiled a provincial plaque at the site of the BME cemetery commemorating the founding of the Puce River Black community.

A 1961 Town-owned building is located immediately north of the museum and could offer suitable collection storage facilities.

The Walls site, owned and operated by a non-profit charity, Proverbs Heritage Organization, is one of 29 Underground Railroad sites located along the Black Heritage Route stretching from Windsor, north to Owen Sound and east to Oakville. A sister site, the Chatham-Kent Black Heritage Society, is found next door to Lakeshore in Chatham-Kent. The Black Heritage Route is one of the Windsor-Essex region's most significant cultural and heritage assets.

The Walls site has drawn up to 300 tour buses annually, is run by 105 volunteers and has hosted celebrities such as Rosa Parks and Bishop Desmond Tutu. In addition to interpreting the Underground Railroad and Black history, the museum recently acquired buildings and artifacts, such as a 1798 French-built cabin, interpreting the history of the wider area. Dr. Bryan Walls, the museum's founder, is interested in establishing a partnership arrangement with the Town in order to ensure ongoing maintenance and public access to the museum.

The Comber and District Historical Museum, located on Lakeshore's east side, just south of Comber, is experiencing some decline in interest. The museum holds a significant collection representing the area's agricultural and social history. Theft and conservation have been issues.



Some collaborative strategies to assist all three museums in enhancing their future viability should be considered, due to their proximity, considerations related to volunteer development, marketing and visitation support and related needs. A strategy that would support the three museums in the sharing of resources, information and working cooperatively with a goal of potentially retaining a full-time professional director / curator and the establishment of museums organizations in Lakeshore that meet the Ontario Community Museum Standards would be beneficial to the long-term development of all three community museum resources.

It is recommended, that the three Boards of Directors of the museums, look for opportunities to work collaboratively on marketing, professional standards and development, training, museum grant applications and other areas of effort, that could enhance the long-term viability, visitation growth and operational development of the three museums. The Municipality could play a role in approaching the museum Boards of Directors and facilitating discussions on potential areas of collaborative effort that would provide benefits to all the museums.

Recommendation – Museum Development and Operating Strategy

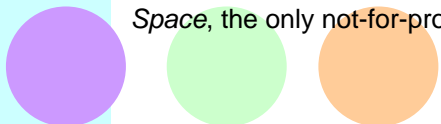
That Lakeshore’s three museums are encouraged to create a museum development and operating strategy for the purpose of sharing resources, information and working cooperatively with the goal of hiring a full time professional director / curator and the establishment of a museum organization that meets Ontario Community Museum Standards.

5.3.13 INVESTIGATE LOCATIONS TO HOUSE A PERFORMING ARTS AND FRENCH HERITAGE CENTRE AND ARCHIVES

A need exists in the Town of Lakeshore for adequate facilities for the following cultural activities:

- ▶ Performing and visual arts;
- ▶ French heritage and cultural activities;
- ▶ The archives of the Société Franco-Ontarienne d'Histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor Essex

Performing arts activities in Lakeshore are presently limited to the programs presented by *The Space*, the only not-for-profit performing arts school and theatre company for children, which



operates out of a storefront location. Apart from a few individual artists who operate their own studios, visual arts presentations are not known.

A French cultural centre has not existed since the closing of the Church of the Assumption in Pointe-aux-Roches in 1998. The Centre Culturel St. Cyr, a group dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of French culture, was headquartered in this church. Since its closing, the group has not found another venue for meetings and activities.

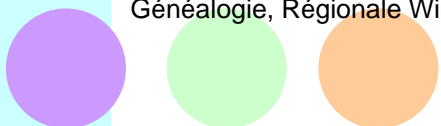
Archives managed by the Société Franco-Ontarienne d'Histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor Essex are presently housed in overcrowded facilities at the St. Simon & St. Jude Roman Catholic Church in Belle River. A steep staircase to reach the archives renders them inaccessible for many elderly and disabled clients.

Coupled with the need for venues for French cultural heritage, French archives, and the performing and visual arts, are two French Roman Catholic churches located in St. Joachim and Pointe-aux-Roches, which are presently standing empty. A key observation of the Town of Lakeshore Heritage, Arts and Cultural Situational Report focused upon the significance of these two churches for the municipality's French community. Pending the outcome of the Ontario Conservation Review Board hearings presently underway in connection to the two churches, each of these buildings could offer a symbolically ideal location for the establishment of a French cultural centre, a home for the archival holdings and research centre of the Société Franco-Ontarienne d'Histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor-Essex, and a centre for performing and visual arts.

It is suggested that the St. Joachim church, set within the St. Joachim cultural landscape and located at the northern end of French Line, would be better suited for a French cultural heritage centre and archives. Its spire is an architectural focal point that can be seen for many miles from the surrounding countryside.

The preservation and sensitive, yet accessible, adaptation of this building would create an identity for all Lakeshore residents, draw the community closer, serve to distinguish the Town of Lakeshore from surrounding areas, attract visitors to the area, and establish a cultural venue in one of Lakeshore's outlying areas.

Depending upon the availability of the St. Joachim church or the Church of the Assumption in Pointe-aux-Roches, a larger multi-use recreational centre could be considered for as a possible venue for French heritage and a performing and visual arts centre. In this scenario, depending upon document conservation requirements, the archives of the Société Franco-Ontarienne d'Histoire et Généalogie, Régionale Windsor-Essex may have to be housed separately in appropriate conditions



suitable for document conservation such as within a new centralized library building as proposed by the 2007 Essex County Library Facility Study.

Other possibilities for performing arts venues include community school facilities, although due to cost and security, according to Karen Mossman, founder of *The Space*, use of schools for after hours drama performances by outside groups have not proved successful. However, two factors indicate that this option should be investigated. These are:

The 2007 \$20 million provincial funding program announced as part of an overall initiative to facilitate and encourage increased utilization of publicly funded schools by community organizations;

The recent construction of two new schools in Lakeshore (Lakeshore Discovery School and St. Anne High School) provide possible venues for cultural activities.

5.3.14 ESTABLISH A ARTS CENTRE TASK FORCE TO INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY AND LOCATIONS TO HOUSE A PERFORMING ARTS AND FRENCH HERITAGE

A community-based Arts Centre Task Force should be established as a working group and forum to initiate and investigate the feasibility and locations to house a performing arts and French heritage centre and archives, either in separate, distinct facilities or together in the same facility. The Task Force should include representatives from the French heritage community, Museums Lakeshore, business, the Lakeshore Community Arts Council, the Youth and Seniors Council, the Municipal Heritage Committee, Chamber of Commerce and Town of Lakeshore Council.



Recommendation - Arts Centre Task Force

Establish an Arts Centre Task Force as a working group and forum to initiate and investigate the feasibility and locations to house a performing arts and French heritage centre and archives, either in separate, distinct facilities or together in the same facility. The Task Force should include representatives from the French heritage community, Museums Lakeshore, business, the Lakeshore Community Arts and Culture Council, the Youth and Seniors Council, the Municipal Heritage Committee, Chamber of Commerce and Town of Lakeshore Council.

Recommendation - Performing Arts and Heritage Centre Feasibility Study

That the Town initiate a performing arts and heritage centre feasibility study.

Work closely with community groups to initiate a feasibility study will help determine the location, funding, governance, administration and operations of a Performing Arts and French Heritage and Archives Centre, either in separate, distinct facilities, or together in the same facility. The study should address:

- ▶ **Vision and mission;**
- ▶ **Governance;**
- ▶ **Evaluation of location options;**
- ▶ **Funding sources and fundraising opportunities;**
- ▶ **Space planning requirements;**
- ▶ **Capital facility costs;**
- ▶ **Projected operating costs;**
- ▶ **Potential operating revenues;**
- ▶ **Attendance and use projections.**

5.3.15 POSITIVE COMMUNITY CHANGE THROUGH COMMUNICATION, PARTICIPATION AND SHARED VALUES

Overview

Active community participation and decision-making in projects that create positive community change facilitates social cohesion, creates a unique community vision, fosters a sense of ownership, belonging and pride, and can create momentum to tackle similar initiatives.

In recognition of the Town’s unique 18th century French heritage, still evident in the high rate of bilingualism (almost 20%) among residents, the area’s architecture and in the names of residents, roads and streets, a policy of bilingual communication services will improve community relations with French heritage residents.

Recommendation – Implement Bilingual Communication Services

Implement a phased policy of bilingual communication services with emphasis upon the following services:

- ▶ **Front-line customer services;**
- ▶ **Municipal road and building signs;**
- ▶ **Community communications literature and the Town’s website**

5.3.16 ESTABLISH A BELLE RIVER DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT WORKING GROUP

Belle River’s downtown area is viewed as the major shopping and entertainment area in Lakeshore by residents and visitors. Strengths include lakefront access and parkland, a marina, multi-ethnic restaurants, a shared resident history of rum-running, industry and marine activities, and 19th century architecture. Although much the 19th century architecture associated with this history is hidden due to demolition and insensitive renovation, enough remains to form a basis for creating a unique, authentic sense of place—qualities which are sought after by heritage tourists and creative businesses and industries.



Established restaurants on Belle River’s main street offer Japanese sushi and Italian cuisine and baked goods. The multi-cultural, food-based foundation created by these successful businesses is a good starting point for the transformation of Belle River as a destination for an international gourmet experience with a focus on French food.

The implementation and success of a Downtown Revitalization Project, beginning in Belle River, identified as an Historic Downtown Area in the Town’s 2007 Official Plan Draft, along with the implementation of other key culturally based Town initiatives, will create community pride, opportunities for businesses, cultural interests and government to work together. The revitalization of Belle River’s downtown as a beginning initiative for downtown areas in Lakeshore can be viewed as a “hub-and-spokes” approach to downtown development as its success will spark similar initiatives in Pointe-aux-Roches, Comber, St. Joachim, and Woodslee—all communities with documented histories and significant 19th century architecture.

The Working Group should include representatives of the Belle River BIA, the Municipal Heritage Committee, the Arts Council, Museums Lakeshore, and the French heritage community.

Recommendation - Downtown Revitalization Project Working Group

Establish a Belle River Downtown Revitalization Working Group to initiate a Downtown Revitalization Project in Belle River, Lakeshore’s primary Historic Downtown Area to:

- ▶ **Rediscover heritage landmarks and authentic streetscapes;**
- ▶ **Promote and interpret Belle River’s 19th and early 20th century industrial and social history;**
- ▶ **Attract new businesses and tourism to this area.**

5.3.17 ARTS AND CULTURE COUNCIL

Increased levels of communication, collaboration and participation between community groups with each other and with municipal government create a foundation of shared values and mutual respect.



Recommendation – Create an Arts and Culture Council

That the Town establish an Arts and Culture Council for the advancement, promotion, development and liaison with municipal Council for all arts, heritage and cultural activities.

- ▶ **Appoint one member of the following groups; Municipal Heritage Committee, Lakeshore Museums Board of Management, the Arts Centre Taskforce and the Downtown Revitalization Working Group and related arts and culture groups to create the Arts and Culture Council.**

- ▶ **Dedicate staff liaison positions to the Arts and Culture Council to support their work.**

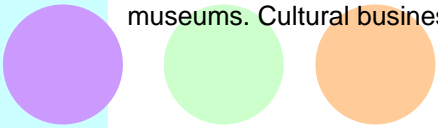
- ▶ **That the Arts and Culture Council establish a policy of community consultation for major cultural initiatives, including:**
 - the development of the Community Cultural Services Policy,
 - the Museums Lakeshore Feasibility Study,
 - the Performing Arts/French Heritage Centre and Archives,
 - the Belle River Downtown Revitalization Project,
 - the Town of Lakeshore Heritage Routes and Sites projects, and
 - the development of area festivals.

5.3.18 EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Key observations made as a result of the Heritage, Arts And Culture Situational Analysis Report show that the Town’s cultural heritage rests upon a unique foundation of early 18th century French settlement along the Lake St. Clair shoreline, followed by 19th century Scottish, Irish, German, and Black agricultural settlement inland. Legacies of these cultural groups, and of the early lake transport, timber, and agricultural industries are still present, albeit often in disguised form, in the languages, customs, social and cultural organizations, built heritage, and road and place names existing in Lakeshore today. Throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, new layers of cultural history, brought in by multi-ethnic groups, continued to be added, resulting in the Town’s present demographic patterns.

Awareness of cultural facilities, specifically museums, by residents is low. Of residents surveyed for the Community Services Master Plan, only one-quarter to one-third were aware of the area’s museums. Cultural businesses in the arts, entertainment and recreation areas constitute only 1.55%



of the Town's commercial sector. Projects focusing upon the area's heritage sites will introduce local residents and visitors to Lakeshore's rich, layered, multi-cultural history.

Lakeshore Heritage Routes Project

Signage, maps, and interpretive media can identify the historic context of the major motorized and non-motorized trails that follow the routes of early settlement roads throughout the Town of Lakeshore. Route development should including a "branding" treatment to create a distinctive logo and design to identify route markers and interpretive signs in conjunction with the Lakeshore Heritage Sites. Routes could include:

- ▶ The Habitant Route, representing 18th and 19th French settlement, would follow the road network along the Lake St. Clair shoreline from Lighthouse Cove to Tecumseh and the French Line along the 5th Concession Road from the mouth of the Ruscom River to the village of St. Joachim
- ▶ The Irish O'Brien Route, representing 19th century Irish settlement, would follow the O'Brien Road north-south between 3rd and 4th Concession Roads from North Rear Road to Middle Road (Co. Rd. 46)
- ▶ The Simcoe Route, reflecting an early transportation artery surveyed and built between 1817 and 1844, and planked ca. 1855, to bring settlers into Essex County under orders from the Lieutenant Governor for the Province of Upper Canada and under the supervision of Colonel Thomas Talbot, would follow the Middle Road (Highway 46) running east west through former Townships of Maidstone, Rochester and Tilbury West.
- ▶ The Talbot Road, running diagonally through Lakeshore's southwest corner and representing the western extension of the original 19th century Talbot settlement artery originating in Elgin County.
- ▶ The Underground Railroad Route, representing 19th century Black settlement, and encompassing the area bounded by 6th Conc. (west) to North Rear Rd. (south) to 3rd Conc. (east) to the southernmost CPR (north).



Recommendation – The Lakeshore Heritage Routes Project

Establish a series of connecting Lakeshore Heritage Routes following the routes of early settlement roads.

Lakeshore Heritage Sites Project

In conjunction with route development, a series of interpretive nodes, Lakeshore Heritage Sites, could be developed using interpretive panels and interactive media to highlight key historic location and events. Interpretive node development should include a “branding” treatment to create a distinctive logo and design to identify Route interpretive signs in conjunction with the Town of Lakeshore Heritage Routes project. Partnership opportunities with the adjacent communities of Windsor and Chatham-Kent, both of which have substantial French heritage roots, can be investigated.

Sites could include:

- ▶ The Belle River Harbour area noted for its industrial and rum-running history;
- ▶ The Cooper Court Hotel in Belle River, ca. 1919, noted for its builder’s entrepreneurial activities and linked by popular history to the area’s rum-running history;
- ▶ An interpretive Belle River cluster area comprising St. Simon & St. Jude cemetery, the monument commemorating the first mass in 1834 in the Mission of St. Jude first log chapel, the former École de Sacre Coeur Sec. No. 1 (1895), the Oullette family resident at 617 West Belle River Road, and the footbridge south of St. Simon and St. Jude Cemetery (south of County Road 42, west of West Belle River Road);
- ▶ The Tremblay Beach Conservation Area noted as a waterfowl staging area and for the St. Clair marshes;
- ▶ The Ruscom Shores Conservation Area noted as a waterfowl staging area and for the St. Clair marshes;
- ▶ The former 19th century charcoal kilns site west of Rochester Townline and south of CNR tracks;
- ▶ The former site of the Goose Inn, ca. 1850, located along Old Tecumseh Road in Pointe-aux-Roches;

- ▶ An interpretive Point-aux-Roches cluster area at Tecumseh Road and Comber Side Road 35 crossroads comprising main street residential, commercial and agricultural architecture, the Church of the Annunciation, Caisse Populaire, Church of the Annunciation cemetery, and Our Lady of the Annunciation Separate School, and the log house located at 6640 Tecumseh Road.
- ▶ The early 19th century lighthouse and Thames River entrance at 19320 Lower Thames Lane in Lighthouse Cove;
- ▶ The Pointe-aux-Roches Cooperative at 2800 Comber Side Road representative of Essex County cooperative movement and symbolic of fellowship and self determination of local farming community;
- ▶ The Country Side Cannery at 2500 Comber Side Road built by local farmer to process tomato crops and symbolic of fellowship and self determination of local farming community;
- ▶ Examples of agricultural drains (location not determined), representative of and unique to agricultural technology in Lakeshore area;
- ▶ An interpretive St. Joachim cluster area comprising St. Joachim Roman Catholic Church, former École St. Ambroise, St. Joachim Rectory, St. Joachim Convent, the War Memorial, and the downtown residential area;
- ▶ An interpretive Comber cluster area comprising the historic Comber railway station, Comber's main street industrial, social, commercial and residential architecture, and the Veterans Memorial Gardens;
- ▶ An interpretive Woodslee cluster area comprising Woodslee railway station and main street commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential history;
- ▶ An interpretive Woodslee cluster area comprising St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church at 1688 County Road 46, rectory, the church cemetery, St. John's Elementary School, an abandoned Methodist cemetery across the road from the church, a steel truss foot bridge, the former site of the Ursuline Convent (located at the corner of County Roads 27 and 46);
- ▶ The Maidstone Conservation area noted for Carolinian oak-hickory woodland;
- ▶ The British Methodist Episcopal cemetery at 1022 County Road 42 (Puce);

- ▶ An interpretive Refugee Home Society/Underground Railroad cluster area in the Maidstone area comprising the John Freeman Walls Historical Site & Underground Railroad Museum, the Walls family cemetery site, the former site of SS No. 9 school at 370 Puce Street, and First Baptist Church Puce (1871) at 710 Puce Road; and the BME cemetery;
- ▶ The former Maidstone Township Office at 108 Puce Road now used as the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum
- ▶ The former Maple Grove School Sec. No. 8 at 10405 Main Street (Hwy. 77) south of Comber, now used as the Comber and District Historical Society Museum

Recommendation – The Lakeshore Heritage Sites Project

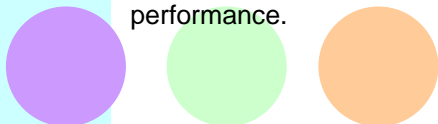
Establish a series of Lakeshore Heritage Sites highlighting significant historic locations and events.

5.3.19 INITIATE A SIGNATURE CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Three of Lakeshore's most largest heritage celebrations have been created through grass roots community efforts. Groups such as the Centre Cultural St. Cyr, the Comber Agricultural Society and the Friends of Woodslee have been organizing community festivals for years. These events, which are examples of community collaboration and goodwill, can be seen as foundations upon which to build partnerships between community groups and external organizations and programs.

As stated in the Town of Lakeshore Tourism Master Plan Draft, Lakeshore would benefit from the creation of a new “signature” event directed at priority market segments, one of which is identified as heritage. Lakeshore’s heritage foundation of French culture, architecture and traditions, coupled with Belle River’s Lakeview Park, form a natural basis for the development of a lake-side French heritage festival, featuring French food, music, art and performances.

Festival development should be directed by the Lakeshore Community Arts Council and draw upon local cultural resources in the form of the Centre Culturel St. Cyr and the area’s French residents. Partnership opportunities with French community groups in the adjacent communities of Windsor and Chatham-Kent can be investigated. Future expansion of the festival could profile Lakeshore’s growing multi-ethnicity with the addition of a multi-ethnic aspect in the form of food and performance.



Recommendation – The Lakeshore French Heritage Festival

Revitalize, expand and mount a French heritage festival, under the auspices of the Lakeshore Community Arts Council, featuring French food, music, art and performances as an area-wide festival focused in Belle River and Pointe-aux-Roches in collaboration with the Centre Culturel St. Cyr and the area’s French community.

5.3.20 SUPPORT AND EXPAND LAKESHORE’S ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

Lakeshore’s established community festivals include the Comber Agricultural Fair and Doc Millen Day in Woodslee. These community-based, grass-roots celebrations represent shared values, community collaboration, and an appreciation for local history. As such these events should be continued to be supported and expanded through the Community Partnerships Fund.

Recommendation – Support and expand Lakeshore’s established community festivals

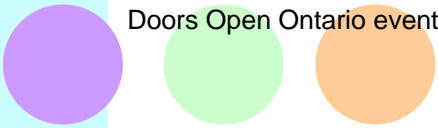
Support and expand Lakeshore’s established community festivals

- ▶ **Comber Agricultural Fair - Support and expand Comber’s annual agricultural fair, highlighting Lakeshore’s 19th century agricultural heritage.**
- ▶ **Doc Millen Day - Support and expand Doc Millen Day, Woodslee’s annual community event, to highlight Woodslee’s heritage and culture**

5.3.21 ESTABLISH A LAKESHORE DOORS OPEN EVENT

A Doors Open event, presented in partnership with the Ontario Heritage Trust, would be an opportunity to highlight Lakeshore's built heritage and cultural resources.

Doors Open Ontario was launched in 2002 by the Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the Government of Ontario dedicated to identifying, preserving, protecting and promoting Ontario's heritage for present and future generations. The program provides an opportunity for communities to showcase their local heritage, while attracting visitors to a unique cultural tourism experience that boosts the local economy. To date, over two million visits have been made to heritage sites during Doors Open Ontario events.



Examples of Lakeshore's outstanding architectural and cultural heritage that could be featured in this event include the St. Joachim Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Assumption in Pointe-aux-Roches, the Comber railway station, the 19th century lighthouse in Lighthouse Cove, St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church in Woodslee, The First Baptist Church Puce at 710 Puce Road, the former Maidstone Township Office at 108 Puce Road (presently used as the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum), the former Maple Grove School Sec. No. 8 at 10405 Main Street (Highway 77) south of Comber (presently used as the Comber and District Historical Society Museum), and the Cooper Court Hotel and the St. Simon & St. Jude Roman Catholic Church, both in Belle River.

Recommendation – Establish a Lakeshore Doors Open Event

Lakeshore Doors Open Event - Town of Lakeshore Municipal Heritage Committee should work with the Ontario Heritage Trust and community groups to establish a new venture for Lakeshore—a Doors Open event to showcase Lakeshore's built heritage and cultural resources.

