

“Beyond Garrets and Silos:”

**Concepts, Trends and Developments in Cultural
Planning**



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Summary

Why Is This Issue Important?

A vibrant cultural life is increasingly understood to be essential for healthy, sustainable and prosperous communities. But while an awareness of culture's contribution to these goals has increased, so has the complexity of planning and decision-making issues at the municipal level. Cultural planning is a response to these issues, and provides new insight and strategies to meet these challenges.

Cultural planning is a multi-faceted approach, and can be best understood as:

1. The strategic use of cultural resources for the integrated development of communities, particularly at the local and regional level.
2. An approach based on broad definitions of 'culture' and 'cultural resources', which encompass heritage, local traditions, arts, media, crafts, topography, architecture, urban design, recreation, sports, entertainment, tourism and the cultural representations of places.
3. A culturally sensitive approach to urban and regional planning and to environmental, social and economic policy-making.

Canada has fallen behind a number of other countries in embracing cultural planning, but is moving toward strengthening research and developing the expertise needed...

Canada has fallen behind a number of other countries in embracing cultural planning as an alternative framework for local cultural development, but is moving quickly in this direction through emerging practice and current directions in research and development in the field.

What Do The Research Findings Tell Us?

Cultural planning is not a panacea for resolving complex municipal challenges. Instead, it is a source of fresh perspectives and new tools that can help tackle local cultural issues. One of its strengths, is its capacity to reframe traditional mindsets of local cultural issues - such as:

- Seeing cultural development through the lens of individual disciplines or sub-sectors (visual arts, performing arts, heritage, various cultural or media industries, etc.) rather than in integrated "whole system" terms
- Viewing 'culture' and cultural resources in largely "aesthetic" terms, related to specific (and often quite traditional) forms of artistic expression
- Maintaining a stark divide between "for-profit" and "not-for-profit" local cultural activity
- Viewing local government's role in cultural development as a funding source or owner/operator of cultural facilities - instead of as resource to help establish conditions conducive to a wide range cultural activity

What Do We Know About The Gap Between Current Practice and These Findings?

Canadian municipalities have been both beneficiaries and “victims” of the dominant leadership role of the federal government's national cultural agenda. Beneficiaries, because federal leadership helped build a cultural infrastructure and professional activity, that is the envy of many nations. Yet victims, because this same leadership has shielded this same institutions from developing deeper roots within their communities and strong local networks and capacities.

...the strong leadership role of the federal government has shielded cultural institutions from developing deeper roots within their communities and strong local networks and capacities.

Ideas drawn from an expanding body of literature and research, offer insight on how to address these challenges. But international experience also reveals the many difficult barriers inhibiting change. Among them:

- The continued hold that established interests and cultural institutions/facilities have on cultural planning agendas
- The tremendous challenge of “walking the talk” about more horizontal and integrated approaches that cut across other areas of municipal planning and decision-making
- Dangers associated with embracing *too* broad a definition of culture and cultural resources
- “Pouring new wine in old wineskins” – attempting to use old planning and decision-making structures to implement significantly different ideas about the nature and scope of local cultural development issues.

What Might Be Done To Close This Gap?

Suggestions for Canadian municipalities in implementing cultural planning strategies include:

- Embracing broader definitions and understandings of local cultural resources
- Using cultural assessment and cultural mapping methodologies as tools for analyzing local cultural life
- Experimenting with community forums for collective planning and decision-making aimed at mobilizing and engaging a wide range of stakeholders
- Giving priority to building the empirical evidence base related to the benefits of cultural development to Canadian cities, and
- Strengthening professional skills and knowledge in municipal cultural planning and decision-making.

1. The Context in Canada – Past and Present

1.1 Rising Stakes in Local Cultural Development

The response to the Municipal Cultural Planning Project (MCP), exemplifies the strong interest in culture shared by various cities and the evolving role that municipalities are assuming in cultural development.

Cultural matters cannot be set apart from many other areas of municipal responsibility, nor can they be managed... using traditional policy and planning methods.

Many factors account for this interest. It is, in part, a reflection of the cumulative support from many decades of arts and cultural policies from all levels of government. As well, there has been more municipal attention to factors that impact quality of life - factors recognized as central to social well being and long-term economic prosperity. Another explanation, is the growing awareness that new knowledge-based economies are fuelled by different kinds of resources, including cultural ones. All of these trends are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

But the terrain on which cultural planning and decision-making takes place, is becoming more complex for municipal staff and elected officials. Cultural matters cannot be set apart from many other areas of municipal responsibility, nor can they be managed and understood using traditional policy and planning methods.

The solution is not simply better access to information on strategies that worked in the past, but new ways of thinking about cultural development and capacity building at the local and regional level.

One of the appealing features of cultural planning, for many cities in Canada and abroad, is its ability to shift the focus – “changing the lens” - on local cultural development, providing new ways to resolve problems that were often seen as intractable.

1.2 Substantive Concerns of Participating Cities

What are some of the complexities facing municipalities in implementing a cultural development agenda? The following provides a brief sketch of current issues and concerns expressed by municipal representatives who participated in MCP.

1.2.1 Creating Links to other Areas of Local Policy and Planning

A top concern for many municipal cultural staff is the need to forge tighter links with other areas of municipal responsibility, specifically: health promotion, parks, recreation and leisure services, social service delivery, economic development and tourism strategies, and, sustainability and “smart growth” strategies.

There is recognition within government administrations and in the community, that these areas of municipal responsibility cannot be approached independently. Municipal cultural staff, need more holistic ways of collaborating with other departments to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

1.2.2 Coping With Amalgamation

In a number of cases, such as Montreal and Halifax, there had been no provision to accommodate cultural development in the newly amalgamated corporate structure. In Ottawa, amalgamation produced a situation where large urban centres, sparsely populated, semi-rural areas, and small hamlets were suddenly part of the same local government structure. In this case, the city had to struggle to reconcile the widely varying cultural interests and needs of these different parts of the new municipality.

... beyond the need for stronger arguments is the need for better empirical evidence of the valuable impact of cultural investments.

On the positive side amalgamation has opened up opportunities in cities to rethink strategies and to build new alliances – both within local government and in the community.

1.2.3 Allocating and Defending Municipal Investment

From a fiscal perspective, there is the dual challenge of; first, having to make competing resource allocation decisions, within constrained budget, amidst an increasing demand for local cultural activity. And also, the perennial challenge of making effective arguments to councils to defend (and ideally expand) municipal investments in culture.

For many years, economic development arguments were assumed to wield the most clout with elected officials. While they still remain powerful, there is a greater awareness, that questions of economic prosperity cannot be separated from issues of quality of life – the two are intrinsically linked. But beyond the need for stronger arguments, is the need for better empirical *evidence* of the valuable impact of cultural investments. Such evidence must be more rigorous and withstand greater scrutiny than what has been produced in the past.

In order to strengthen cultural planning within municipal structures, it's important to provide a historical perspective of today's realities and to review how local government in other countries have embraced cultural planning as a framework for local cultural development.

2. Local Cultural Development: Where Have We Come From?

2.1 Local Cultural Development in Canada

While arts and cultural activity in Canadian communities can be traced beyond a century, the impetus toward formal policies and support infrastructures was largely a post-war breakthrough. Bailey (1978) claims that community arts councils, a key support mechanism for local arts activity, are “an original Canadian product.” The first community arts council in North America was established in Vancouver in 1946. Local activity subsequently grew throughout the 1950s and 1960s, fueled by an expansion of federal funding.

The Massey-Levesque Commission was the most influential force shaping the Canadian cultural agenda... Many argue it remains the essential frame of cultural policy discourses today.

In Ontario, arts development at the local level remained largely the preserve of local arts councils, from the 1960's to early 1970's. Municipal involvement began to expand significantly during the late 1970's to early 1980's, a period which also saw an explosion of activity - arts and cultural facilities built, policies and plans adopted, and municipal staff positions created (Elvidge, 1996).

The Massey-Levesque Commission

Yet despite increased municipal involvement, much of the cultural development agenda was already established at a federal level. *The Commission on the Arts, Letters and Sciences* (1952) better known as the *Massey-Levesque Commission* was the most influential force in shaping the Canadian cultural agenda. The Commission's themes of - nationalism, economic and cultural sovereignty, and the “civilizing” impact of the arts¹ - defined a cultural policy discourse, that continued to dominate for many decades (Tuer, 1992). Many argue it remains the essential “frame” of cultural policy discourses today (Baeker, 2001).

Massey-Levesque introduced a cultural policy discourse, dominated by a “two-tier” cultural system. The *upper-tier* consisted of a state-subsidized, Eurocentric “civilizing” or “high” arts system, usually linked to lofty goals of national identity and cultural sovereignty. The *lower-tier* consisted of various forms of “popular” or “ethnic” culture. These were either community-based or existed in more commercial forms and were operated either in the marketplace or as a voluntary activity. The expectation for the *lower-tier*, was that it was to be demand-driven. Whereas, cultural policy that addressed the subsidized, high arts system operated on a supply-side basis, subscribing to an “if we build it (or create it), they will come” ethos.

However, the recommendations of the Commission amplified existing tensions. The centralist vision facilitated the establishment of major “flagship” organizations –

¹ The Commission defined culture as “that part of education which enriches the mind and refines the taste. It is the development of the intelligence through the arts, letters and sciences.” Cited in Tuer (1992).

mostly in central Canada and regional capitals - that were charged with circulating work to other parts of the country. Canadians outside these centres saw this approach as elitist- dominated by a central Canadian aesthetic (Zemans, 1996).

...the FCA's vision included a decentralized cultural development strategy, manifested through a network of community cultural centres.

The Massey-Levesque strategy was justified as a way to make the best use of limited resources and as a means to broaden accessibility to artistic “excellence” for a vast, sparsely populated country. On the upside, it was responsible for expanding and even establishing most of the major arts organizations and principal training schools in the country. The downside was that it failed to address the need for local cultural expression and development (ibid.).

The Federation of Canadian Artists

The pattern of cultural development which unfolded in Canada was not the only alternative. In 1944, the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA) presented a “Brief Concerning the Cultural Aspects of Canadian Reconstruction” to the Turgeon Special Committee on (Post-war) Reconstruction and Re-establishment. The brief called for a strengthened federal role in cultural affairs, particularly, for a central coordinating mechanism. Massey-Levesque subsequently shaped this into recommendations that eventually established the Canada Council for the Arts. Less remembered, is the FCA’s parallel recommendation for a *decentralized* cultural development strategy through the establishment of a network of community cultural centres.

These multidisciplinary community centres - each equipped with a theatre, movie projector, art gallery and library- were to provide local contexts and venues for cultural activity. The centres would also engage in ambitious adult art education initiatives, in order to build an informed audience for local and national cultural activity, such as traveling programs and exhibitions from national institutions. Here was an integrated vision of cultural development, linking local cultural development to a viable national culture. The Turgeon Committee was enthusiastic about the community centre concept² (Tuer, 1992).

Unfortunately, this vision was lost in the post-war rush to centralization (Baeker, 2001). One can only wonder how different the situation of arts and cultural institutions in communities across Canada could have been, had the FCA vision been adopted.

The Enduring Legacy of the Massey -Levesque Commission

The result of the centralist vision of Massey-Levesque, was that the needs of historically advantaged art forms and cultural institutions drove the cultural policy agenda, subverting the interests of newer cultural groups and the needs of an increasingly diverse public. It also contributed to the divide between “aesthetic”

² [It was] the one thing which really captured the Committee’s imagination .. especially given its potential (to) serve the amateur and the professional; which made federal, provincial and municipal governments financially responsible for culture; and which addressed the problems created by central Canada’s domination, the country’s vast size, and its reliance on foreign cultural producers, organizers and philanthropists (1992, 34).

objectives that served dominant communities and “social” objectives that served “ethnic” or “heritage” communities (Baeker, 2001).

Another outcrop of Massey-Levesque is the tradition of *discipline-based funding*. This tradition separates specific categories of cultural activity - music, dance, visual arts, literary arts – that quickly became the basis of funding programs of government agencies such as the Canada Council for the Arts. The discipline-based orientation has had many benefits in raising the level of professional activity. But it also had negative impacts. It contributed to barriers around forms of expression that fell outside Western European artistic traditions and acted to perpetuate the interests of historically advantaged institutions. It also fractured cultural activity along disciplinary lines, undermining a shared sense of identity and advocacy efforts throughout the cultural sector and limiting the profile of cultural activity.

Cultural Democracy vs. the Democratization of Culture

A core concept in cultural policy is the distinction between the *democratization of culture* and *cultural democracy*. The democratization of culture involves broadening access to the products of one culture. In Canada, as in many countries, this has generally been interpreted as the promotion of European forms of high culture. *Cultural democracy* is a more radical vision of cultural development. It seeks not simply the broader dissemination of one culture, but acknowledges the value and legitimacy of many cultural traditions and forms of expression.

The era following Massey-Levesque focused on raising the standards of artistic excellence and elevating Canadian artistic expression, to internationally recognized standards (Zuzanek, 1987). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, amidst the general swell of democratic sentiment, there was a modest yet genuine effort by the federal government to press toward the radical goal of cultural democracy (ibid.). However, by the early 1980s cultural democracy had largely disappeared from the policy discourse, in the face of economic recession and rising neo-conservative sentiments

Growing Attention to Municipal Cultural Development

In recognition of the increasingly important role of municipalities in cultural development, the Canadian Conference for the Arts (CCA) held its 1978 annual conference on the theme of municipal cultural policy, observing that “local government involvement in the arts [had] lagged” (Bailey, 1978, 2). In 1986, the Task Force on the Funding of the Arts in Canada (The Bovey Commission) reported that municipalities provided about 6% of total operating revenues of arts organizations, compared to the federal government’s 23% and the province’s 28% (1986). The Task Force viewed municipal arts and cultural development as, “the most crucial area of Canadian cultural evolution.” The CCA’s 1988 annual conference returned to the theme of municipal cultural policy, evidently believing that municipal government still needed prodding.

In the early 1990s the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) researched municipal cultural activity, concluding, “most municipalities ... have developed policy and support mechanisms to assist arts, culture and heritage in their

The Bovey Commission (1986)... viewed municipal arts and cultural development as “the most crucial area of Canadian cultural evolution”

communities” (FCM, 1991, 2). The study also confirmed the substantial involvement of municipalities in providing grant support, dedicated municipal staff and specialized facilities. Unfortunately, the recommendations were weakened by narrow definitions of cultural activity – which excluded libraries, restricted “culture” to the performing and visual arts, and associated “heritage” solely with built heritage.

Cardinal (1998) completed a study, which traced the evolution of municipal policy in select communities across Canada from the 1950s to the 1990s. She observed the growth of cultural planning approaches in recent planning exercises in Vancouver, Greater Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Kitchener, identifying the following shared characteristics:

- Increased citizen participation and involvement in policy/plan formulation
- Greater attention to issues of cultural diversity and pluralism
- Broadened definitions of culture
- The use of “community cultural development” as the integrating framework for linking arts, heritage and cultural industry activity to broader civic concerns (1998).

In the late 1990s the Municipal Association of British Columbia (1997) also pointed cities toward more integrated cultural development strategies, and established a number of useful reference points. The following range of municipal roles was identified:

- *As funder* - for example, providing project funding, grants in aid, annual grants
- *As facilities manager* - managing municipally owned facilities, supporting facilities at “arm’s length, or providing indirect support for facility development,” e.g. forgiving of property tax or providing zoning exemptions
- *As enabler or facilitator of cultural activity*
- As advocate and supporter

The publication also classified three different types of municipal cultural plans (MABC, 1997):

- *Single issue plans* - addressing one cultural issue, such as heritage building conservation
- *Broader community planning processes* - integrating cultural policies or planning statement into other city planning documents (such as Official Plans)
- *Comprehensive arts and cultural planning* - incorporating all elements of local cultural development.

Quebec Cultural Policy- Creating Cultural Agreements with Municipalities

A significant development in the evolution of municipal cultural policy and planning was the Quebec Cultural Policy - *Politique culturelle de la province de Québec* (1992). An important provision of this policy, was that municipalities in Quebec were required to develop municipal cultural policies, as a precondition of funding. In 1995, the Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications initiated a targeted

.. municipalities in Quebec were required to develop municipal cultural policies, as a precondition of funding.

local cultural development program for municipalities, building on the requirement of local cultural policies. Cultural development agreements eventually served as tools for planning and management, and for greater collaboration between cities and Quebec's Ministry of Culture.

2.2 Developments in Other Jurisdictions

2.2.1 United States

Precedents for cultural planning approaches in the United States can be traced to civic programs and the stronger tradition of community-based arts and cultural activities and centres (Ghilardi, 2001). With weaker federal funding and leadership traditions in the arts and culture, developments in the United States have had to be more community-based and driven than in Canada.

This organic development pattern, combined with stronger tax incentives to encourage local charitable giving, has created stronger support systems at the state and local level, including dedicated agencies that offer opportunities for staff and board training, capacity building strategies, collective advocacy campaigns. Many successes have been attributed to proactive alliance building among local cultural groups in undertaking shared projects and initiatives (Dreeszen, 1994).

Partners for Livable Communities

The idea of “cultural planning” emerged explicitly in the mid 1980’s, partly from a dissatisfaction with narrow, economically driven strategies that linked cultural policy with the physical regeneration of downtown cores. Partners for Livable Communities (PLC) is a Washington-based, non-profit organization, who for more than 20 years, has led the charge to locally promote quality of life, economic development and social equity through cultural strategies. They advocate a shift from the prevailing “subsidy” mindset to an “investment” perspective to guide municipal action. They also raise issues of access and equity for disadvantaged groups within a cultural planning framework.

In 1992, Partners published *Culture and Communities: the Arts in the Life of American Cities* (McNulty, 1992), a collection of case studies representing a cross-section of communities in the United States. The purpose of the research, was to place arts and culture in the broader context of community development - building on its economic role and reinforcing the important place cultural resources has in addressing social concerns and in fostering community pride and identity.

The report suggested that cultural plans have to move to the forefront, as an essential component of how we understand and develop communities, instead of as an appendage focused on specific events or cultural facilities. This means integrating cultural planning with other aspects of local planning and community development, such as: transportation issues, education, the environment, and urban renewal.

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A subsequent study, *Strengthening Communities through Cultural Strategies: The Role of Cultural Leadership* (1995), examined local cultural development needs and strategies, drawing particular attention to the critical leadership role of cultural staff and boards. Among the conclusions:

- the need for ongoing forums for cultural leaders and activists to discuss their work, design new strategies, and develop new collaborative projects
- the need for more credible information and consistent data on the impact of cultural activities and resources in communities
- the need for training and education regarding the importance of broader community cultural strategies at several levels – for staff and boards of cultural organizations, for municipal staff and politicians, for local business leaders, etc.
- the challenges posed by the lack of a shared vocabulary (i.e., "art," "culture," "community,") and the obstacle this poses to consensus building on issues of training curriculum, defining agendas and priorities, establishing partnership parameters etc. (PLC, 1995).

... the need for ongoing forums for cultural leaders and activists to discuss their work, design new strategies, and develop new collaborative projects

The report made a series of recommendations to address these needs:

- establishing cultural forums as planning and monitoring mechanisms for ongoing community cultural strategies
- developing more reliable quantitative measures for demonstrating the impact of cultural activities and resources in communities
- complementing professional training in specific fields of artistic practice and arts management with more holistic community cultural development education
- training existing practitioners and board members in these same areas
- educating non-cultural community leaders about the impact of community cultural development strategies through forums and educational resources so they can serve as an advocacy and leadership base
- creating professional networks for support, information exchange and technical assistance between leaders affiliated with community-wide cultural programs
- disseminating basic information on community cultural strategies, both nationally and locally, through stories about successful programs, educational videos and interactive media, and high profile spokespeople (ibid.).

2.2.2 Western Europe

In Europe, the “aesthetic” interpretation of culture dominated the thinking of cities toward cultural development well into the 1980s. Broader perspectives then began to emerge - driven largely by economic and urban regeneration strategies and, unfortunately, accompanied by gentrification and the displacement of artists and cultural workers from downtown cores (Bianchini, 1997).

Previous strategies focused on large-scale tourism promotion, and a few “flagship” cultural attractions as a means of marketing a city’s image. These approaches were seen to focus too narrowly on the economic and physical dimensions of cities, failing

to integrate with social, political and other important aspects of cultural development (ibid.).

Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) traced the evolution of cultural policy and urban regeneration strategies in Western Europe from the 1960s to the early 1990s, leading to, what they describe as, an integrated” cultural planning approach:

[cultural planning’s] central characteristics are that it rests on a very broad, anthropological definition of 'culture' as 'a way of life,' and that it integrates the arts into other aspects of local culture and into the texture and routines of daily life in the city. Its field of action ranges from the arts, the media, the crafts, fashion and design to sports, recreation, architecture and townscape, heritage, tourism, eating and entertainment, local history, and the characteristics of the city's public realm and social life, its identity and external image. Cultural planning can help urban governments identify the city's cultural resources and think strategically about their applications, to achieve key objectives in areas as diverse as physical planning, townscape design, tourism, industrial development, retailing, place marketing, community development, education and training (1993, 209).

Their research found that cities had been more successful in innovating democratic forms of cultural development than national governments. These accomplishments took many forms, including support for neighbourhood-level activity and cultural facilities, cultural animation strategies, and efforts to bridge not-for-profit and for-profit activity. They also found that city governments had often been more effective than national governments in actually addressing – rather than simply making pronouncements about - the challenges associated with expanding cultural diversity in cities (1993, 200).

Cities had been more successful in innovating democratic forms of cultural development than national governments.

Even with growing support for the value of cultural planning approaches, their research identified three "strategic dilemmas" confronting cultural planning initiatives:

- *conflict between cultural provisions in the city centre and in marginal urban areas* – i.e., between affluent city-centre and suburban residents, and low-income citizens living in run-down inner-city areas or peripheral housing estates
- *conflict between “cultural consumption” and “cultural production” strategies* – the former placed a strong emphasis on tourism development the latter devoted more attention to new artistic creation and developments in new media and cultural industries (Bianchini and Parkinson argue it is the latter that offers higher value-added employment and greater long-term economic impact and potential), and,
- *conflict between investment in existing cultural facilities and support for non-facility based local cultural activity and participation (festivals, etc.)* – support for large and long-established facilities in all cities continue to consume the vast majority of available public support.

The Urban Pilot Program

Some of these tensions became the motivation for the Urban Pilot Program (UPP), a decade-long initiative launched in 1990 by the European Commission. The study was premised on the belief that traditional cultural policies were of limited use, when dealing with the changes affecting contemporary cities, and in responding to the needs of new cultural movements, such as ethno-racial communities, gays, lesbians and other "lifestyle groups" (sic). These groups often assert their forms of attachment in non-traditional and non-hierarchical ways that don't lend themselves to conventional policy and processes.

The UPP was designed to explore how the economic potential of cities could be addressed and shared throughout Europe, while taking into account urban problems arising from social exclusion, industrial decay, and environmental degradation. Although there was a bias toward building-based initiatives, some of the funded projects managed to implement interesting and valuable examples of integrated solutions (Ghilardi, 2001).

2.2.3 United Kingdom

The 1980's were also a turning point in cultural development in the United Kingdom (UK), as efforts were made to develop more integrated and strategic approaches at the local level. A leader here was the Greater London Council (GLC). The GLC was also an early proponent advocating the shift from a "subsidy" to an "investment" mindset for cultural development strategies. But what distinguished the GLC's strategy, was the connection they built between economic and social justice agendas.

They focused on the needs of disadvantaged groups, many drawn from culturally diverse communities. Among these strategies:

- connecting old (mostly pre-twentieth century) art forms resistant to increased productivity, together with the "ephemera" of community festivals, workshops and celebrations, with new technologies that make these experiences available in homes, libraries or community centres and workplaces
- overcoming legal barriers that prevent government loans to commercial - but socially desirable - cultural producers and distributors
- utilizing the resources of semi-autonomous investment companies, and
- focusing on distribution systems that helped artists and cultural producers to find markets for their work locally, regionally and internationally.

The very early work GLC is credited for helping to create systems that linked cultural producers and audiences in diasporic communities worldwide (e.g., a pan-European network of black film makers and cultural centres) in ways that initiated sufficient market demand to support self-financing projects.

A number of individuals who played key leadership roles in the GLC eventually joined the Blair Labour government when it was elected in the late 1990s. They have since helped shape cultural policies aimed at urban renewal and

The UK in recent years has explored the role of local cultural development networking agencies that have proven successful in generating partnerships and contributing to more sustainable models of cultural activities.

regeneration, a priority for the government since their election.

In June 1999, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published *Local Cultural Strategies: Guidance for Local Authorities in England*, in which all local authorities were called on to develop a cultural strategy by the year 2002. While the vision and planning processes described in the guidelines remain relatively traditional the document constituted a basic platform on which to build more comprehensive assessments of local resources on a cultural planning model (Ghilardi, 2001).

The UK has also been a leader in exploring the roles of local arts and cultural development agencies. The focus of these agencies is to broker connections between local artists and cultural producers, with local businesses and municipal decision-makers. Although initially controversial (the policy was seen as diverting resources from individual artists and arts organizations), it has proven successful in generating partnerships and contributing to more sustainable models of local cultural activity.

3. Cultural Planning: Core Concepts

In the arts, we know how changing a picture frame on a canvas can profoundly shape our view of the work. Cultural planning is a new “frame” within which to view municipal responsibilities in the area of culture. The following chart contrasts some old and new perspectives:

TABLE A: A COMPARISON OF CULTURAL POLICY TO CULTURAL PLANNING

	Cultural Policy	Cultural Planning
Definition of Culture	<i>Arts-based</i> – largely European “high arts” and cultural industries	<i>Cultural resources</i> – expanded view of local cultural assets or resources
Underlying Perspective	<i>Discipline-based</i> – fragmented perspective driven by disciplinary ‘silos’ - theater, dance, museums, etc.	<i>Place-based</i> - more “whole systems” perspectives rooted in place
Rationale for Government Intervention	<i>Inherent importance</i> – “arts-for-arts sake,” plus economic impacts	<i>Benefits-driven</i> – emphasis on contributions to urban development (broadly defined)
Role of Government	<i>Top-down</i> – old public management focus on financing, regulating, owning	<i>Bottom-up</i> – new public management focus on enabling, supporting (“steering not rowing”) combined with community development approaches
Determination of Artistic or Cultural Value	Artistic value and cultural meaning are prescribed by arts producers and arts institutions/authorities	Artistic values and cultural meaning are more negotiated between art and audience or community
Infrastructure Focus	Focus on hard infrastructure of facilities (the “edifice complex”)	Focus on building soft infrastructure of networks, new media distribution strategies, etc.
Key Stakeholders	Communities of professional arts/heritage /cultural industry organizations and enterprises	Cultural sector representatives local citizens, community organizations, local business, etc.
Understanding of ‘Cultural Development’	<i>Cultural development</i> –seen as the development of the cultural sector. There is focus on increasing the impact, intensity and the quality of product.	<i>Cultural development</i> –culture understood as a resource for human development. There is broader goal of societal improvement.

The two columns, of course, overstate differences between the perspectives. A more accurate representation would be a continuum of perspectives between these two extremes. Also important to note, is the fact that cultural planning does *not reject* previous assumptions. Rather it envelops them within a larger frame of reference.

A number of these core concepts and principles in cultural planning are elaborated below.

“Cultural resources” can be understood to include all those assets that help to define a community’s unique identity and sense of place

3.1 Cultural Planning

Cultural planning has been defined in different ways in different jurisdictions. One leading international expert defined it as *the strategic and integrated planning and use of cultural resources in urban and community development* (Grogan et. al., 1995).

Two ideas are important here. “Cultural resources” does not only embrace traditional arts, heritage and cultural industry activities, but also extends to include a wider range of a community’s cultural assets. These assets exist in both physical forms – cultural facilities, cultural landscapes, built environments – and intangible forms, including images and perceptions of the community (see 3.2).

Also, “development” includes not only economic development, but also many other dimensions – social, environmental, civic – that contribute to sustainable and healthy communities.

3.2 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources, as understood in cultural planning, extends beyond the traditional focus of arts, heritage and cultural industry activities, but stops short of embracing the full anthropological understanding of culture as ways of life. It establishes parameters for defining culture either too narrowly (as in the arts) or too broadly (as in ways of life).

There are many definitions of “cultural resources.” Generally they are understood to include all those assets that help define a community’s unique identity and sense of place. Comprising:

- the range of facilities *and human resources* connected with the “pre-electronic” media – i.e., performing and visual arts, museums and heritage, as well as the contemporary cultural industries – film and video, sound recording, broadcasting, publishing, design and fashion
- training programs and other systems necessary to develop local talent connected to the activities listed above
- unique or specialized products and skills in crafts (jewelry, ceramics, etc.), manufacturing, and new media industries
- the diversity and quality of leisure activity,

When applied to cultural planning, the role of the municipality becomes one of establishing the conditions... for cultural activities to flourish.

- including recreation and entertainment
- historical, artistic, architectural, archaeological heritage (including local traditions, dialects, festivals)
- urban landscapes and geography, including landmarks, park systems, waterfronts, public spaces
- external and internal perceptions of the city, media images and conventional wisdom (adapted from Glasgow, 1990).

Ultimately, cities must decide for themselves how narrowly or broadly they wish to define their cultural resources. Cultural planning acknowledges the need for cities to better assess and inventory the range of these resources.

3.3 Place-Based Planning

Cultural planning shifts the focus from *discipline-based* (e.g., visual arts, performing arts, heritage) to *place-based* approaches. Discipline-based distinctions tended to place more emphasis on developing specific artistic disciplines, than on connecting these disciplines with community interests or with strengthening connections *across* disciplines at the community level.

Cultural planning begins by considering the circumstances of a specific community, to determine how their cultural assets can contribute to reinforcing their identity and sense of place. The concept of "place making" is central not only to cultural planning, but also to more integrated approaches adopted by cities for managing the built and natural environment, especially in urban design.

3.4 Whole Systems Thinking

Whole systems thinking is a school of thought where "the whole is not only greater but also *different* than the sum of its parts". Jane Jacobs was an influential advocate of whole systems thinking as it applies to cities. Jacobs viewed cities as complex, local ecosystems, each with their own unique rhythms and characteristics. She was highly critical of the notion that cities were profoundly ordered, rational places and equally critical of traditional planning methods that sought to "engineer" change through externally imposed top-down models.

Central to the success of whole systems thinking is the need to *generate and nurture relationships*. When whole systems thinking is applied to cultural planning the role of municipalities becomes one of *establishing the conditions* necessary for local cultural activity to flourish instead of determining and controlling its direction. A key part of this "condition creation" is enabling opportunities for people to come together, to define shared needs and to take action.

When applied to cultural planning, the role of the municipality becomes one of establishing the conditions... for cultural activities to flourish.

3.5 Cultural Assessments

Cultural assessments are a core cultural planning process that:

- creates a population portrait of the community

- identifies and inventories *cultural resources* or assets that exist in an area, and,
- analyzes this information to define relationships, and identify gaps and opportunities for working collaboratively.

Cultural assessments are essentially a type of “stocktaking”. It begins by consolidating existing data on the local population, drawn from census data, municipal planning documents and other sources. It then uses cultural mapping methods to inventory local cultural resources. Baseline questions used in cultural mapping include:

- what cultural resources exist in the community - and are recognized as such
- what cultural resources exist - but are not recognized
- what cultural resources might grow with encouragement and planning and
- to what uses, in terms of individual and community development, can each of these resources be put to?

Community involvement in cultural assessment and mapping exercises, is an expression of community development.

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4. Realizing the Vision

It would be a mistake to idealize cultural planning and its potential to transform local cultural development. Based on experience in other countries, the gap between the vision and the reality of cultural planning practice becomes clear.

"Cultural strategies have been more concerned with the problems of arts organizations than with the problems of cities."

4.1 Barriers to Cultural Planning Approaches

Disciplinary Barriers and Entrenched Interests

Dreeszen's (1994) study of cultural plans in American cities found one of the most serious barriers to implementing cultural planning approaches: the influence of established institutions and their interests, that impose "aesthetic" or "fine arts" definitions of culture on the planning agenda. This means that planning remains inwardly focused on the needs of the cultural sector. He concluded: "cultural strategies have been more concerned with the problems of arts organizations than with the problems of cities."

Part of the solution Dreeszen recommended lies in striking a better balance between broad statements of policy direction and focused action plans and strategies. Broad policy statements can easily obscure the intentions and the interests being served, while focused strategies cannot be as easily manipulated.

Other factors inhibiting the broadening of the planning agenda include:

- institutional inertia
- the existence of powerful and well-connected boards of trustees in cultural institutions
- the failure of professional training and education programs to provide future cultural workers with alternative assumptions regarding cultural development and cultural production
- structural and bureaucratic barriers in working more "horizontally" across local government, and,
- the continued hold that zoning and physical (land use) planning have on local planning practice (Brednock, 1997).

Another aspect to this barrier, is the resilience of European values and norms that profoundly shape what forms of expression we consider "cultural", and what it is assumed these forms of expression represent in the world. The question, as Bowen (1997) presents it, may be less *how* to "integrate" culture into the local planning agenda, but *whose* culture is currently shaping our urban experience?

Municipal Administrative Structures – 'Culture Everywhere and Nowhere'

Cultural planning also experiences institutional barriers, since it does not fit neatly within the existing municipal administrative structure. Depending on the municipality, responsibility for cultural planning issues can fall variously into Community or Human Services, Parks, Recreation or Leisure Services, Economic Development – or any combination of the above. The conservation of land-based heritage – particularly built

heritage and archaeology – usually falls to planning departments responsible for *land use issues*.

The result is the dispersal of energies, resources, and frequently, political and bureaucratic “clout.” This could be resolved through improved policy coordination and integration within municipal administrative structures. However many obstacles stand in the way of achieving greater policy coherence and administrative coordination:

- Organizational fragmentation
- Policy complexity
- Resource scarcity
- Conflicting values
- Competing interests
- Departmental rivalries
- Increasing specialization
- The sheer scope and scale of government activity
- The overload of senior policy makers (Boston 1992 88).

“In Canada...there still remains a weakness in setting out clear roles and responsibilities for shared policy areas and there exist few mechanisms for ensuring accountability after a policy has been developed”

Providing a Canadian perspective, Gow (2000) observed:

In (pursuing more) strategic policy, departments need to work differently so that collaboration, partnerships and consensus building become paramount. In Canada, although many departments collaborate on the *development* of policy, there still remains a weakness in setting out clear roles and responsibilities for shared policy areas, and there exist few mechanisms for ensuring accountability after a policy has been developed (2000 3).

Getting Beyond Motherhood

An alternative view, is that there is no need to move culture “in from the margins” of decision-making because it *already is* at the heart of the major challenges facing cities today (Hawkins and Gibson, 1993). This is manifested in tensions between development and amenity, between public and private ownership/control, and between local and international culture.

Hawkins and Gibson further suggest that cultural planning must be based on more realistic and rigorous analysis of the economic and political forces at play.

Cultural planning in Australia needs to move beyond motherhood statements about how good culture is for local identity and economies. It needs to reflect a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between political processes and economic forces. The implicit emphasis on the aesthetic benefits of culture - good design, heritage streetscapes, public art - makes cultural planning blind to the forces shaping cities (1994, 220).

Defining Culture Too Broadly

Despite the appeal for a broadened vision of cultural planning, there is still the potential of embracing a scope of cultural planning issues that is too broad. As Stevenson (1993) argues: “if ‘culture’ is interpreted as ways of life, urban planning is *already* cultural planning” (1993, 8). Cultural plans must address more than conventionally defined arts activity and “aesthetic” concerns, but must be manageable in political and administrative terms, establishing its own middle ground.

However, even this middle ground has proven too large a canvas for many municipalities in applying cultural planning approaches. A helpful development in this regard is the evolution of more sophisticated methodologies for understanding and mapping “everyday culture” in cities (see *Culture in Everyday Life* below).

Local Decision-Making More Not Less Complex

Laperrière (1995) maintains that contrary to conventional wisdom, local cultural decision-making is *more* complex than it is at senior levels of government. As decisions about cultural matters are pushed down to where people live and work, they become more politically charged and can generate intense conflicts: “local decisions often have a direct, visible and immediate impact ...they leave no one indifferent” (Laperrière, 1995, 3).

Examining cultural planning and decision-making systems in Quebec during the mid-1990s, Laperrière found that traditional approaches to cultural decision-making remained resilient.

As decisions about cultural matters are pushed to where people live and work, they become more politically charged...

Cultural planners cannot simply go on asking for more money and more facilities for culture. Traditional ‘linear’ planning models can still be effective for planning specific cultural facilities or events, but only if certain conditions are met:

- A single decision-making authority is involved - i.e. one level of government
- A clear and unambiguous need can be recognized - i.e. “there is no library in district X”
- The objectives are incontestable
- The means - money, land permits, etc. are readily available, and,
- The community - i.e. the artists/cultural workers as well as local residents - know and agree on what is desired” (1995, 7).

Situations that meet all these requirements, Laperrière believes, are rare.

Cultural planning approaches *advocate* for more community-based, participatory planning and decision-making models. Although successful models have been implemented in some jurisdictions, experiments in this direction have frequently, not gone far enough. One European cultural planning expert argues that the failure to realize the vision and potential of cultural planning is the result of seeking to “pour new wine in old wineskins” (Ghilardi, 2001). Cultural planning introduces a number of fundamentally different assumptions about local cultural development, but then

frequently reverts to existing (mostly government driven) planning and decision-making structures inadequate for these new assumptions.

4.2 Bridges to Cultural Planning Approaches

While barriers to implementing cultural planning approaches are many, experience in Canada and abroad offers insight into ways to move this agenda forward.

"Tourists are also local people... the best way to make them appreciate local culture is not to deny all sense of localism... make them aware that your local product is the same, but different."

New Planning Principles and Assumptions

Laperrière (1995) offers the following set of principles as a guide to facilitate cultural planning strategies:

- The traditional "product-oriented approach," while excellent for tourism and resource management, is less useful for local residents a more "user-oriented" approach is emerging, one initially developed for neighborhood purposes but that can also be applied to visitors and tourists who wish to discover "the real" life of the city
- Tourists, even international ones, "are also local people ... the best way to make them appreciate local culture is not to deny all sense of localism ... make them aware that your own local product is the same but different"
- Cities and neighborhoods need a "signature" to be recognized, and that can be provided by "exhibitions, festivities, festivals of all kinds"
- Small and parochial are not necessarily inseparable: "you can be small in size and have an international orientation, or big and still be close to the needs of various local communities"
- A new breed of cultural facility is needed, the "in-between building ... [this is] not a medium-sized building but one able to obtain international recognition while respecting local requirements", and,
- Planners must avoid "ghettoization" by counterbalancing support for cultural difference or multicultural events -"side-by-side diversity"- with a concern for intercultural events (1995, 10-11).

Culture in Everyday Life

Culture in Everyday Life (CEL) is a perspective and research methodology, supporting more democratic models of cultural development. It is based on the premise that existing cultural policies will never respond adequately to the diversity of populations that now inhabit urban areas, as long as they are conceived as simply "arts plus media policies".

Account has also to be taken of the ways in which cultural activities are knitted into the fabric of everyday life of the ways in which ethnically-marked differences in cultural tastes, values and behaviours inform not just artistic and media preferences but are embedded in the daily rhythms of different ways of life and of the ways in which these connect with other relevant social characteristics – those of class and gender, for example (ibid.).

CEL has emerged as a direct response to the focus placed on cities and regions, as the driving force for cultural development. With its attention to the daily rhythms and fabric of life in communities, CEL has embraced cultural planning perspectives related to broadened definitions of cultural resources and the use of mapping and assessment methods for identifying these resources.

The Department of Media, Culture and Sport's (DMCS) in 2000 in the UK, announced support for a National Everyday Culture Program - an indication that this subject is of interest to governments grappling with new challenges within cultural policy and diversity.

DMCS support is based on the priorities shared with this Program:

- Demonstrating the *central importance of culture* in all aspects of economic, social and political life
- Contributing to *combating social exclusion* in the cultural life of the country
- Supporting *community empowerment* through community involvement and ownership of local community initiative
- Supporting *democratic cultural policy* by better understanding through participation studies what people are doing or not doing (and revealing what people want to do) rather than succumbing to elite metropolitan definitions of the arts and culture
- Linking to key objectives related to formal and informal education
- The program's reflection of a commitment to *working in partnership* with others to encourage quality and excellence in the cultural life of the nation and to make culture available to all
- The program's reflection of a commitment to *evidence based policy making* and the need for relevant, sound and timely research to support decision-making and to build the evidence base for the importance of culture to communities and the country.

Culture in Everyday Life (CEL), emerged as a direct response to the focus placed on cities as the driving force for cultural development.

The work being advanced in the UK could potentially open opportunities to inform cultural planning research and practice in Canada.

5. Looking to the Future: Cultural Planning and Emerging Civic Agendas

5.1 Cities as Cultural Entities

The growing acceptance of cultural planning approaches coincides with the re-emergence of *place* as essential to urban planning practice. Planning as a modern profession was the product of late 19th and early 20th century visionaries such as Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford, whose views of cities bore remarkable similarity to those articulated by Jane Jacobs and others, many decades later. They shared the view of cities as *cultural entities*, places that were shaped by their natural and human heritage and a product of the shared values of their citizens. Both Geddes and Mumford advocated citizen participation in planning through “civic exhibitions” on urban and regional issues, surveys, and through input to the creation of planning alternatives or scenarios. Mumford saw plans as “instruments of communal education” (Baeker 1999).

Cities are increasingly seen to be cultural entities - places that are shaped by their natural and human heritage and a product of the shared values of their citizens. ... Cultural planning...is positioned to be a critical part of the 21st century civic agenda

The professionalization of the urban planning field that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s and its institutionalization as a function of local government undermined these more holistic views. The professional culture of municipal planners turned technocratic, and its concerns viewed as “apolitical.” The primary focus was on the administration of land and on the efficient delivery of municipal services. Growth and development were generally viewed in positive – and often unquestioned – terms (ibid.).

These traditions will not quickly disappear, but the planning literature also demonstrates that a “re-placing” of the planning profession will increasingly intersect these more technocratic concerns. This is based on the recognition that despite the diversity of cities, citizens still share:

a collective home place ... a region-scale place that a majority might invoke in a foreign place to describe their home turf ... although collective home places are billed as the new natural places and eco-states as the new political places, they share a common ecological denominator. Their combination would create a merger of the political and the natural, resulting in a blended political and ecological citizenship (Wight, 1999).

Cultural planning, with its focus on place and more democratic, inclusive approaches to cultural development, is well positioned to be a critical part of the 21st century civic agenda.

5.2 Cultural Planning and Social Capital

Urban planning theorists are starting to research the role arts and cultural activity in cities can play, in challenging dominant assumptions and widening possibilities for urban reform. Planning has traditionally paid little attention to the work of artists and

other cultural workers who use myths, stories and metaphors to challenge conventional narratives. One urban planning scholar writes of the importance of “alternative histories” that challenge accepted historical narratives and portray a world that is more complex and contingent, offering opportunities for larger numbers of citizens to have influence (Mandelbaum 1991).

Hawkins and Gibson (1994) believe cultural planning offers alternatives to models of urban planning which perpetuate the myth of planning as a value-free, technical process responsible for managing the urban environment. They call for cultural planning to facilitate both cultural and economic diversity, countering visions of cultural standardization and economic concentration.

The tools of the artist are an essential part of how we imagine cities: through stories, images, metaphors, exploring possibilities, as well as critiques.

Ghilardi (2001) also argues that cultural planning offers an opportunity for influencing more open and creative practices of planning and policy across a wide range of civic issues. It accomplishes this by exploring how the cultural practices of diverse communities are woven into the fabric of everyday life - routines and interactions - in particular spatial contexts. She also acknowledges, that this will require equipping local cultural planners and cultural managers with a broader knowledge of the factors conditioning the ways in which culture is intermeshed with social and economic life in urban environments.

Cultural planning offers a vehicle for citizens to imagine their city in new ways. It invites contributions from all people and groups to fashion the city they desire. Defining cultural resources and issues broadly means that each person and group has a right to be heard and to contribute their concern, vision or story. Respecting the unique perspectives voiced and multiple contributions offered, requires models of decision making that are respectful of difference, admit ambiguity, and depend on relationships that endure through time. In this provisional and temporal space, the unifying factor is the shared place in which participants dwell, however variously that place is understood and imagined (Cardinal, 2001).

In this vision of cultural planning, the contributions of the artist are also invited, and the tools of the artist become key to the participation of all. For the city is firstly imagined, and then brought into being, through citizen action in a multitude of spheres, including the official, political ones. The tools of the artist are an essential part of how we imagine cities: through stories, images, metaphors, exploring possibilities as well as critiques. In whole systems approaches, that involve broadly based-participatory decision making and embrace a broad understanding of cultural resources, the tools of the artist are engaged by all who care about the collectively imagined public space in which they dwell. And it may be that the civic capacity for inventing more fully human cities can become a model for governance at senior levels and on larger scales (ibid.).

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