

Wilmot Arts & Culture Strategy

Potential Recommendations



Preamble to the Recommended Actions

This is the first-ever arts, culture and heritage strategy for Wilmot Township. It is intended to cover a five-year period, approximately from the year 2019 to 2023, although it is anticipated that the direction(s) established over this 5-year period will continue into the longer term.

Despite the absence of a strategy, the Township has of course been very active in its support of its arts, culture and heritage sector. This is evidenced in the strategy itself, where many of the actions are to continue an ongoing practice or delivery mechanism, or to increase awareness of existing Township activities related to arts, culture and heritage.

The consultation process revealed, not surprisingly, great support for the current set of activities of the municipality, and indeed, a desire for more. Wilmot is a very progressive community. Not many municipalities this size have arts and culture on their radar at all. But the Township of Wilmot understands that there are significant community and economic benefits to nurturing and growing its cultural base. Wilmot “gets it.”

Proposed Vision

Drawing from the interviews and surveys, and the consultants’ own observations, a proposed Vision for arts, culture and heritage in Wilmot Township is as follows:

The Township of Wilmot will continue to support its vibrant arts, culture and heritage community. It will encourage a strong focus on rural arts and creativity in all their visual and performance forms. Wilmot will nurture and strengthen the cultural sector as it grows. The Township will continue to promote, celebrate and support the rich heritage and unique rural character for which it is already widely known.

Current and Ongoing Actions

These actions identified are well established and ongoing. This reflects on the significant investment and resources the Township of Wilmot has already provided and supports. The plan validates and reinforces these initiatives.

Facility Provision and Places/Spaces

- (1) Continue to encourage and promote greater use of public spaces and facilities for arts, culture, and heritage activities
- (2) Continue to maintain and promote existing inventory of available facilities, features, and contact persons (e.g. places of worship, schools, community halls, etc.) Ensure that these are featured on the portal (see new actions)
- (3) Continue to maintain and update existing municipal heritage designation listing and interpretation
- (4) Continue to explore the appropriateness of identifying and designating scenic vistas and cultural heritage landscapes as per the Township approved Official Plan.
- (5) Continue to promote community awareness of the Township Archives

Program & Service Provision

- (6) Continue to respond to community needs through the through direct provision of programs
- (7) Continue to support more programs that involve youth as per the approved Parks, Facilities Recreation Services Master Plan.
- (8) Continue to support intergenerational programming
- (9) Continue to promote the 'Story of Wilmot' approach to interpretation

Organizational Support

- (10) Continue on-going support of arts, culture and heritage organizations (through funding, in-kind support, facilities support, etc.)
- (11) Continue to improve the provision of information available to organizations regarding municipal requirements and support services available for events
- (12) Continue to provide capacity-building support for community organizations (in partnership with others in the Region)

Festivals & Events

- (13) Continue to support existing and future festivals and events to ensure a continuing and fresh offering to residents and visitors

Marketing & Tourism Promotion

- (14) Continue to work with Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corporation (WRTMC) to be proactive and current in promoting what Wilmot has to offer throughout the Region (and beyond)
- (15) Continue and expand on-going efforts by developing more murals, public art
- (16) Continue to develop and promote a rural tourism strategy possibly in combination with other rural lower tier municipalities in Region and with WRTMC.

New Actions

The actions proposed to support this vision over the 5-year period of the plan are listed below. The suggested timeframe in which these actions would be implemented is shown after each recommendation according to the following legend which covers the 5-year period of the plan:

S = short-term (the next two years, say 2019 and 2020)
M = medium term (2021 and 2022)
L = long-term (2023)

Program & Service Provision

- (17) Explore programs relating to and celebrating the diversity of cultures in Wilmot (L)

Information & Coordination

- (18) Develop an on-line mechanism for improved information-sharing and coordination (e.g. portal, calendar of events, etc.) (S-M)

Creative Industry Sector Support

- (19) Explore the development of a Public Art Policy (M)

Future Review

In five years' time, the Township will evaluate and update this strategy and investigate the need for additional staff resources, facility needs, programming, etc. to ensure continued growth of arts, culture and heritage activities in Wilmot.

Recognizing that this is the first such strategic plan for arts and culture and heritage in Wilmot, and that at the end of this 5-year period an updated and revised plan will be created, it is important to realize that not all comments brought forth during the consultation process can be accommodated within this first effort. Rather, it should be understood that this 5-year planning period can in many ways prepare the groundwork for some of these initiatives to potentially occur in the longer-term.

They include:

- an investigation into the feasibility of a medium-size performing arts facility somewhere in the Township (or possibly undertaken in partnership with the other rural townships and occurring elsewhere in the Region)
- the establishment of a Municipal Arts Advisory Committee
- a major increment to the funding made available to arts, culture and heritage organizations
- municipally-provided incubator facilities for artists and craftspersons (which is already occurring in the Township through private sector provision)
- additional staff resources devoted to arts, culture and heritage that are specifically focussed on these new initiatives (*note that this would be in addition to any 'normal' operating annual increases in human resource efforts for arts, heritage and culture that might be expected as to accommodate the needs of a growing population base*)