



Cultural Master Plan

City of Grande Prairie



Photo: Melanie Jenner



Photo: Shai Gil Photography

Grande Prairie Public Library

The Prairie Art Gallery presented Without End: Exploring the Lines That Keep Us Apart in September 2009. Visitors at the opening reception were invited to draw on one of the canvases and the wall it where it was displayed.

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1.0 Executive Summary

Cultural activities and facilities have substantial tangible benefits for a growing city like Grande Prairie. Culture is a shared responsibility between all levels of government, with municipal funding most important. It is also shared between government, the nonprofit sector, the corporate sector, and individuals. Local government provides cultural policy, funding and facilities. The City, the County and the region can collaborate more effectively; artists, patrons and audience members all cross jurisdictions. One of the strategic ways in which this collaboration could proceed is to look forward to the 100th anniversary of Grande Prairie in 2014 and the opportunity to apply for Cultural Capital funding.

Nevertheless, at \$19.71, per capita spending for arts and heritage is significantly lower amount when compared to other small and mid-size cities in Alberta. If the City was in line with these other municipalities the per capita amount would be approximately \$36.00 and funding for arts and heritage \$1.8M. Increasing support for culture is a wise investment that will pay dividends in the short and long terms for Grande Prairie and its citizens.

1.1 Vision

Residents of and visitors to Grande Prairie create, consume and appreciate expressive culture and heritage as an essential part of our everyday lives. The City of Grande Prairie invests in indoor and outdoor cultural facilities and in the vibrancy and sustainability of its cultural community that provides diverse accessible programs.

1.2 Strategic Directions

1. Demonstrate leadership in developing a financially stable and sustainable environment for culture in the City of Grande Prairie.
2. Integrate cultural considerations into municipal planning.
3. Increase public awareness of the value of arts and culture and encourage participation in arts and cultural activities in the larger community
4. Develop programs to engage the City's growing and increasingly diverse population.
5. Ensure equal access to cultural opportunities, with a particular focus on the Aboriginal population, New Canadians and youth.
6. Complete the development of state of the art flagship institutions.
7. Enhance outdoor cultural programming in the Montrose site, Downtown and Muskoseepi Park.
8. Foster greater collaboration within the cultural community, in the City, County and Peace Region.



Alberta Arts Days

1.3 Financial Implications of the Implementation Plan

A number of actions have financial implications. The City has invested significantly in cultural infrastructure in recent years, particularly in the Montrose Cultural Centre, the Library, Art Gallery, and Centre for Creative Arts. The next major capital expense will be the proposed Performing Arts Centre. There are several viewpoints about the size and nature of the centre; a Feasibility Study should be conducted to determine the scope of the project, its capital and operating costs, and governance and funding models. The Museum requires significant capital investment, either renovation and expansion of the existing facility or construction of a new facility. The Archives also requires additional space and is exploring the possibility of building a new facility. These are all long-term projects, outside the 5-year detailed plan, but preliminary planning should be initiated in the interim. Interim facility improvements to the 2nd Street Theatre and Museum have been identified.

Several new positions have been identified:

- Curator, Grande Prairie Museum
- Cultural Coordinator, City of Grande Prairie
- Heritage Planner, City of Grande Prairie
- Cultural Programmer, Muskoseepi Park
- Curator, Prairie Art Gallery

New and expanded programs that will require ongoing investment from the City include:

- Cultural Capital Funding application will require a one-time investment from the City
- Annual multidisciplinary cultural festival and awards program
- Public Art Program
- Increased festival funding

The plan is the result of extensive research and community consultation; the vision, strategic directions and action plan all come from the community.



Montrose Cultural Centre

Photo: Shai Gil Photography

2.0 Definitions

Accessibility: the ability to engage in cultural activity, physically, intellectually, and financially

Art: work in an expressive medium (media) that is specifically produced, experienced and valued for its aesthetic, interpretative and instrumental aspects

Artist: an individual who engages in an expressive medium (media) that meets professional expectations such as accreditation or critical recognition. The art produced is intended for public recognition and compensation

Culture: artifacts, products, pursuits and traditions, including but not limited to arts and heritage activities that define, shape and sustain groups and communities

Cultural Industry: Industry Canada defines the cultural industry as publishing industries (including software publishing), motion picture and sound recording industries, broadcasting industries, telecommunications, etc. and considers live productions, artistic productions and cultural works, preserving and exhibiting objects, sites, and natural wonders of historical, cultural and/or educational value as part of the arts, entertainment and recreation industries. For the purposes of this plan, and consistent with the scope of the Peace Region Cultural Industry Coalition (PREDA), cultural industry also includes museums, galleries, arts and live entertainment

Cultural Tourism: visits to the community that are motivated by visual and performing arts, human heritage, natural history, and festivals or the desire to learn about local social institutions or customs

Diversity: representation and participation by a range of ethno-cultural, linguistic and demographic groups in arts and heritage activities in a given community

Heritage: what is or may be inherited, both tangible and intangible, includes but is not limited to local history, natural landscape and cultural traditions

Expressive Media: forms available to artists and arts organizations for the purpose of production and engagement including traditional media such as painting, craft, the written word, music and theatre, and new media such as digital technologies

Sustainable: cultural facilities and programs that can survive into the future, whether financially, in terms of human resources and audiences, or environmentally, without negatively impacting the present



Youth Filmmaking Challenge workshop leader Scott Belyea checks the camera work of student Marina Gardner at the 2009 Reel Shorts Film Festival

3.0 Inventory of Cultural Organizations

Cultural Festivals

Grande Prairie International Street Performers
Festival Association
Reel Shorts Film Festival

Cultural Industries

Northwest Video Production
The Rabbit Hole
Velocity Video Productions Ltd

Ethnocultural Organizations

Aboriginal Head Start Program
Assn Canadienne Française de l'Alberta
Chinese Association of Grande Prairie
Grande Prairie Friendship Centre
Islamic Association of GP & District
Metis Local #1990
Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Troyanda Society of Ukrainian Culture & Heritage

Heritage Organizations

GP & District Alberta Genealogical Society
GP Heritage Building Restoration Society
Grande Prairie Museum
Heritage Discovery Centre
Pioneer Museum Society of GP & District
South Peace Historical Resource Restoration
South Peace Regional Archives

Historic Sites

Bear Creek Cemetery
Forbes Homestead
Grande Prairie Cemetery
Historic Anglican Church building

Library/Literary Arts Organizations

Cygnnet Writers Group
GP Children's Literature Roundtable Foundation
Grande Prairie Public Library

Performing Arts – Dance Organizations

Across the Floor Dance Studio
Dance Trendz Corp
Dans Connection Dance Studio
Explosion Dance Studio
The Grande Prairie Dancers Academy
Monie Desmarais School of Dance
NOW Dance Society
Pey Wapun Dance Group
Ready Set Dance
Scottish Country Dance Society

Performing Arts – General

Douglas J. Cardinal Performing Arts Centre
Grande Prairie Performing Arts Guild
Second Street Theatre

Performing Arts – Music Organizations

GP & District Music Festival Association
Grande Prairie & District Pipes and Drums
Grande Prairie Boys Choir
Grande Prairie Music Parents Association
Peace Starts at Home Society of GP

Performing Arts – Theatre Organizations

Broadway Live Broadway
Grande Prairie Live Theatre
Ovations Dinner Theatre, Evergreen Park

Umbrella/Support Organizations

Community Foundation of Greater GP
 Grande Prairie Council for Lifelong Learning
 GP Regional College Fine Arts Department
 Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association
 Immigrant Settlement Services
 Peace Library System
 Peace Region Cultural Industry Coalition
 Volunteer Services Bureau

Visual Arts Organizations

Art of the Peace Visual Arts Association
 Artists North
 Centre for Creative Arts
 Courtyard Gallery, QEII Hospital
 Forbes and Friends
 The Grande Prairie Figure Drawing Club
 Grande Prairie Guild of Artists
 Grande Prairie Photography Club
 The Prairie Art Gallery
 Unique Gallery

4.0 Introduction

4.1 Methodology

The cultural planning process began in February 2010, when the City contracted a consulting team led by Catherine C. Cole & Associates and including Barr Ryder Architects and Interior Designers and Topside Consulting (2004) Ltd. to develop the plan. The consultants made initial site visits and met with the Project Manager and Manager of Culture and Heritage, Lois Harper, and members of the Advisory Committee: Laurie Harrison, Library Director; Candace Hook, Executive Director, Centre for Creative Arts; Robert Steven, Director/Curator, Prairie Art Gallery; Geoff Whittall, Chairperson, Department of Fine Arts, Grande Prairie Regional College; Rick Hryciuk, General Manager, Grande Prairie Live Theatre. Trenton Perrott and former Alderman Elroy Deimert

were also on the committee for brief periods of time.

Research and consultation included:

- Literature review of various documents related to municipal planning and cultural organizations that revealed how the City has integrated cultural considerations into recent planning projects
- Environmental scan of cultural facilities and programs in other cities that serve as a point of reference for Grande Prairie
- Site visits, facility tours and meetings about each flagship organization that enhanced the consultants' understanding of the organizations, their strengths and weaknesses
- Detailed facility reviews of the 2nd Street Theatre and the Grande Prairie Museum that identified immediate and long-term issues
- One-on-one meetings with City officials and key members of the community, including the business community and philanthropists that indicated the level of support for culture
- Two distinct surveys of cultural organizations and individuals active in the cultural community that provided valuable information about the concerns and priorities of the cultural community
- Five focus groups that broadened the debate to include under-represented segments of society – youth, Aboriginal people, ethnocultural communities, and nonprofit societies
- Interim report and presentation to the Community Development Committee that summarized findings to date and provided opportunity for feedback
- Public meetings that further expanded opportuni-

ties for input into the process

The plan is the result of extensive research and community consultation; the vision, strategic directions and action plan all come from the community.

4.2 Acknowledgements

Thanks to Advisory Committee members Laurie Harrison, Library Director; Candace Hook, Executive Director, Centre for Creative Arts; Robert Steven, Director/Curator, Prairie Art Gallery; Geoff Whittall, Chairperson, Department of Fine Arts, Grande Prairie Regional College; Rick Hryciuk, General Manager, Grande Prairie Live Theatre, and to Trenton Perrott and former Alderman Elroy Deimert who were also on the committee for brief periods of time.

Many community members contributed to the development of the plan by participating in interviews, focus groups or public meetings, and completing the surveys and providing feedback on draft documents. Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

5.0 Current Status

5.1 The City and the Region

Grande Prairie is a city of 50,000 and a service centre to a region of 250,000 incorporating north-western Alberta and north-eastern British Columbia. The community has been shaped by its isolation, northern climate, recent settlement history, and rapid population growth. As the regional hub, the City boasts a cultural life beyond that of most cities with a population of 50,000. Distance from the next major urban centre represents both a challenge (e.g., travel costs and time for touring performances and exhibitions coming to, or originating in, Grande Prairie) and an opportunity (i.e., the requirement to

develop cultural amenities and products locally). The cultural life of the city has been developed in large part through a pioneering, 'can do' attitude but residents' aspirations are perhaps bigger than the city's population can support.

Compared to other Canadian cities, Grande Prairie has an affluent but relatively uneducated, and young population (median age 30). The cultural community is well-established and, by contrast, is below average income, and above average education and age. The population doubled in the 20 years before the recent economic downturn, and the economy shifted from that of an agricultural community/ service centre to being increasingly resource-based. The rapidly growing workforce expects to have access to quality facilities and modern programs. The recession was less severe in Grande Prairie than in other parts of the country, but it has affected culture; for example, theatre ticket sales are down 30%.

The City sees itself as a "vibrant community of rapid growth and prosperity ... a community of excellence that embraces challenges and opportunities." The City is proud of its cultural facilities, particularly the new Montrose Cultural Centre, the Grande Prairie Public Library, and the Prairie Art Gallery, and the newly renovated Centre for Creative Arts nearby. The Montrose site has great potential to become the focal point of a cultural district, with a public square and urban green space, home to cultural events year round. Muskoseepi Park, "the jewel of our urban park system" is a great recreational asset for the community, but its cultural value could be enhanced through improvements to the amphitheatre and cultural programming, and investment in the Grande Prairie Regional Museum, its primary cultural facility.

5.2 Benefits of Culture

Cultural activities and facilities have substantial tangible benefits for a growing city like Grande Prairie. Among other things, they provide young families and newcomers, as well as long-standing residents, with opportunities and places to actively participate in community life. They foster a sense of local pride and convey that Grande Prairie is a liveable and attractive city. Yet per capita spending for arts and heritage, excluding libraries, is only \$19.71, a significantly lower amount when compared to other small and mid-size cities in Alberta such as Medicine Hat (\$57.12), Lethbridge (\$37.51) and Red Deer (\$34.36), whose commitments also do not include library expenditures. The discrepancy is not a matter of Grande Prairie having a proportionally smaller population. In fact, if the City was in line with these other municipalities the per capita amount would be approximately \$36.00 and funding for arts and heritage \$1.8M. It's clear that the other municipalities see even greater benefits from culture if measured by their spending. The commitments make these cities more sustainable as liveable communities. Thus increasing support for culture is a wise investment that will pay dividends in the short and long terms for Grande Prairie and its citizens.

Cultural funding and planning in Grande Prairie should also be seen in a broader context. During the past decade, many large and small municipalities across Canada invested substantially in culture. Commitments included infrastructure, increased support for arts and heritage organizations and an array of cultural programs to serve increasingly diverse populations. The push has come from elected officials at various levels of government, from the cultural community itself, from other civic leadership and from advocacy organizations, such as the Creative City Network. There is now an overwhelming consensus that culture is an essential component in the life of any city that needs to be nurtured and sustained.

The recognition that culture matters has resulted in development of cultural plans which serve as a blueprint for a city's immediate, medium and long-term aspirations and actions. While the recent economic downturn has resulted in budget freezes or reductions in some places, support for culture nevertheless prevails as cities strive to maintain themselves as liveable communities.

Grande Prairie is positioned to not only maintain its commitments to culture but to increase them. While Grande Prairie has had to cope with economic swings, it is a thriving service centre for an equally prosperous region. And it is already served by some impressive new infrastructure which is an anchor for cultural development. These are the kind of realities and the resources that fuel arts and heritage activity and make culture an integral and viable part of city life.

5.3 Role of the City

The City is committed to developing a more cosmopolitan urban environment and maintaining a high quality of life to attract professionals and a skilled labour force by providing cultural services and amenities. Culture is now recognized as one of the pillars of sustainable development. Public consultation during other recent local planning processes raised the importance of improved cultural facilities – the cultural planning process has further explored and perhaps raised residents' expectations. City Council has been moderately supportive of arts and heritage and recognizes the importance of local culture, history, and people in fostering a sense of place, providing educational and recreational opportunities, making Grande Prairie a good place to live, and attracting professionals to the community. However, Grande Prairie did not consider the economic impact of arts and heritage when evaluating other industries; a specific study of the economic impact of culture should be undertaken.

The City provides cultural policy, funding (operational grants to flagships, plus \$70,000 to festivals and \$10,000 for arts development), and facilities. The City is establishing a Cultural Legacy Endowment within the Community Foundation that will receive donations from both the City and community members. It would like to get to \$100,000 fairly quickly, to then be able to disburse \$3,500/year (3.5%). However, there is no plan for how to increase the endowment.

5.3.1 Culture is a Shared Responsibility

Although this is a Cultural Master Plan developed by and for the City, it is impossible to completely separate the City from the County and indeed the region, as artists, patrons and audience members all cross these three jurisdictions. Surrounding communities are developing their own cultural amenities and

educational facilities that have an impact on the development of facilities in Grande Prairie because the audience is regional. The City and the County could collaborate more effectively. There are a number of regional arts organizations, the most recent of which, the Peace Country Cultural Industries Coalition, is sponsored by the Peace Region Economic Development Agency (PREDA). Others include Artists North and Art of the Peace.

Culture is also a shared responsibility between all levels of government. Survey respondents note that the provincial government supports 97% of cultural organizations in Grande Prairie, and the City 88% of organizations, but that the City's support is the most substantial. The provincial and federal governments' importance is demonstrated by the following table:

Per-Capita Spending by Governments on Culture: 2006-2007				
Jurisdiction	All	Federal	Provincial	Municipal
Quebec	\$335	\$164	\$104	\$91
PEI	\$272	\$141	\$101	\$30
Saskatchewan	\$257	\$48	\$118	\$91
Ontario	\$245	\$107	\$55	\$82
Nova Scotia	\$234	\$115	\$80	\$39
Manitoba	\$231	\$73	\$110	\$48
Newfoundland	\$224	\$93	\$106	\$26
Alberta	rank 8: \$219	rank 8: \$57	rank 6: \$95	rank 6: \$66
New Brunswick	\$210	\$91	\$81	\$37
British Columbia	\$194	\$46	\$58	\$90
Average	\$266	\$114	\$79	\$73

Note:

Except for municipal spending, per-capita spending is higher in all three territories but they were excluded from the analysis because of their small populations; the provinces with the smallest populations show the lowest per capita municipal spending also putting Alberta at the lower end in this category if this factor is taken into account. This table includes funding for libraries.

Cultural programs and events are not well coordinated or marketed; there is a lot of duplication of effort. This may change with the establishment of the Peace Country Cultural Industries Coalition, intended to support cultural industries as a significant driver of the Peace region economy. The Coalition's first priorities are to develop a greater understanding of the cultural sector, create a database, and provide networking opportunities and encourage collaborative initiatives such as joint marketing. The coalition intends to develop programs to encourage young and emerging artists to stay or return to the region and increase awareness within the larger community of the impact of arts and culture, and of the richness of the local cultural amenities, programs and products. Local economic development studies have not considered the economic impact of the cultural sector or of the nonprofit sector in general. The recent economic slump was not as severe in Grande Prairie as in some parts of Canada; for the cultural sector, the challenge is to attract and retain qualified staff when nonprofit organizations are unable to pay salaries that are competitive with other industries.

There is a small but active cultural community in Grande Prairie. One of the most significant threats to cultural development is human resources – from board members, to staff, to volunteers, to audience members. Cultural activity thrives through personal commitment to the place and to the organization. Many organizations are struggling. Older community volunteers are getting burned out; younger people are involved in their children's activities and do not have a lot of time to dedicate to community programs. There's a need for board development, succession planning, fund development, etc.

The City wants to encourage more tourism; cultural tourism is one aspect that could be further developed. Commemoration of local history is recognized as providing educational, tourism

and economic development opportunities. Grande Prairie Regional College, which provides education, training, and venues, is an important cultural partner. Cuts to the provincial government's touring budget in the early '90s still impact the region; it is a challenge to bring artists and travelling exhibitions to Grande Prairie and to develop projects that tour from the city. There is a lot of cultural activity, but there are gaps, particularly in terms of programs for youth and newcomers.

Although culture is a shared responsibility, the City is the most important investor in local cultural initiatives. Federal and provincial sources may support major capital projects, and special projects that are considered to be of provincial or national significance, but it is the City that provides the most ongoing operational support.

5.4 Cultural Facilities

The City and the community are understandably fully proud of work to date on the Montrose Cultural Centre. However, the site is not yet complete; municipal plans suggest the addition of one or more additional cultural facilities, public art, and the development of public space outdoors that could be used for festivals.



Photo: Melanie Jenner

A local artist creates a chalk drawing on the streets during the 2008 Street Performers Festival.

5.4.1 Grande Prairie Public Library

The Library is widely regarded as the primary cultural asset in the city. It has a very impressive new facility, with specific spaces designed for each user group as well as for meetings and training programs. The Library has developed numerous partnerships with community organizations such as the French Language Resource Centre and the Genealogical Society, and seen a significant increase in use since moving to its new facility last year. The Library's 2011-2014 Strategic Plan emphasizes increased collaboration and partnerships in their programming as a means of achieving its service goals. The Library hopes to develop an additional multipurpose programming space in its second floor expansion area to offer a wide variety of programs to target audiences identified in their Plan: teen art and music programs that allow for creative "messes" and noise; multicultural programs celebrating ethnic diversity through music, food and dance; programs in support of lifelong learning and more.

Additional programming space is complementary to this Cultural Plan and the City's Action Plan for Welcoming and Inclusive Communities.

In particular, there are "priority services responses" including:

- Targeted commitments for collaboration with community organizations to celebrate diversity and cultural awareness; and
- Increasing opportunities for lifelong learning.

Both responses could entail collaboration with a range of other cultural organizations, such as the Grande Prairie Museum, the South Peace Regional Archives and the Native Friendship Centre on city-wide heritage activities, such as the Doors Open concept which is explored under 5.4.11. There are also increasing possibilities for collaborating with the Prairie Art Gallery to develop and deliver complementary programming for the Teresa Sargent Hall in the Montrose Cultural Centre.

Grande Prairie Museum

5.4.2 Prairie Art Gallery

The Prairie Art Gallery (PAG) is also considered to be a much-valued cultural asset. The recent opening of the new space in the Montrose Cultural Centre and the ongoing renovations to its heritage facility will increase space from 9,000 sq. ft. to 15,000 sq. ft. The Gallery will need to learn how to use these new and extensive spaces, both indoors and out. The Gallery has Category 'A' status under the Moveable Cultural Property Program which provides it with an opportunity for showing and acquiring highly valuable art work. It also has set a very ambitious objective of wanting to be the best small art gallery in the world in 15 years. To exploit its 'A' status, and to realize its dream of being the best, the PAG will have to engage in some necessary initial steps. It should develop a strategic plan that includes specific financial, curatorial and organizational actions to achieve its lofty goals. Yet initially, even before a planning process begins, it should hire a full-time curator to meet immediate programming needs.

The Gallery currently hires guest curators for particular projects, some of which have been very successful and received regional or national notoriety. But invited curators cannot provide the ongoing stability the Gallery requires especially when it comes to making the strongest possible case for operating support from the Canada Council for the Arts and conceivably other federal government funding. The Gallery can certainly build on previous initiatives, such as site-specific exhibitions like Artery, to begin developing at least one thematic direction for the gallery's contemporary art program. Indeed, such a focus may be especially attractive to prospects for the curatorial position given the current interest in this area in the visual art world.

The Gallery certainly recognizes that it plays an important role in the Peace River region given its travelling exhibition coordination for the Alberta Foundation of the Arts. It recognizes as well the need to serve various communities in Grande Prairie more effectively while at the same time develop critical exhibitions that are complemented by publications and innovative programming. These objectives may be partially realized by building, once again, on previous site-specific projects and by collaborating further, as noted above, with the Library, as well as the Centre for Creative Arts and other cultural organizations to reach particular constituencies such as families, newcomers, the First Nations community and youth.

5.4.3 Centre for Creative Arts

The Centre for Creative Arts (CFCA), also frequently mentioned as an asset by the community, moved into its newly renovated facility this spring. There are a few shortcomings that remain to be ironed out (e.g., floors, sound transfer) but overall the renovations were successful. The CFCA exhibits the work of both emerging and established artists in various genres; the gift shop features regionally produced arts and crafts; and the Centre provides instruction in visual arts, drawing, painting, photography, pottery, glass, and metals.

Now that the facility is enhanced the CFCA should consider developing a strategic plan for the purpose of setting medium and long-term objectives. In the meantime, its current commitments remain considerable. The Grande Prairie Figure Drawing Club, Grande Prairie Guild of Artists, Artists North, and Photography Club all use the facilities.

The CFCA provides opportunities for the rationalization of programs, such as offering studio programs and community exhibitions while critical exhibitions are held at the Gallery. Yet the two organizations could collaborate more on programs,

such as CFCA workshops that tie in to art media and processes featured in exhibitions at the Gallery. The CFCA also operates the Hapi Program (Healing Arts Program Initiative) and would like to extend the reach of this program by receiving funding for individuals unable to pay. Given the Library's strategic plan noted above, as well as the City's Action Plan for Welcoming and Inclusive Communities, the CFCA could collaborate with other arts and cultural organizations to develop and deliver Hapi as well as additional programs for various ages and community groups.

The CFCA also coordinated the successful Art Days event in Fall 2010 and could take the lead in organizing an annual arts and cultural festival each fall, a commitment no doubt that would be weighed in the development of a strategic plan. This festival could also integrate the legacy of the Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards by incorporating other current honours such as Friend of the Francophone Community, the South Peace Archives Award and the Eby McBryan Award. New awards could also be introduced such as one which recognizes an emerging artist or the contribution of youth to arts and heritage.

5.4.4 Second Street Theatre

The City owns the Second Street Theatre and provides funding support to Grande Prairie Live Theatre. The existing facility is inadequate for use as a theatre and, although several renovations have extended its life as a theatre, it is time to begin planning towards a new facility. A number of immediate repairs are required, including: repairs to the exterior walls, flashing and stucco; water damage to the sheathing and framing behind the stucco; need to install a 1½" overhang past the stucco surface on parapets and gable ends of the roof, and retrofitting the windows, vents and doors; replace the stucco with a cementitious plank siding, with rigid insulation behind

it for an increase in R-factor. A number of interior wall repairs are also required, as well as updating the electrical, plumbing and air handling systems. From a functional perspective, the building has limitations as a theatre. The building is too small for its present use: wing, backstage, storage, and dressing rooms are all inadequate. It may be retained in the future, primarily as a rehearsal, administration and storage space or some other use.

5.4.5 New Performing Arts Centre

The need for a new Performing Arts Centre was identified in the RFP and enthusiastically confirmed through this consultation process. Having numerous companies and users under one roof can create partnerships and opportunities not realized in the current infrastructure. Currently there are numerous organizations that operate in independent locations and cannot take advantage of any common infrastructure, or utilize the events of others to promote their own. Potential users who have expressed interest in using the facility include Grande Prairie Live Theatre, Broadway Live Broadway, Ovations Dinner Theatre, Grande Prairie Boys Choir, the Dance community at large, and ethnocultural groups (to name a few). The community stands to benefit from a single facility designed to meet individual and collective needs. Throughout the public consultation process, potential users and community organizations viewed the impact of a new PAC to the cultural life of Grande Prairie as very positive, with the realization that they must work together to provide a facility that is flexible and usable for as many groups as possible, while not compromising on the essential features for primary users. It may not be possible to accommodate all interested groups.

The two biggest challenges ahead for a new PAC are:

- Having all stakeholders work together to create a unified facility; and
- Funding opportunities for construction and operations to reduce the capital input required from the city and to offset operations and rental rates so that the facility is affordable for all.

Initial public consultation indicated a preference for larger facilities rather than smaller ones. This is in part a response to the desire to be all things to all genres. It was noted that some performers require larger audience chambers, while a smaller venue for an intimate setting still needs to be maintained. An in-depth review of design and seating options needs to be performed to create an audience chamber that does not become unmanageable for all but specific performances. Careful attention needs to be paid to creating spaces that accommodate various kinds of performance. There is a danger in trying to create a single space that will work for all configurations and ultimately fails in all aspects because it compromises too many required 'needs'. The next phase would identify seating configurations, pros and cons, performable types, along with recommending the desired configuration(s).

The consultation also generated a lot of useful information to begin the process of laying the design framework for a new PAC. The two primary components mentioned are the need for a performing arts space, complete with theatre quality seats, traditional stage and proscenium, adaptive and flexible for everything from theatre to voice to orchestra. The second component identified was a black box theatre type venue. This is meant to house less traditional performances and be more flexible for a multitude of users. This black box would also serve as a rehearsal space as required for larger productions in the main theatre.

Ancillary to these two components would be the front of house and back of house areas. Front of house areas would include patron services, administration, etc. as well as the very important grand lobby. This lobby will need to accommodate the full patron load during intermissions and provide the space and function to serve and circulate the theatre goer comfortably. Back of house pertains to the inner sanctum of the artist and is a critical component to how successfully a theatre can put on performances. The back of house consists of a sequence of events and operations and should be designed in conjunction with experienced designers and theatre specialists. A common concern raised at the public presentations was to ensure that the storage and service spaces be large enough to support the intended uses. Planning will have to keep in mind the potential for technological obsolescence. Designing a system that can be expanded and interactive will alleviate some of the inevitable changes in technology.



Broadway Live Broadway's production of Elton John's Aida

Photo: Don Zwicker

Feasibility Study

The next step is to issue an RFP for a Feasibility Study. A detailed building program will be required to ensure that all the required areas are included and accounted for. This next phase can be unified to include a Feasibility Study, program assessment and budget development. This method would produce a document that would identify the major ground work needed to begin the Schematic and Design Development phases. The Feasibility/concept development report would be submitted and reviewed. The City could at that time decide if there is a desire to proceed to the next (Schematic Design) phase. The Feasibility Study should, at a minimum, identify the following information:

1. Project description
2. Describe results desired
3. List the deliverables required
4. Identify a realistic schedule
5. Provide enough information to provide a competitive and comparative fee proposal

The specific areas that the RFP should focus on are:

1. Needs assessment and market analysis

Consultation to confirm primary users and identify other potential users who may not use the facility on a regular basis but would still like the ability to use the facilities as needed, i.e. wind/jazz ensembles, movie series, the Reel Shorts Film Festival and other festivals, recitals, speakers, powwows, concerts, etc. It has been suggested that the PAC might stimulate the regeneration of a community orchestra – trained musicians live in the community, they just require a conductor. The

Centre could also accommodate touring productions. The needs assessment should go hand in hand with a market analysis that considers existing facilities in the region and determines future needs based upon projected population growth, demographics, and demand.

2. Governance

Preliminary consultation suggests that rather than having any one of the existing performing arts groups or the City develop and manage the facility, a nonprofit, registered charitable organization should be established to spearhead the project. Initially a Council approved committee should be established to further explore options and oversee the study. The City would ultimately own the building and provide ongoing funding to manage the facility.

3. Site assessment

The majority of discussion to date has centred around locating the PAC on the Montrose site and creating a centralized cultural district. Although other sites were suggested Council needs to confirm whether the PAC will be located on the Montrose site. The feasibility study will identify any site-related issues that need to be addressed.

4. PAC building program

Numerous comments were made stating the need for the potential PAC facility to be as multipurpose as possible. In order for a facility such as

this to be successful, it needs to be able to be programmed year round and always have something to offer the public. A facility that sits idle for weeks or months will not generate the cultural appeal that this facility is intended to produce. A facility that is flexible and useable by many different users will be vibrant and productive and become an integral part of the Grande Prairie community.

The next phase of investigations needs to address opportunities for shared use spaces and identify spaces where compromise is not possible. The goal of this exercise would be to generate a list of program spaces by area and user to create a program for the PAC that was functional, compact and meets the majority of stakeholders' needs. This program needs to be discussed with the stakeholders to gain approval and ensure that everyone is included in the decision making process. If the stakeholders are not involved, the risk to the project may be in the form of groups lobbying for personal interest and possibly starting negative campaigns because they feel they are not being consulted on their own needs.

This concept does not relate to the 'look' of the PAC but relates to how the facility is positioned in the marketplace. The overall feeling was, one that establishes this facility as a leader in service and is a facility that 'attracts' out of town interest, whether that is manifest in out of town patron attendance for local performances or out of town shows that look to Grande Prairie as a viable and prosperous stop on tours.

5. Project and construction budget (preliminary)

The public understands that what they are asking for is not an inexpensive undertaking and anticipates a budget of more than \$20M. The real test will come when a construction budget is measured against the building program and design. The next phase should include a budget based on current construction costs of such facilities as well as a building program to make the budget project specific. The budget should also identify escalation, construction and soft costs in order to give a realistic 'all in' project budget.

6. Business case

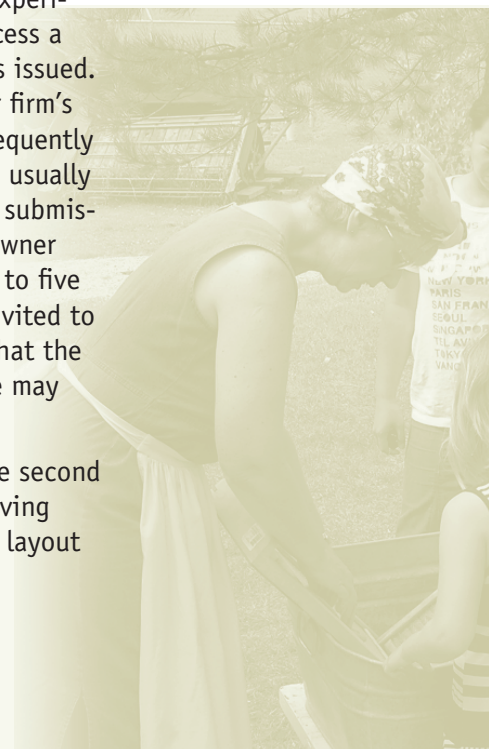
Identifying potential revenue streams and creating a preliminary business plan and operation model for this facility is crucial to long term viability of such an entity – this assessment should be included in any next step as it speaks directly to the program and design of the building. Both the City and potential users need to understand their ongoing operational costs and potential revenues. The feasibility study should include a “Triple Bottom Line” approach and measure the social, fiscal and environmental sustainability of the project. It should also emphasize the importance of the Performing Arts Centre to downtown development. The City’s commitment to LEED, Built Green or other environmentally sustainable building practices should be considered in undertaking the feasibility study.

Issuing the RFP

There are two similar yet distinctly different methods of issuing an RFP. The first is a traditional RFP in which the project concept is described and a comprehensive list of desired results and deliverables is identified. This RFP is let out to the design community at large and is open for any and all professionals to bid their services. In the current competitive market this method could generate more than fifteen proposals from qualified and unqualified firms. The negative aspect of this method in today’s market is that numerous firms with little to no theatre experience can and will apply and may possibly enter a fee proposal lower than experienced firms due to lack of understanding of the project. The lure of a low fee sometimes trumps experience in this process and owners may not get the desired result from a less experienced firm.

As a result of this situation, more and more clients are modifying the traditional process to establish a minimum experience level to bid on the project. In this modified process a ‘Request for Qualifications’ or ‘Expression of Interest’ is issued. This request is intended to select firms to submit their firm’s qualifications and experience to be reviewed and subsequently short listed to a predetermined number of proponents, usually three to five. This process will still generate numerous submissions but would not include any fees for service. The owner then reviews all submissions and selects the top three to five most qualified firms to be placed on a short list and invited to submit a formal bid on the RFP. This process ensures that the owner will select a pre-qualified firm. However, the fee may not be as low as with the traditional method.

In light of the specific and complex nature of PACs, the second method of selecting a consultant may lend itself to having greater value to this project and providing the desired layout and information to build on in the subsequent phases.



This Pre-design or Schematic Design procedure would provide the City enough information to fully address the requirement, cost and impact of a new PAC for Grande Prairie. If the results of the RFP are favourable to the City, they could then move into the next detailed phase of Design Development and ultimately the final construction drawings and building construction of a new PAC.

5.4.6 Grande Prairie Museum and Heritage Village

The Pioneer Museum Society of Grande Prairie & District was founded in 1961 and the Museum opened in 1971 in Muskoseepi Park. A shop and entrance were added to the main building between 1984 and 1986, a machine shed was built in 1987, and an expansion in 2005. The Museum began to develop a Heritage Village in 1974, with the relocation of the Tempest House, a two-story log house/post office from Kleskun Lake. In 1977, the Museum added the 1911 McQueen Presbyterian Church, the 1917 Hermit Lake school, and the Big Mountains forestry cabin. In 1979, the Edson Trail caboose was added. In 1999, a replica of the town fire hall and a replica of the 1919 Campbell Cabin (Isabel Campbell's childhood home), the 1935 Pipestone Creek Store, and a 1930 barn were added. The Museum is responsible for the Heritage Discovery Centre at Centre 2000. Established as a nonprofit organization, the Museum became a part of civic administration in January 2007. The Forbes Homestead Provincial Historic Site that opened in the summer of 2010 also falls under museum management.

The Museum's budget and staff should be increased; other museums examined in the environmental scan all have significantly larger budgets. For example, the Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery has an operating budget of \$975,354, \$880,550 of which is provided by the City; unlike Grande Prairie the museum

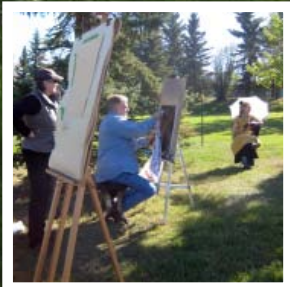
and gallery are combined in one facility. The Sir Alexander Galt Museum in Lethbridge has a budget of \$1,445,313, for the museum and archives. Both institutions have 15 staff compared to seven in Grande Prairie. Their facilities, budgets and number of professional staff provide sufficient resources to carry out various exhibition, collection and public program activities that meet museological standards and respond to a range of community expectations both in the respective cities and the southern and central regions of the province. The Galt Museum has a collection of more than 20,000 artifacts and completed an \$8.9 million expansion in 2006. The Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery has a collection of more than 85,000 artifacts and is currently completing a \$3 million renovation. While larger in budget and number of staff, these museums are not more complex institutions than the Grande Prairie Museum which has a collection of 52,000 artifacts, a heritage village, and two satellite locations, the Heritage Discovery Centre and the Forbes Homestead. With only seven staff, the museum now manages three sites.



Grande Prairie Museum



Broadway Live Broadway



Centre for Creative Arts

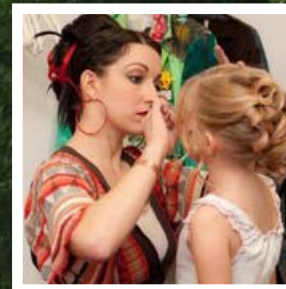


Grande Prairie Boys Choir





Grande Prairie Museum



Alberta Arts Days GALLERY



Alberta Arts Days

The Grande Prairie Museum does not have a vision, current strategic plan or collections policy. Museums by definition collect, preserve, study, and interpret objects. Museums and archives both preserve community memory and are a city's safe deposit box, where tangible cultural heritage is retained and intangible heritage studied and interpreted. However, it is exhibitions, public and educational programs – not the complex and essential behind-the-scenes work – that people tend to think of first when they think of museums. Museums today, particularly those in the majority that are without major collections of valuable unique, signature artifacts and works of art, realize the value of temporary exhibitions and ongoing programming in attracting repeat visitors. The Museum needs to develop more contemporary exhibitions and programs that highlight unique features of the collection. As an example, here is a possible exhibition and program concept:



Grande Prairie Museum

Going Places

The exhibition would highlight the Edson Trail Caboose and the Threshing Caravan in the Heritage Village and would focus on the use of mobile structures in the region, such as caravans and trailers used by work crews. The exhibition would emphasise the challenges of working in the region both today and historically, and include photographs of historic examples, and objects associated with such structures. A travelling exhibition could be developed, mounted inside a modern trailer provided by a sponsor (such as Foster's covered wagons). The exhibition could be driven to schools and community events throughout the region in May/June, promoting related events to be held at the Museum in July/August. Potential programming events include:

- Show and Shine of various old trailers and vans at the Museum;
- Trailer Rally – a Corporate Challenge event in which trailers from various work crews in the area would go geocaching and end up at the Museum <http://www.geocaching.com/> ;
- Film Series – old films showing these structures/ vehicles in use; etc.

The Museum has talked about an expansion as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations in 2012. The Museum is not very accessible, particularly to seniors, nor is the building itself very attractive within the context of the 'jewel' of the urban park system or of enhancing the major arteries in the city. Two distinct ideas have been raised: expanding around three sides of the Museum and expanding the Discovery Centre. However, the Museum should develop a Strategic Plan before initiating work on another expansion. The Strategic Plan should address: vision, goals, objectives, and organizational requirements in

terms of the main facility, village, human resources (need to hire a professional curator), funding, collections (including collections policy), preservation, research, exhibitions, interpretation, etc. The Strategic Plan should consider whether the Museum should continue to operate the Discovery Centre and Forbes Homestead and, if so, identify the additional resources necessary to do so without further draining the Museum itself.

Whether or not the current facility and location is the best option for the Museum in the long run has been questioned. The Canadian Conservation Institute should be asked to conduct an assessment that would determine whether or not it would be possible to obtain Category 'A' status for the Museum and, if so, what would be required in order to do so. If the Museum cannot be brought to Category 'A' condition, the Strategic Plan might identify a long-term goal of building a new facility for the Museum and Archives, also possibly on the Montrose site to round out the cultural complex. If the Museum is to remain in its current location, it should examine ways to integrate into the park experience as noted in the Muskoseepi Park Master Plan, introducing programs that capitalize on its location and emphasise the natural and Aboriginal history of the area, and working with Muskoseepi Park to develop interpretive stations, signage, and walking tours, about the cultural landscape. As noted in the park's Development Plan, "With the multiple layers of history present in the site (aboriginal, industrial, recreational), historians should be consulted for correct and sensitive interpretation. The Heritage Museum resource should be capitalized upon with all historical matters on the park."

If the Strategic Plan confirms the need for an expansion on the present site, the Museum should conduct a Feasibility Study to:

- Develop a functional program: look at better integration of new and old space, spatial relationships, amount of space required for various functions, address climate control issues;
- Determine whether or not it is possible to renovate the facility to meet Category 'A' standards;
- Investigate issues related to redirecting the creek, parking, heritage trees, access/mobility, etc.;
- Provide budget estimates, capital and operating; and
- Investigate funding sources, various government jurisdictions, corporate and private.
- As is City policy, the Feasibility Study should include a "Triple Bottom Line" approach – measure the social, fiscal and environmental sustainability of the project; explore the museum expansion concept within the plans to enhance Muskoseepi Park and to establish a positive visual impression on major arterial corridors that support the City's vision of an attractive community. The City's commitment to LEED, Built Green or other environmentally sustainable building practices should be considered in undertaking the feasibility study.

A new collections policy may alleviate the space problems to some extent by formalizing acquisition and deaccession criteria. With the policy approved, a collections assessment should be completed to determine future collections development through deaccessioning and proactive acquisition.

The 100th anniversary of Grande Prairie in 2014 provides an opportunity to apply for Cultural Capital funding and may be a catalyst for a heritage project such as museum expansion. The application requires a well thought out strategic approach that outlines how the City would benefit from the infusion of federal funds. Some of the ideas mentioned above could be integrated into the application.

5.4.7 South Peace Regional Archives

The South Peace Regional Archives (SPRA), established in 1999 and currently housed in the Museum, also requires additional space and is exploring development of a new facility by 2017. The South Peace Regional Archives, while located at the Museum, continues to operate as an independent society that preserves and provides access to archival records, maps, photographs, and films relating to history of the Peace Region. Initially part of the Museum, the Archives formed its own Society when the Museum gave up its arms-length, nonprofit status and became a direct line City department in July 2007. The Archives operates with funding from the City, County and other municipalities in the region and is open to partnering with a complementary organization and seeking capital funding for the new facility from various sources. The Archives has considered existing public buildings and privately-owned buildings, and is exploring the idea of building a purpose built facility to meet its long-term requirements, including being in a public area, possibly downtown, providing public access and security for its relatively small staff, and improving its vis-

ibility. The Museum and Archives are complementary functions and the two organizations are considering whether they could continue to develop their facilities in partnership.

5.4.8 Heritage Discovery Centre

The Heritage Discovery Centre, which opened 2001, focuses on the history of the Peace district, not just the City. The future of the Heritage Discovery Centre should also be considered within the Museum's strategic plan. The Centre is under-utilized and drains human resources from the Museum itself. The Centre would like to expand under the deck to provide approximately 2,000 sq. ft. of additional programming space and to improve traffic flow in existing exhibitions; however it could also reallocate space from the temporary exhibition gallery.

The strategic plan will have to address the River of Death and Discovery, whether to remove the dinosaur theme or to make it complementary to the proposed exhibitions in the River of Death and Discovery, and should perhaps focus on gallery redevelopment rather than short-term improvements to the existing exhibitions.

5.4.9 Forbes Homestead

The Forbes Homestead, which opened in May 2010, needs to refine the recreated environments to better reflect the time period of the building. The Museum does not have enough staff to be able to animate the facility and relies upon summer students for interpretation. The Forbes Homestead should also be considered within the Museum's Strategic Plan.

5.4.10 Historic Anglican Church

The Historic Anglican Church restoration is ongoing. The future use of the facility has not been determined. Although a potential user had been identified, they are no longer interested due to the amount of time required for the restoration process. Its future should also be considered within context of the City's Heritage Management Plan.

5.4.11 Heritage Preservation

The City has invested significant resources in heritage preservation, most recently in the ongoing restoration of the Grande Prairie High School, home to the Prairie Art Gallery, and restoration of the Forbes Homestead. However, the restoration of the Anglican Church is proceeding at a very slow rate.

The City has reintroduced the use of historical road names (e.g., Richmond/100th Avenue and Clairmont Road/100th Street), a creative link that connects the city's heritage with its future. Site-based interpretation (e.g., public art, interpretive panels, walking tours) will ensure that the names retain their relevance in the future. While there may not be sufficient heritage integrity remaining on Richmond Avenue to warrant a Main Street program, efforts should be made to retain and restore the remaining heritage buildings in the area.

The City developed a Heritage Management Plan in 2008. However the plan has not yet been adopted by Council, nor have its recommendations been implemented. The City is committed to partnering in and promoting the conservation of heritage resources and programs as an expression of community identity. Heritage preservation is acknowledged as a means of enhancing the downtown and improving the appearance of the city. Heritage preservation is also consistent with sustainable community principles: "the greenest building is the one that already exists."

Heritage preservation has implications for both the Culture and Planning Departments as heritage considerations impact new development and the preservation of existing structures. As well as considering respect for historical or architecture significance of buildings, planners need to consider the impact of new construction on streetscapes, and issues such as compatibility in height, scale and design of other buildings in the neighbourhood. Planning initiatives including Heritage Conservation Areas, transitional zoning, neighbourhood and infill design guidelines, and variances for preservation of historic resources should be considered. Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs) should preserve the integrity of historic resources included on the inventory and survey.

Grande Prairie currently does not participate in Doors Open, a heritage program that began in Scotland, came to Canada via Toronto and now makes selected heritage properties in cities throughout Canada more accessible once a year. For the day or weekend of Doors Open, properties not normally accessible to the public are open; those normally open provide access to rooms normally closed; and those normally open for a fee may be open free of charge. The program involves many community partners and volunteers and has been very popular in other cities. While beyond the current resources of the museums to organize, with adequate support and a heritage planner in place, the program would be good to introduce in the future.



Grande Prairie Museum

5.5 Public Art

Public art in Grande Prairie consists of a few sculptures and murals, some of which are owned by the College. Consultations indicated that there is substantial interest in developing a formal Public Art Program as a means of improving the appearance of the City and stimulating creativity and debate in the community. This interest is consistent with trends in other cities, both large and small, across Canada; many have increased commissions and/or developed or expanded public art programs to include several components, including community-based initiatives such as murals and partnerships with other public institutions as well as businesses. In any case, the rationales are similar i.e. that artworks aesthetically enhance parks, squares, civic buildings and other public spaces and that public art is a visible, physical demonstration of a city's commitment to cultural and community development.

Whether a city chooses to commission works periodically or whether it has a full-fledged program, expenditures of effort and money are considerable even if the aims are relatively modest. Most individual commissions, for example, now average between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

Previous efforts to establish a percent for art program failed. The City recently established a Public Art Trust Fund to which it will funnel surplus from arts development grants; however a more aggressive strategy needs to be introduced to create a fund that will support an active Public Art Program. This said, consideration must also be given to creating a steering committee to advise the City on the development of a Public Art Program with the attendant policies and resources. Some of the matters to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- The overall purpose and scope of the program
- The specific rationale and location of commissions

- The competitive process for commissions which normally include remuneration for semi-finalists and the eventual winner
- The availability of funds for the process and for the cost of work(s), their installation and their ongoing maintenance
- Partnerships and collaborations (as noted above) which also may include arts and heritage organizations such as the Prairie Art Gallery
- Linkages to other programs and events such as commemoration
- Community-based aspects such as a residency program in which professional artists work with community groups community organizations to produce works

5.6 Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Arts Awards Legacy

The Iskoteo festival surrounding the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Arts Awards, hosted by Grande Prairie in June 2009, was a moment of pride for the cultural community, a large, collaborative initiative that highlighted cultural activity broadly speaking. The City would like to establish a legacy of the event, such as a festival and awards program that provided awards in various arts and heritage disciplines. The program could integrate existing awards and also introduce new awards, such as an emerging artist award. As a result of the success of the 2010 Arts Days, the Centre for Creative Arts has expressed interest in developing an annual arts festival and awards program. With support of the City, the event could be a legacy of both Arts Days and the L.G. Awards.

5.7 Cultural Tourism

The RFP indicated a desire to develop cultural tourism in the city, potentially through festivals and/or through Aboriginal tourism. However, the primary audience for cultural festivals is



local/regional residents. The City would have to invest significantly in festivals in order to develop them to the point of attracting people from outside the region. Edmonton, the closest larger and major city, invests more than \$1.1 million annually in cultural festivals. The City of Grande Prairie currently provides a very modest amount of funding (\$70,000) to a handful of festivals and only for a few years. Perhaps initially one signature festival, unique to Grande Prairie, should be fostered. Two possibilities, which are not mutually exclusive, are building on the success of Arts Days noted above and the Going Places concept.

In any case, to develop and sustain a festival as well as other destination programs and events, more tourism-related data is required. It is necessary to have a better understanding of tourists who come to Grande Prairie, where they're from, why they visit, and what they'd like to experience. As for the prospect of a festival as a signature event it is important to recognize that most take time to nurture, attract notoriety and become sustainable. Few ever become entirely self-supporting, except for for-profit entities which are rare; they continue to rely on a combination of funding including earned revenue, funding from all levels of government, corporate sponsorship, and in some instances endowment funds. The most successful festivals by any cultural standard, and whether large or small, are those that begin with and maintain a core audience/niche market and become an integral part of the cultural fabric of the places in which they take place, as well as attracting tourists.

Grande Prairie's location in the Peace region is also critical in terms of cultural tourism, whether the focus is a signature event and/or other initiatives such as partnering with other communities in the region to develop theme packages. For example, the Alaska Highway is a draw primarily for older people, often Americans who are sensitive to fluctuating

gasoline prices and may respond negatively to the current advertising campaign in the United States about the tar sands. Thus presenting the region as a destination may pose particular challenges in the current and long term. There is also the overall impact of the recent economic downturn to consider in any assessment of cultural tourism possibilities. Pertinent too are generational and demographic factors, which are having an impact on attendance at natural sites such as parks and cultural heritage sites and events, which for many years were the bedrock of tourism.

Nevertheless, The River of Death and Discovery, currently in development, is regarded as a major cultural tourism opportunity for the region. It is projected to draw tourists and residents, especially young families. The City has committed \$1.5M to the project. However, it could be a threat rather than an opportunity as it duplicates the dinosaur theme at the Museum, Discovery Centre, and Tumbler Ridge Museum. There is, therefore a need to consider how these heritage entities might complement the new development rather than be affected adversely.

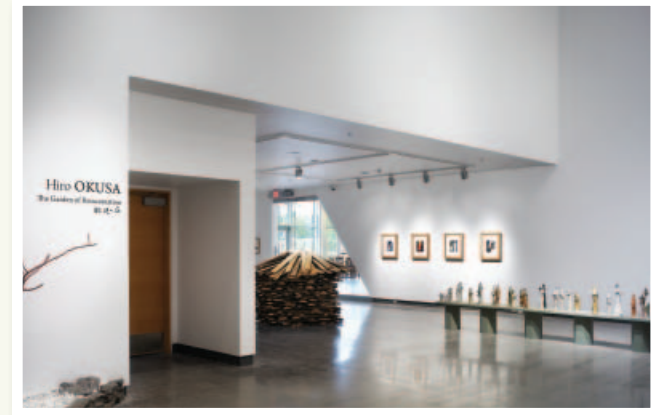


Photo: Shai Gil Photography

The Prairie Art Gallery

6.0 Future Cultural Development

6.1 Vision

Residents of and visitors to Grande Prairie create, consume and appreciate expressive culture and heritage as an essential part of our everyday lives. The City of Grande Prairie invests in indoor and outdoor cultural facilities and in the vibrancy and sustainability of its cultural community that provides diverse accessible programs.



Photo: Don Zwicker

Broadway Live Broadway's production of Elton John's Aida

Strategic Directions >

6.2 Strategic Directions

1. Demonstrate leadership in developing a financially stable and sustainable environment for culture in the City of Grande Prairie.
2. Integrate cultural considerations into municipal planning.
3. Increase public awareness of the value of culture and encourage participation in arts and cultural activities in the larger community.
4. Develop programs to engage the City's growing and increasingly diverse population.
5. Ensure equal access to cultural opportunities, with a particular focus on the Aboriginal population, New Canadians and youth.
6. Complete the development of state of the art flagship institutions.
7. Enhance outdoor cultural programming in the Montrose site, Downtown and Muskoseepi Park.
8. Foster greater collaboration within the cultural community, in the City, County and Peace Region.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Strategic Direction #1: Demonstrate leadership in developing a financially stable and sustainable environment for culture in the City of Grande Prairie.						
Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase multi-year, operational city funding to cultural organizations • Revamp existing arts funding program to improve flexibility and provide project grants to cultural organizations, festivals and individuals (e.g., professional development) • Allocate a portion of legacy funds from any future athletic games to the Cultural Legacy Endowment within the Community Foundation 	•	•	•	•	•	•
Support for Arts & Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a Cultural Coordinator to assist the Manager in providing support to arts and cultural organizations • Coordinate and support volunteer groups organizing festivals and events • Provide information and facilitate training in strategic planning, board development, succession planning, fund development, etc. • Develop a network and distribute information about cultural programs, volunteer positions and funding, as well as information about local artists and organizations (i.e., cultural map) • Provide assistance in fundraising (e.g., grantsmanship) • Commission a series of research reports (e.g., economic impact; audience development; cultural diversity) 		•	•	•	•	•

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Strategic Direction #2: Integrate cultural considerations into municipal planning.						
Cultural Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor implementation 	•	•	•	•	•	•
Built Heritage and Urban Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt Heritage Management Plan Introduce heritage planner position and hire Preserve integrity of historic resources (as determined by the heritage inventory and heritage survey) within ARPs Introduce architectural guidelines and development controls including Heritage Conservation Areas, transitional zoning, neighbourhood and infill design guidelines, and variances for preservation of historic resources Ensure planners enforce guidelines 	•	•	•			
Public Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate cultural considerations into future transportation planning, e.g., free transit passes for people attending cultural events; extended bus hours to accommodate cultural programs 	•	•	•	•	•	•
Public Art <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a steering committee to develop a Public Art Policy and implement a Public Art Program as a means of improving the appearance of the City, to reinforce a sense of place, and stimulate creativity and debate Identify and pursue an aggressive strategy to increase funds in the newly established Public Art Trust Fund 	•	•	•	•	•	•

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Strategic Direction #3: Increase public awareness of the value of culture and participation in arts and cultural activities in the larger community.						
Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop community awareness of culture as an industry, like the manufacturing, oil and gas, and forestry industries and provide requisite investment • Encourage local people to recognize the value of the arts in their everyday lives 		•	•	•	•	•
Increase visibility of the sector and profile of Grande Prairie as a destination for the Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a Cultural Laureate, someone who would be seen as the face of culture, provide commentary, and heighten the profile of culture at important civic events • Profile local artists and festivals • Promote art, dance and music programs in the schools at all levels, including GPRC 	•	•	•	•	•	•
Strategic Direction #4: Develop Programs to engage the City's growing and increasingly diverse population.						
Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other cultural organizations, such as the museum and archives, on city-wide heritage activities • Continue to work with the Prairie Art Gallery to develop and offer related programming • Continue to work with the Gallery and the City to pursue programming opportunities for Teresa Sargent Hall • Develop initiatives in recently adopted strategic plan coincident with the cultural plan, in particular its "priority service responses" which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - targeted commitments for collaboration with community organizations to celebrate diversity and cultural awareness - increasing opportunities for lifelong learning 	•	•	•	•	•	•

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Prairie Art Gallery						
• Establish curator position and hire professional curator		•				
• Develop strategic plan		•				
• Build on previous site-specific exhibitions, such as Artery, to develop a thematic direction for the gallery's contemporary art program		•	•	•	•	•
• Continue to work with the Library and the City to pursue programming opportunities for Teresa Sargent Hall	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Continue to work with the Library on programming where there are mutual interests	•	•	•	•	•	•
Centre for Creative Arts						
• Develop strategic plan	•					
• Continue to offer exhibition opportunities for artists	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Continue to offer a range of classes and workshops to meet the artistic and cultural interests of an increasing population	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Building on the success of Arts Days 2010 and the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Arts Awards, take a lead in organizing an annual arts and culture festival each fall	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Within this festival, integrate existing awards such as: Friend of the Francophone Community, Beth Sheehan South Peace Archives Award, Jenny Tetreau Award, Short and Sweet Award, Euphemia McNaught Award and Evy McBryan Award and Introduce new awards, such as an emerging artist award	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Collaborate with other arts and cultural organizations in meeting complementary aims and delivering programs for various ages and cultural groups	•	•	•	•	•	•

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Museum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish curator position and hire professional curator Develop a strategic plan, including contextualizing the village, Heritage Discovery Centre and Forbes Homestead Develop exhibitions and programs that incorporate themes such as post-WWII history, Aboriginal history, and the experiences of recent immigrants to Grande Prairie Develop more hands-on interactive programs and engaging activities for families, youth, and diverse communities Develop collections policy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 				
Heritage Discovery Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the museum's strategic planning process, consider separating the Discovery Centre from the museum If the museum continues to manage the Centre, begin planning for gallery redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 				
Forbes Homestead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop exhibitions to better reflect the time period and context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 					
Reduce the sense of isolation for cultural creators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize on opportunities to bring in national/ international artists to perform, hold residencies, and to lead workshops in collaboration with leading institutions including GPRC Develop travelling exhibitions and productions that would tour to and from Grande Prairie Include individual professional development opportunities in revamped funding program 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Celebrate the 100th anniversary of Grande Prairie in 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for Cultural Capital funding • Develop a proposal around the theme: Going Places, a play on words that encompasses both the mobility of people in the regional historically and today, and the notion that the community itself is going places; proposal could include a signature cultural festival; a travelling exhibition featuring the mobile structures in the museum, commission a play or piece of music about the theme, etc. • Celebrate the 50th anniversary of GPLT 		•	• •	• •		
Strategic Direction #5: Ensure equal access to cultural opportunities, with a particular focus on the Aboriginal population, New Canadians and youth.						
Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that the library, museum, and art gallery are public institutions supported primarily by public funds not user fees • Ensure that cultural facilities and programs are accessible and affordable, particularly for immigrants, Aboriginal residents, families, and young people • Investigate ways to provide free access for those in need (e.g., subsidies, sponsorship) 	•	•	•	•	•	•
Youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support programs that expose them to the arts and engage them in artistic expression • Support groups and individuals who create opportunities for emerging artists • Provide support to emerging artists through accessible programs, mentorships, performance opportunities, and funding • Establish a funding program specifically for emerging artists (e.g., professional development, apprenticeship programs, compensation) 	•	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Aboriginal community						
• In partnership with the Aboriginal community, integrate Aboriginal history into the Museum		•	•	•	•	•
• Support efforts within the Aboriginal community to establish an annual cultural workshop/ elders conference, as a means of continuing cultural traditions and values	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Support efforts within the Aboriginal community to develop a powwow to improve cultural awareness among the larger community	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Weave Aboriginal elements into municipal activities as a matter of course, not as an add-on or after-thought	•	•	•	•	•	•
• Hire Aboriginal people to work in the Visitor Centre, the Museum, and Muskoseepi Park, (i.e., position could be shared between the Museum and the Friendship Centre with Friendship Centre providing cultural knowledge, training and support and Museum demonstrations of traditional skills)	•	•	•	•	•	•
New Canadians						
• Integrate ethnocultural elements into municipal activities	•	•	•	•	•	•
• In collaboration with the Volunteer Services Bureau, identify people who speak different languages who could be liaisons with various communities		•	•	•	•	•
• Support the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities group	•	•	•	•	•	•

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Strategic Direction #6: Complete the development of state of the art flagship institutions.						
Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop second floor expansion area for additional library programming as budget permits 		•				
Prairie Art Gallery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete renovations to original building and reinstall and reopen exhibition spaces 	•					
2nd Street Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake immediate repairs identified in Topside report and City facilities report 	•					
Performing Arts Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a committee, approved by Council, to spearhead the project Conduct feasibility study for new centre Construct new PAC 		• •				•
Museum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Canadian Conservation Institute to complete a facility assessment Undertake immediate repairs identified in Topside report If plan recommends staying in current facility in the long-term, investigate means of integrating into the Park more effectively Conduct feasibility study for museum expansion 	• •	• •				
Historic Anglican Church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete restoration Identify future use 	• •					
Archives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of new archives, possibly in collaboration with new/expanded museum 		•				

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-25
Strategic Direction #7: Enhance outdoor cultural programming in the Montrose site, Downtown and Muskoseepi Park.						
Montrose Site						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop outdoor exhibition space adjacent to the Prairie Art Gallery and develop public art for the site as a whole, based on municipal guidelines Develop public space outdoors for performance/ festival use Provide permanent signage indicating library and gallery 	•	•	•			
Downtown						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve linkages between the Montrose site and downtown Introduce heritage interpretation for historical road names Enhance cultural festivals in the downtown core 	• •	• •	•	•	•	•
Muskoseepi Park						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire cultural programmer Improve amphitheatre as a venue for cultural programs Encourage the use of the Park for outdoor theatre, music, movies, and free family events Working closely with the Aboriginal community, develop interpretive stations, signage, and walking tours 	• •	•	• •	• •	• •	• •
Strategic Direction #8: Foster greater collaboration within the cultural community, in the City, County and Peace Region.						
Collaboration						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the County and other municipalities within the region to improve the environment for culture throughout the area Collaborate with the Peace Country Cultural Industries Coalition where appropriate Encourage cultural organizations to partner with one another and with other community-based organizations, corporations, and individuals to provide programs 	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •



Grande Prairie Live Theatre

