



2025-2035 Township of Wilmot

# ARTS & CULTURE MASTER PLAN

Prepared by STEPS Public Art



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# Land Acknowledgement

We have gathered in Wilmot Township on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg Haudenosaunee and Mississauga peoples.

We also want to acknowledge the importance of The Dish with One Spoon Covenant - a peace agreement made between Indigenous nations before the Europeans arrived. It characterizes our collective responsibility to each other and Mother Earth - we should take only what we need, leave enough for others and keep the dish clean.

By acknowledging this covenant and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, we are reminded of our important connection to this land where we live, learn and work together as a community.

# Acknowledgements

The Township of Wilmot Arts and Culture Master Plan was developed in partnership between the Township of Wilmot staff and the consulting team from STEPS Public Art, in consultation with cultural organizations and residents from across Wilmot.

## Steering Committee:

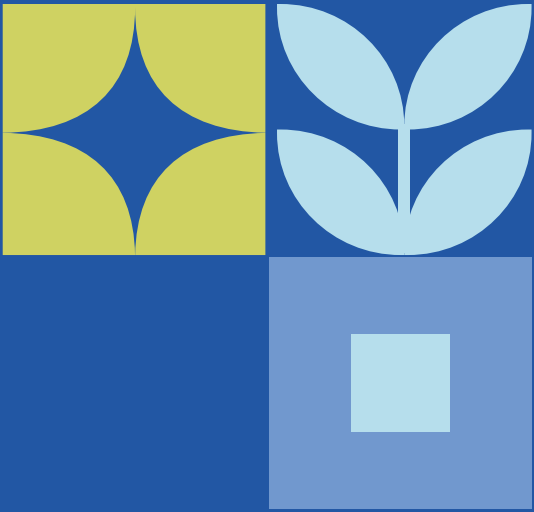
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# Executive Summary



# Executive Summary

## A Vision for Culture in Wilmot

Culture plays a crucial role in building an attractive and vibrant community. Around the world, municipalities foster local cultural development through cultural plans that focus on identifying and managing cultural resources, while ensuring that culture is prioritized in decision-making processes.

The Township of Wilmot 2025-2035 Arts and Culture Master Plan sets forth key priorities and a strategy to foster cultural growth through actionable initiatives over the next 10 years. It updates the previous Arts and Culture Master Plan, which was developed in 2018.

Informed by the analysis of Wilmot's current demographic profile and culture context and responding to the insights received from community members and other stakeholders on identified needs, opportunities and challenges for the cultural ecosystem in Wilmot, the Arts and Culture Master Plan provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing Wilmot's cultural assets in a coordinated and sustainable manner. The plan envisions a desired future for culture in Wilmot and provides an ambitious action plan to guide its implementation. It is important to note that the recommendations outlined offer a framework for implementation for the Township, but these recommendations are not intended as binding municipal commitments and a number of the actions will require supplementary resources outside of municipal funding.

The following Vision Statement and Mission Statement will guide Wilmot's future cultural endeavours:

### Vision

"The Township of Wilmot is a vibrant, welcoming countryside community where creativity thrives and culture is accessible to all – boasting diverse cultural offerings that drive community connections, invite residents and visitors to explore the township's unique heritage, agricultural roots and small-town feel, and ensure that all feel included, inspired, and proud to call Wilmot home."

### Mission

"In close collaboration with external stakeholders, the Township of Wilmot supports, facilitates, and showcases creative offerings that celebrate Wilmot's unique identity and embrace new voices, fostering a thriving cultural ecosystem that promotes community wellbeing, attracts visitors, and strengthens the connections between all residents."

In addition, six guiding principles have been identified. These helped shape the action plan included in this Arts and Culture Master Plan, and can be referred back to as guiding directions in future decision-making processes for investment in cultural initiatives:

- **Heritage and Innovation:** We will honour and conserve Wilmot's agricultural and historical heritage while fostering innovation through creative expression, ensuring that culture evolves while staying connected to our roots.
- **Community Inclusion:** We are committed to fostering a welcoming environment where all residents feel valued, respected, and empowered to engage with cultural opportunities.
- **Accessibility and Equity:** We will prioritize making cultural experiences accessible to all residents by supporting the presentation of cultural offerings in diverse locations, enhancing communication channels, and investing in infrastructure that supports equitable access. By removing financial, logistical, and social barriers, we will ensure that cultural activities are inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to everyone in the community.
- **Sustainability:** We will integrate economic, environmental, and social sustainability into cultural investment, ensuring that the growth of Wilmot's cultural landscape benefits future generations.
- **Celebration of Diversity:** We will embrace and reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of Wilmot's residents, using arts and culture to promote understanding, dialogue, and unity within the community.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** We will build strong, collaborative relationships with local artists, community groups, and organizations, to encourage ongoing creativity in our community.



# Action Plan

In order to achieve the Vision identified for Wilmot's cultural ecosystem, we have identified four strategic priorities:

**Celebrate our Roots while Fostering Innovation:** This will focus on honouring Wilmot's roots while encouraging creative expression and cultural evolution to ensure a vibrant, dynamic cultural landscape that evolves over time and with the residents of Wilmot.

**Sustainably Grow Cultural Resources:** This will focus on developing and maintaining cultural initiatives with a focus on long-term sustainability, integrating economic, environmental, and social considerations to benefit future generations.

**Collaborative Community Building:** This will focus on strengthening partnerships with local artists, community groups, and organizations, streamline processes, and create opportunities for cultural experiences that are accessible and impactful for all residents.

**Foster Inclusion:** This will focus on fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where residents of all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in and contribute to cultural programming, ensuring equal access and representation.

For each priority, key goals and recommended actions are indicated in the **Priority, Goals, and Actions section** starting on page 14. These detail the concrete steps to take to move towards the identified Vision.

# Planning Objectives

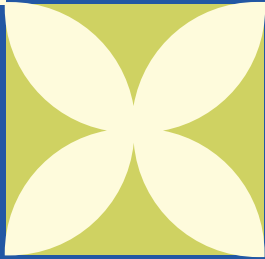
The Arts and Culture Master Plan was developed with the intention of:

- **Enhancing the quality of life in Wilmot** through contributing to community well-being, fostering community cohesion, and enhancing offerings that meet the needs of community members for discovery and creative expression.
- **Sustainably growing the local creative sector** through leveraging existing assets, enhancing collaborations and improving processes.
- **Increasing Wilmot's attractiveness for residents and visitors and contributing to the local economy** through fostering a rich cultural ecosystem.
- **Committing to ad-hoc investments, chosen based on robust research and engagement feedback**, to ensure future actions benefit how culture is experienced by the whole Wilmot community.

## Why Does Culture Matter?

An Arts and Culture Master Plan, developed in response to a municipality's unique context, helps leverage the wide-ranging benefits that culture can bring, such as:

- **Enhancing community well-being:** Culture provides meaning and contributes to mental and physical well-being.
- **Supporting community pride:** The presence of a vibrant cultural fabric and the celebration of a place's unique culture contributes to community pride, helps create a strong sense of place, and fosters civic engagement. By conserving local stories and encouraging fresh artistic voices, communities build a sense of belonging rooted in the past and energized by a shared vision for what's ahead.
- **Fostering Social Connection:** Cultural experiences bring people together, nurturing a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation. By creating spaces for shared expression and celebration, artistic offerings help strengthen the bonds between neighbours and inspire collaboration. They also open doors to learning about and appreciating the diverse cultures that make each community unique.
- **Contributing to economic development:** The cultural sector generates both direct and indirect economic benefits. Cultural presentations enhance the attractiveness of a place, leading to increased resident, visitor spending, and investment.



# Vision, Mission & Guiding Principles



# Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

The following vision statement, informed by the findings of the engagement process and research, outlines the hopes of Wilmot's community for the development of culture in Wilmot. As an aspirational description of what Wilmot's culture can look like in ten years, the vision statement will guide municipal cultural action throughout the plan's implementation.

## Vision

"The Township of Wilmot is a vibrant, welcoming countryside community where creativity thrives and culture is accessible to all – boasting diverse cultural offerings that drive community connections, invite residents and visitors to explore the township's unique heritage, agricultural roots and small-town feel, and ensure that all feel included, inspired, and proud to call Wilmot home."

The mission statement describes how the Township of Wilmot can act to achieve this vision.

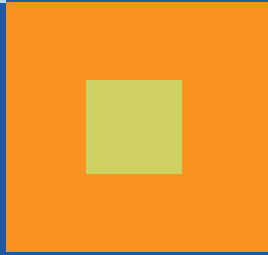
## Mission

"In close collaboration with external stakeholders, the Township of Wilmot supports, facilitates, and showcases creative offerings that celebrate Wilmot's unique identity and embrace new voices, fostering a thriving cultural ecosystem that promotes community wellbeing, attracts visitors, and strengthens the connections between all residents."

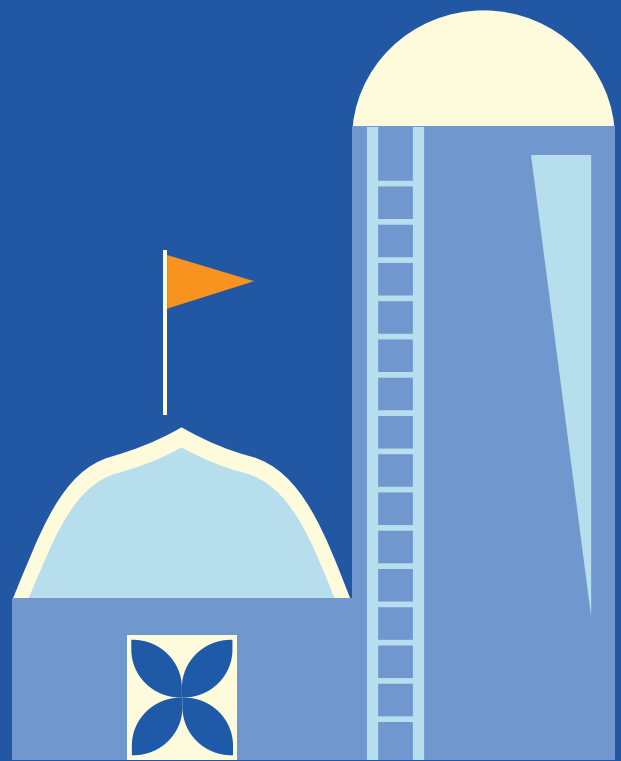
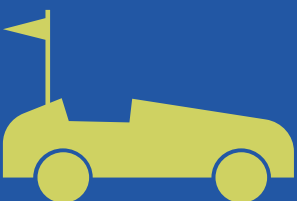
# Guiding Principles

We have identified seven key values which will guide the cultural plan and shape the priorities, goals, and actions:

- **Heritage and Innovation:** We will honour and conserve Wilmot's agricultural and historical heritage while fostering innovation through creative expression, ensuring that culture evolves while staying connected to our roots.
- **Community Inclusion:** We are committed to fostering a welcoming environment where all residents feel valued, respected, and empowered to engage with cultural opportunities.
- **Accessibility and Equity:** We will prioritize making cultural experiences accessible to all residents by supporting the presentation of cultural offerings in diverse locations, enhancing communication channels, and investing in infrastructure that supports equitable access. By removing financial, logistical, and social barriers, we will ensure that cultural activities are inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to everyone in the community.
- **Sustainability:** We will integrate economic, environmental, and social sustainability into cultural investment, ensuring that the growth of Wilmot's cultural landscape benefits future generations.
- **Celebration of Diversity:** We will embrace and reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of Wilmot's residents, using arts and culture to promote understanding, dialogue, and unity within the community.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** We will build strong, collaborative relationships with local artists, community groups, and organizations, to encourage ongoing creativity in our community.



# Priorities, Goals and Actions



# Priorities, Goals and Actions

To achieve Wilmot's vision for culture, the Township of Wilmot will need to act as both a supporter and a catalyst, encouraging collaborations, facilitating the presentation of cultural endeavours, creating connections between stakeholders, and promoting Wilmot's cultural assets. Four strategic priorities will guide this work:

1. **Celebrate our Roots while Fostering Innovation:** This will focus on honouring Wilmot's roots while encouraging creative expression and cultural evolution to ensure a vibrant, dynamic cultural landscape that evolves over time and with the residents of Wilmot.
2. **Sustainably Grow Cultural Resources:** This will focus on developing and maintaining cultural initiatives with a focus on long-term sustainability, integrating economic, environmental, and social considerations to benefit future generations.
3. **Collaborative Community Building:** This will focus on strengthening partnerships with local artists, community groups, and organizations, streamline processes, and create opportunities for cultural experiences that are accessible and impactful for all residents.
4. **Foster Inclusion:** This will focus on fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where residents of all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in and contribute to cultural programming, ensuring equal access and representation.

## How to Read this Section

This section details the four strategic priorities that will guide the Township of Wilmot's support for culture over the next ten years. Informed by the findings of the planning process, these strategic priorities are key areas of importance, on which the Township should concentrate its attention to address current needs, help Wilmot's cultural ecosystem achieve its full potential, and ensure the benefits of culture are felt by all community members. Strategic priorities will build upon each other, creating a cohesive framework to help achieve Wilmot's vision.

In this section, we have outlined information about each priority and included a list of goals and suggested actions. It is important to note that the suggested actions are offered as guidance to the Township and should not be construed as legally binding municipal commitments and many of the actions outlined will require economic development initiatives that bring in revenues from outside municipal funding.

For each priority, we have included:

- **Outcomes of Achieving this Priority:** This details the expected impact of actions supporting the achievement of a strategic priority.
- **The Challenge (What We Heard):** This section details findings from the community engagement and research processes, which led to identifying each priority as a key area of importance. It details more specifically identified challenges and opportunities.
- **What Work Has Already Been Accomplished:** This section outlines existing municipal investment, on which the Township can build.
- **What We Need to Get Us There:** For each priority, we have listed a series of goals, which will help monitor progress. These goals identify concrete objectives towards which the Township and its partners can work over the next ten years.
- **Action Plan for Each Goal:** We have listed a series of recommended actions for each goal. These are not intended to be read as commitments made by the Township but rather, as concrete suggestions to consider. In each case, we have included a general recommendation followed by more specific potential steps to take.
- **Timeframe:** For each, we have identified whether the suggested action should take place in the short-term (S), mid-term (M) or long-term (L). These correspond roughly to the following timeframes:
  - **Short-term (S):** In the first 3 years of the plan's implementation.
  - **Mid-term (M):** In years 4 to 7.
  - **Long-term (L):** Action to be considered for implementation by the end of the plan's lifespan.
- **Potential Performance Metrics** are indicated after each action list. These detail concrete data points that can serve as Key Performance Indicators for the suggested actions.



# Priority 1. Celebrate Our Roots While Fostering Innovation

## Outcomes of Achieving Priority 1

- Wilmot's unique characteristics and history are conserved and celebrated with events and cultural opportunities showcasing Wilmot's unique roots.
- The Township of Wilmot's heritage is well-known and appreciated by residents and visitors alike.
- As the Township of Wilmot grows and evolves, new cultural opportunities reflecting the changing character of the township and serving all residents are supported.

## The Challenge (What We Heard)

### Celebrate and Conserve Wilmot's Unique Culture

In addition to traditional artistic disciplines, such as visual arts, music, and theatre, interviewed community members repeatedly mentioned specific characteristics they saw as constitutive to Wilmot's unique culture. Wilmot's architectural heritage, rural and agricultural roots, small-town feel, and rich cultural traditions were especially seen as central to the township's identity and praised for the impact on the local quality of life and community wellbeing.

Participants especially appreciated key heritage assets such as the New Hamburg Heritage Conservation District, Castle Kilbride, the New Hamburg Water Wheel, and Puddicombe House, as well as the parks and trails system and large-scale community events. Wilmot's intangible heritage—including Mennonite traditions, agricultural practices, music, and communal stories—was also seen as vital to the Township's cultural fabric and worthy of continued celebration. Participants expressed a strong desire, as Wilmot continues to grow and evolve, to see the Township's unique character and agricultural roots conserved and more prominently celebrated.

### A Desire for Increased and Expanded Support for Heritage and Culture

Participants in the community and stakeholder engagement processes overwhelmingly mentioned Castle Kilbride as the main local cultural institution. While praising the role this institution plays in Wilmot's cultural life, many participants wished to see an expansion of investments and activities beyond the focus on this flagship institution. Interviewees hoped to see municipal support expand beyond this institution to showcase and develop other local assets.

## A Need for an Increased Promotion of Cultural Resources

Despite existing efforts on the Township of Wilmot's website and social media, community members overwhelmingly cited a lack of awareness of existing offerings as a significant barrier to cultural participation. Throughout the engagement process, we heard that community members and event organizers wished for the creation of an improved centralized platform showcasing available activities, and for an increased support from the Township in promoting cultural resources.

## Balancing the Celebration of the Past with a Forward-looking Approach

While participants celebrated Wilmot's heritage and wished to see it conserved and showcased, many community members also hoped for an increased inclusion of new voices in cultural offerings, and called for support in developing new activities that can bring the community together as Wilmot continues to grow.

## What Work Has Already Been Accomplished?

### Conservation and Promotion of Castle Kilbride

Castle Kilbride, in Baden, is the primary cultural landmark in Wilmot. This Victorian home, built in 1877 for flax industrialist and politician James Livingston, features Italianate architectural design and intricate trompe l'oeil murals and ceilings, created by German artist Henry Scharstein, and a belvedere for scenic views. The building was purchased by the township in 1993, with funding from the federal, provincial and municipal levels, as well as local fundraising efforts by the Friends of Castle Kilbride, and has been open to the public as a museum since 1994. It was designated a National Historic Site by the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada in 1995. As a flagship tourist attraction, Castle Kilbride is a member of Explore Waterloo Region and Destination Stratford.



Castle Kilbride and the Administration Complex

In recent years, Castle Kilbride has successfully grown special programming that grows touristic interest. This includes Ghost Walk tours, plays, crafts workshops on weekends, a tea and tour experience, concerts at the castle, Christmas events, and themed pet parades and a partnership with Guess Where Trips. Additionally, Castle Kilbride presents programs that showcase local creatives and bring the community together around art appreciation, such as art shows and a summer concert series. However, while highlighting the successful efforts undertaken by the Castle to provide varied programming through these well-loved events such as the summer concert series, interviewees warned that staff resources currently allocated to the operation of Castle Kilbride were insufficient to address broader cultural needs in the community.

## Community Grants

The Township of Wilmot supports local community groups through the Community Grants Program, with a total yearly funding of approximately \$55,000. In 2024, cultural community organizations supported included the New Hamburg Art Tour, the New Hamburg Concert Band, and the Dundee Artisan Festival.

## What We Need to Get Us There

- **Goal 1.** Increase awareness and appreciation of Wilmot's unique cultural identity, its agricultural roots and history
- **Goal 2.** Honour, conserve and showcase Wilmot's heritage
- **Goal 3.** Encourage the creation of new cultural offerings
- **Goal 4.** Foster the growth of initiatives that showcase Wilmot's local identity, such as agro-touristic ventures

## Goal 1. Increase awareness and appreciation of Wilmot's unique cultural identity, its agricultural roots and history

### Recommended Actions

#### Recommended Action #1: Raise awareness of the Arts and Culture Master Plan

Action Steps	Timeframe
Distribute a media release to announce the Council's approval of the Municipal Cultural Plan.	Short-term (S)
Publish the Plan on the Township's official website.	Short-term (S)

#### Recommended Action #2: Promote and further cultural mapping

Action Steps	Timeframe
Publish the inventory of cultural resources on the Township's website, and consider developing an interactive map of identified cultural assets.	Short-term (S)
Celebrate the unique characteristics of Wilmot's culture, promoting attractions and focuses that have been mentioned as central to the local culture in the community engagement, beyond more traditional art forms: e.g., car shows, agricultural presentations, storytelling, Mennonite and German heritage.	Short-term (S)
Explore collaborating with neighbouring townships to develop an area-wide cultural mapping.	Medium-term (M)
Continue expanding the cultural mapping. In particular, collaborate with the Heritage Committee to maintain an up-to-date inventory of significant historic sites, heritage buildings, and historic plaques.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #3:** Enhance online and print communication on cultural assets and events

Action Steps	Timeframe
Refine the design of communication materials (including webpages and walking tour information) to enhance their user interface, modernity and visual appeal.	Short-term (S)
Create a central platform housing information on local cultural assets and events, which can be hosted on the Township of Wilmot website or a separate platform.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #4:** Continue supporting community groups that promote Wilmot's unique history

Action Steps	Timeframe
Continue supporting organizations through the community grants program.	Short-term (S)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Successful publication and sharing of the Arts and Culture Master Plan
- Number of enhanced communication materials
- Successful creation of a platform presenting the cultural inventory and of a method for community members to suggest assets to add

## Goal 2. Honour, conserve and showcase Wilmot’s heritage

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Continue to support Castle Kilbride’s activities while exploring opportunities to expand its impact

Action Steps	Timeframe
Explore the potential of increasing the presentation of ticketed special programming, such as ghost tours, concerts, or holiday events.	Short-term (S)
Assess the staffing capacity for the presentation of increased programming, and determine how to better support this programming, whether through adapting Castle Kilbride’s opening times to allow for an increased focus on special programming, through hiring dedicated part-time staff, or through increasing partnerships with external stakeholders who can deliver activities on Castle grounds.	Short-term (S)
Ensure the maintenance of Castle Kilbride by regularly assessing the building and assets’ states and incorporating needed repairs into capital planning.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Promote and further cultural mapping

Action Steps	Timeframe
Maintain the Community Grants Program, and ensure a dedicated percentage of these grants is targeted towards cultural activities, with a focus on activities that celebrate Wilmot’s unique strengths.	Short-term (S)
Ensure the support of Township staff representatives organized by third-party community organizations that promote Wilmot’s unique culture.	Short-term (S)
Increase collaborations with external private and community stakeholders that invest in heritage conservation and renovation and explore ways to support their work.	Medium-term (M)
<i>Examples of recent and ongoing initiatives include the transformation of the B&amp;W Feed Mill in Downtown New Hamburg into a community hub by Love Your Neighbour Communities and investments in the renovation and upkeep of The Imperial and Puddicombe House.</i>	

**Recommended Action #3:** Increase Township’s staff direct involvement in flagship events that promote the Township’s culture and foster community building

Action Steps	Timeframe
Assess required staff and resources for Township staff to sustainably deliver Canada Day programming.	Short-term (S)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Percentage of culture-focused initiatives among Community Grants Program recipients
- Number of new relationships developed with external partners supporting heritage conservation

## Case Studies and Examples to Explore

**Focus** – Examples of special programming presented at historic houses

### Immersive Theatre

- **White Mills Theatre Co.:** This company specializes in classical vocal performance and new play development in collaboration with Canadian historic sites. To date, the company has only collaborated with Toronto-based institutions, but a partnership with White Mills Theatre Co. or another theatre company could be explored.
- **The Three Ships Collective – A Christmas Carol:** Set in the historic Campbell House Museum in downtown Toronto, this theatrical experience gives audience members a chance to immerse themselves in Victorian England as they follow the journey of Ebenezer Scrooge towards redemption.

### Holiday Programming

- **Eerie Tales & Spine-Tingling Tours:** Presented around Halloween in Toronto History Museums, this series of after dark tours invited visitors to discover historic houses with a focus on Victorian death practices, paranormal beliefs and ghost stories.
- **Steampunk Halloween at Gibson House in Toronto:** Throughout October 2024, visitors were invited to learn about the retro-futurist origins of the Steampunk aesthetic through a special display and a costuming and selfie opportunity. This event focused on a genre beloved by young adults to invite visitors to look at the house’s assets through a new lens.

## Group Activities, Arts and Crafts Workshops

- **Birthday Parties:** Hamilton museums and historic houses offer themed birthday parties, designed based on each venue's unique assets<sup>1</sup>. This can include providing historic costumes to children and inviting them to play with reproductions of historic games.
- **Garden parties:** Castle Kilbride's lawn offers a beautiful setting, used for events such as the concert series and for wedding photography. Historic houses also use similar settings as venues for themed events such as garden parties. Spadina House, in Toronto, has for instance organized costume parties, such as the annual Gatsby Garden Party, which includes attractions such as a costume contest, swing dance instruction, live music, croquet and a photography station. In Aurora, Ontario, the Aurora Historical Society organizes different special events to encourage visits to heritage sites, such as a Victorian Garden Party held at Hillary House National Historic Site, with live music, activity stations (ballroom dance, playing Victorian games, outdoor croquet, learning a heritage craft). Costume props are provided to guests, helping enhance the experience. While Castle Kilbride's lawn does not offer as much space as the gardens of these houses, smaller-scale events could be considered.
- **Historic-themed workshops:** Historic houses present workshops that invite participants to experience the lives of past inhabitants of the sites, through activities such as cooking historic recipes, learning a heritage craft (e.g., crochet, embroidery, carpet weaving), or playing games. Such activities are part of Castle Kilbride's special programming, and could be enhanced with focuses on the unique characteristics of the house: e.g., exploration of trompe l'oeil painting, in collaboration with local artists; flax fiber workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Hamilton website, Birthday Parties, <https://www.hamilton.ca/things-do/venues-facilities-bookings/venue-rentals-packages/birthday-parties>



## Goal 3. Encourage the creation of new cultural offerings

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Promote the use of local event spaces to event organizers

Action Steps	Timeframe
Initiate discussions with local event organizers to explore expanding their activities with integrated revenue generation strategies, drawing inspiration from events like Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest.	Short-term (S)
Prioritize collaborations with events that address community desires, as identified through the community engagement process, and are aligned with Wilmot's cultural identity, while also integrating economic development opportunities.	Short-term (S)
Regularly communicate with large event organizers presenting events in Wilmot to identify pain points and areas for improvement.	Short-term (S)
Organize post-event debriefs with large event organizers to collect feedback.	Short-term (S)
Develop a proactive approach to encourage local event organizers to present activities at Township facilities through a structured case-by-case fee-for service model.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Support grassroots cultural initiatives

Action Steps	Timeframe
Offer small grants or recognition awards for individuals or groups who propose creative, low-cost cultural events. This can encourage grassroots cultural initiatives while ensuring that the events align with community interests.	Short-term (S)
Encourage local artists and performers to organize smaller cultural events or workshops by offering promotional support through the Township's website, social media, or newsletters.	Short-term (S)
Support temporary, pop-up cultural experiences that are easy to organize and execute, such as outdoor concerts and film screenings, street performances, art installations, or pop-up art workshops. These events can create excitement in the community while requiring minimal financial investment.	Short-term (S)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of post-event debriefs with event organizers
- Number of meetings/conversations with new potential partners
- Percentage of the Community Grants Program focused on heritage conservation

## Goal 4. Foster the growth of initiatives that showcase Wilmot’s local identity, such as agro-touristic venture

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Celebrate and promote existing agro-touristic experiences, and encourage the development of agro-touristic experiences

Action Steps	Timeframe
<p>Partner with local farms, wineries, and food producers to create agro-tourism experiences - including farm tours, harvest festivals, and “meet the farmer” events - that are economically sustainable and benefit the community.</p> <p>Perth County’s agricultural tours are a potential source for inspiration. The county promotes a wide range of signature experiences, all promoted on their website<sup>2</sup>.</p>	Short-term (S)
Pursue partnerships and funding opportunities to promote existing local farm experiences via Wilmot’s cultural channels.	Medium-term (M)
<p>Maintain and expand collaborations with presentation opportunities such as the “Farm to Fork” series<sup>3</sup> while embedding economic development opportunities to ensure sustainability.</p> <p><i>Examples of existing experiences include the Sip &amp; Graze and Goat Social series at Perth Farmhouse, cheese plant tours at Mountainoak Cheese, Pick Your Own strawberry picking at Pinehill Farms, tours at Fall Harvest Farm, and more.</i></p>	Long-term (L)
Promote local food, craft, and agri-businesses through special events, such as seasonal farmers’ markets, farm-to-table dinners, and food and beverage festivals, celebrating Wilmot’s agricultural identity.	Long-term (L)

<sup>2</sup> Perth County, Discover More Adventures, <https://www.perthcounty.ca/en/discover/discover-more-adventures.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Explore Waterloo Region website, “Farm to Fork in Waterloo Region”, <https://tinyurl.com/mr38bzmw>

**Recommended Action #2:** Engage the Local Community in Agro-Tourism Development, with embedded economic opportunities to ensure long-term sustainability of initiatives

Action Steps	Timeframe
Conduct community consultations and workshops to gather input from local farmers, residents, and cultural groups on their vision for agro-tourism development and what they feel best represents Wilmot's agricultural identity.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #3:** Encourage local stakeholders to support the transmission of the agricultural heritage

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collaborate with local farms to offer workshops, tours, and training sessions on sustainable farming, heritage farming practices, and local food systems for tourists and residents alike, fostering greater appreciation for Wilmot's agricultural heritage.	Long-term (L)
Work with local schools to create opportunities for students to engage with agricultural practices and rural tourism.	Long-term (L)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of new stories created
- Number of agricultural-related activities created

## Priority 2. Sustainably Grow Cultural Resources

### Outcomes of Achieving Priority 2

- The Township of Wilmot is successfully promoted as a touristic destination.
- New revenue streams are developed, which leverage existing cultural assets. Revenue generated through these activities helps fund cultural investment.
- Existing venues and spaces adapted to the presentation of artistic creations are used to their fullest potential.
- Local cultural resources grow progressively, balancing the need for an increased investment in culture and current financial constraints.
- Needs identified for the full expression of Wilmot's residents' creativity, such as the creation of appropriate venues, are addressed through long-term planning.

### The Challenge (What We Heard)

#### Develop Wilmot's Potential as a Tourism Destination

While Wilmot boasts notable heritage, natural resources, and agricultural assets, there has not, to date, been a coordinated effort to coordinate and promote these resources to establish Wilmot as a tourist destination, and most of the existing promotion focuses on Castle Kilbride. Stakeholders consulted hoped for dedicated investment that would leverage Wilmot's unique strength and its proximity to both large urban centres and touristic destinations such as Stratford to establish the Township as a new destination.

#### Creating a Dedicated Venue for the Arts

While Wilmot is home to a vibrant and growing arts community, many stakeholders spoke to the need for a dedicated cultural venue—a welcoming, accessible space where creativity, connection, and community can thrive. Current facilities, such as schools and community centres, are not designed with the needs of cultural programming in mind, often posing challenges around acoustics, accessibility, and availability. A promising step forward came in 2022, when the Township received \$4.18 million in provincial funding to redevelop the former New Hamburg Arena, with plans to create a shared space for recreation and cultural activities. The proposal included a dedicated stage for The Community Players (TCP), a beloved local theatre company that has played a central role in Wilmot's cultural life for decades. While this project is currently on hold pending further consultation and cost assessment, many community members expressed hope that it might still come to life. They emphasized that a cultural venue would not only meet the growing needs of local artists and residents, but also strengthen Wilmot's identity as a welcoming, creative, and culturally rich community. Such a space could help position the Township as a destination for visitors and neighbours alike, while celebrating and elevating the work of groups like The Community Players and other local creatives.

## Financial Constraints

Interviewees frequently identified financial constraints as a major barrier to investing in culture within Wilmot. Many acknowledged the Township's limited budget and small tax base, noting that this often results in cultural initiatives being deprioritized in favour of more immediate infrastructure or service needs. Several stakeholders felt that while there is interest in supporting arts and culture, funding remains inconsistent and often project-based, making long-term planning and sustainability difficult for both the Township and local cultural organizations. There was also concern about the capacity to secure operational funding—not just for building or launching cultural initiatives, but for maintaining them over time. Some participants highlighted the need for external partnerships, grants, and creative funding models to support cultural development without overburdening municipal resources. Overall, there was strong support for encouraging film production in Wilmot as part of a broader cultural and economic development strategy.

## What Work Has Already Been Accomplished?

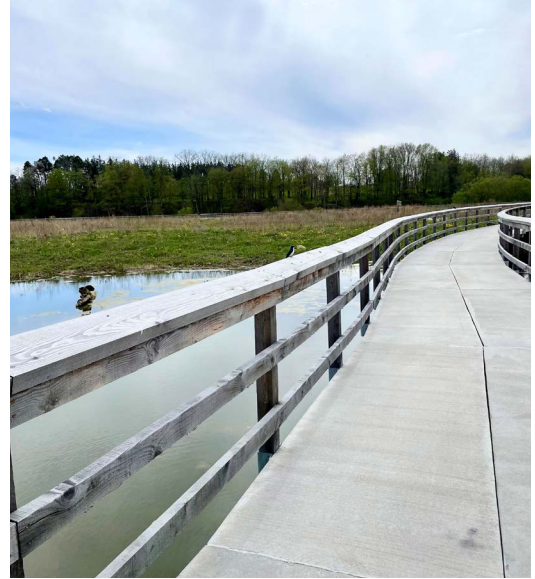
### Film Production

Interviewees expressed enthusiasm about Wilmot's growing potential and appeal as a filming location. They noted that the Township's heritage architecture, rural landscapes, and distinctive small-town charm make it an attractive backdrop for film and television productions. Some participants referenced recent filming activity in the area (including "Ghosting", a CBC Gem production, filmed at Castle Kilbride, and "Anne with an E"), highlighting the economic and promotional benefits it brought to local businesses and the broader community.

Stakeholders viewed film activity as a valuable opportunity to increase visibility for Wilmot, attract visitors, and support the local economy. However, they also emphasized the need for clear municipal processes and guidelines to support future productions—such as streamlined permitting, communication with residents, and logistical coordination. Overall, there was strong support for encouraging film production in Wilmot as part of a broader cultural and economic development strategy.

## Investment in Natural Resources

In recent years, significant investments have been made to enhance Wilmot's natural areas and promenades, which stakeholders overwhelmingly praised during the engagement process. Notably, the Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve was established in 2019 following a partnership between the Township of Wilmot and Mike Schout. This 55-acre natural preserve, home to a vibrant ecosystem, features a 1.6 km boardwalk that spans multiple wetland ponds and includes several educational components. Similarly, the Nith River Promenade and Trail underwent major improvements, with construction completed in early 2024. The enhanced promenade now provides scenic access to three key architectural landmarks of New Hamburg: the New Hamburg Reservoir Dam, the New Hamburg Waterwheel, and the Hartman Bridge.



The boardwalk and wetlands along the Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve

Interviewees emphasized that these enhancements reflect a growing recognition of the vital role natural spaces play in community life. These spaces offer welcoming and inclusive environments for families, seniors, and newcomers, while fostering a strong sense of community pride and environmental stewardship.

Stakeholders also highlighted the potential of Wilmot's natural resources to promote tourism. Structural improvements—such as boardwalks, trail connections, accessible facilities, and interpretive signage—not only elevate the visitor experience but also help position Wilmot as a destination that blends rural charm with cultural and ecological richness. There was a strong desire to see continued investment in trails, parks, and natural heritage features, as part of a broader effort to enhance quality of life and support sustainable tourism.

## What We Need to Get Us There

- **Goal 1.** Develop and support initiatives that contribute to local businesses, create job opportunities, and boost the township's economic vitality
- **Goal 2.** Maximize the use of underutilized assets
- **Goal 3.** Continue to enhance, conserve and promote natural resources
- **Goal 4.** Explore new partnerships and funding models to grow cultural assets in an economically sustainable fashion

## Goal 1. Develop and support initiatives that contribute to local businesses, create job opportunities, and boost the township's economic vitality

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Encourage the use of Wilmot's heritage sites as filming locations, while initiating new revenue generation initiatives

Action Steps	Timeframe
Develop a targeted strategy that builds on past successful collaborations (e.g., "Ghosting" and "Anne with An E" filming at Castle Kilbride), transitioning from one-off projects to a more consistent and revenue-generating activity.	Medium-term (M)
Build a photo library of potential, high-interest filming locations. Highlight sites that are one-of-a-kind in the region, with unique characteristics or that evoke different historical periods. Include historic buildings, industrial zones, residences, streets, scenic routes, schools, distinctive structures, and expansive vistas.	Medium-term (M)
Create and publish clear communication on these locations, outlining their unique characteristics. The Town of St. Marys filming locations webpage provides an example of the type of materials that could be developed. The webpage lists potential locations and contains information on past successful filming in St. Marys. <sup>1</sup>	Medium-term (M)
Clearly define processes and fees for filming in Wilmot.	Medium-term (M)
Create a list of local support services available for production (hotels and other accommodations, restaurants, catering).	Medium-term (M)
Organize familiarization trips for Ontario location managers and scouts.	Long-term (L)
Designate a Township staff contact for interested audiovisual companies, who will be the first entry point and be in charge of connecting film companies with relevant internal departments (e.g., for permits and traffic control).	Long-term (L)

<sup>1</sup> St. Marys website, "Filming Locations", <https://www.townofstmarys.com/en/recreation-and-culture/filming-locations.aspx>



**Recommended Action #2:** Enhance the Township staff capacity to support the promotion of Wilmot’s cultural assets

Action Steps	Timeframe
Create a dedicated position (e.g., Economic Development and Tourism Officer).	Long-term (L)
Define objectives for this new position. The Economic Development and Tourism Officer should be in charge of relaying information on existing assets and marketing Wilmot’s cultural opportunities beyond its borders.	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #3:** Work with the Economic Development and Tourism Officer and partner stakeholders to develop a Wilmot Tourism Strategy

Action Steps	Timeframe
Identify financial resources to realize Tourism Strategy.	Medium-term (M)
Identify key messaging/types of assets that Wilmot can develop and promote: e.g., downtown New Hamburg (including small-town feel, architectural heritage, culinary experiences); natural resources; agro-tourism.	Long-term (L)
The strategy should address both cultural tourism and community development (such as neighbourhood or district level marketing), enhance partnerships with local and regional agencies, and identify opportunities to promote Wilmot’s cultural offerings to new Wilmot residents, local, regional, national and international visitors year-round in alignment with the Region’s Tourism priorities.	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #4:** Create guides and itineraries to promote Wilmot’s cultural resources

Action Steps	Timeframe
Create a cultural tourism guide/itinerary that highlights the Castle Kilbride and highly attended annual festivals as the main attractions, while also showcasing and expanding upon other cultural resources and activities in Wilmot, including built heritage, natural resources, agricultural experiences, performance arts, and culinary experiences. Include information on accommodations, restaurants, and local shops.	Long-term (L)
Market this package to tour operators.	Long-term (L)
Create a “Cultural Guide” (available in both print and online formats) that highlights a variety of notable cultural resources. The following websites can offer inspiration for the format of such a guide:  St. Jacob’s Village – <a href="https://www.stjacobsvillage.com">https://www.stjacobsvillage.com</a> Discover St. Marys – <a href="https://www.discoverstmarys.ca">https://www.discoverstmarys.ca</a>	Long-term (L)
Distribute the guide locally, especially in cultural venues, hotels, and restaurants.	Long-term (L)
Collaborate with large event organizers (e.g., Moparfest, Fall Fair, Mennonite Relief Sale) and with stakeholders hosting large private events (e.g., weddings and corporate events at Puddicombe House) to promote the cultural guide to their audiences.	Long-term (L)
Create incentives to encourage participants in large events to explore other local assets (e.g., discounts at local stores and restaurants).	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #5:** Collaborate with The Community Players and other cultural organizations to secure a permanent venue for cultural presentations

Action Steps	Timeframe
Engage with The Community Players to discuss the associated partnership models.	Short-term (S)
By the end of the Arts and Culture Master Plan's implementation, ensure an adapted space is provided for theatre presentations.	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #6:** Work with the Economic Development and Tourism Officer and partner stakeholders to develop a Wilmot Tourism Strategy

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collaborate with Explore Waterloo Region, Ontario Yours to Discover, and other stakeholders to enhance the promotion of Wilmot's assets.	Medium-term (M)
Review current marketing to identify gaps. In particular, using the cultural resources inventory, ensure local assets are mentioned on the Explore Waterloo website and events are included in the website's event calendar.	Medium-term (M)
Collaborate with Explore Waterloo to create new content promoting the Township's assets. In particular, develop promotion on central assets identified in the Tourism Strategy. This can include adding information on New Hamburg to the Our Neighborhoods webpage ( <a href="http://explorewaterloo.ca/waterloo-region-neighbourhoods">explorewaterloo.ca/waterloo-region-neighbourhoods</a> )	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #7:** Explore collaborations with nearby tourism destinations to develop tours

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collaborate with Destination Stratford to encourage local visitors to participate in itineraries, including stops in Wilmot.	Medium-term (M)
Collaborate with St. Jacob's to develop tours.	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #8:** Collaborate with key stakeholder community representatives

Action Steps	Timeframe
Find key advocates within key groups who are interested in collaborating with the Township on joint tourism initiatives, including stakeholders in the culinary industry, accommodation and agro-tourism industries and the Mennonite community.	Long-term (L)

**Potential Performance Metrics**

- Number of engagement opportunities
- Representation of diverse perspectives on advisory committees
- Successful creation of a resource list

## Goal 2. Maximize the use of community assets

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Identify potential spaces for the presentation of visual arts in the community

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collaborate with local stakeholders to identify spaces suitable for visual arts presentation, e.g., local library branches of the Region of Waterloo Library, select restaurants and hotels, community and recreation centres, Castle Kilbride, etc.	Medium-term (M)
Create and publish an inventory of these spaces.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Facilitate the use of Township venues for events aligned with the Arts and Culture Master Plan's objectives.

Action Steps	Timeframe
Encourage the use of community centres and public spaces for events that can support the plan's objectives, especially prioritizing activities that promote community development, serve equity-deserving groups, contribute to a strong local cultural identity, and/or help generate economic benefits through streamlining rental processes and offering discounts for high-impact events.	Short-term (S)
Promote the use of high-potential venues, such as the New Dundee Bandshell, Scott Park, and the Fairgrounds, through developing communication materials highlighting these spaces' unique characteristics, ensuring the rental process is streamlined, and approaching potential community event organizers.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #3:** Explore ways to expand the use of Castle Kilbride through partnerships

Action Steps	Timeframe
Consider expanding the use of the Castle Kilbride lawn by hosting events such as concerts, movie nights, and performances organized by third-party stakeholders in addition to the concert series and events presented by Castle Kilbride.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #4:** Collaborate with the local Region of Waterloo Library branches to present events and activities

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collaborate with the New Hamburg Region of Waterloo Library branch and community groups focused on historical conservation to present a permanent display and regular activities, such as architectural tours, showcasing the history of the Carnegie library.	Medium-term (M)
Collaborate to present activities in library branches, such as temporary displays, arts and crafts workshops, and presentations.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #5:** Transform underutilized spaces into vibrant community hubs through the inclusion of public art

Action Steps	Timeframe
Develop an inventory of underutilized spaces that present a high potential for the inclusion of public art, based on their location, visibility, accessibility, and available canvases.	Long-term (L)
Create landmark artworks.	Long-term (L)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Success in creating an inventory of spaces for visual art displays
- Number of visual art displays presented by third-party organizers in the Township following the publication of the inventory
- Number of events organized in high-potential Township venues
- Attendance at events

## Goal 3. Continue to enhance, conserve and promote natural resources

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Continue enhancing the trails and increasing access to natural resources

Action Steps	Timeframe
Install creative furnishings (e.g., painted chairs, benches) and public art activations on the trails, to enhance streetscaping and celebrate local creativity.	Medium-term (M)
Develop hiking trails connecting key sites, such as a hiking trail going from the Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve to the downtown area.	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #2:** Encourage the use of natural resources through dedicated activities

Action Steps	Timeframe
Develop walking and cycling tours focused on Wilmot's natural beauty, including the Mike Schout wetlands, river trails, and local parks, integrating local culture and history into the experience.	Medium-term (M)
Install signage with information on natural resources in key sites such as on the Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve boardwalks.	Medium-term (M)
Designate key natural sites, like the river and wetlands, as venues for outdoor cultural programming, such as environmental art exhibitions, educational programs, and nature-based performances.	Long-term (L)

### Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of structural improvements to trails and other natural areas
- Number of visitors
- Number of activities presented in natural spaces
- Qualitative feedback received from residents

## Goal 4. Explore new partnerships and funding models to grow cultural assets in an economically sustainable fashion

### Recommended Actions

#### Recommended Action #1: Expand partnerships with private sector stakeholders

Action Steps	Timeframe
Identify resources needed to increase private sector partnerships and consider developing a position dedicated to attracting private sector investments and developing partnerships for key projects.	Medium-term (M)
Develop partnerships with private organizations, philanthropists, and cultural foundations to fund new projects, such as the renovation of the old arena or the creation of new cultural trails.	Medium-term (M)

#### Recommended Action #2: Expand fundraising activities

Action Steps	Timeframe
Explore opportunities for funding through government grants for arts, culture, and heritage conservation, with a focus on building sustainable partnerships to support ongoing initiatives.	Medium-term (M)

#### Recommended Action #3: Dedicate a percentage of the cost of capital projects and structural repairs to public art presentation

Action Steps	Timeframe
Explore opportunities for funding through government grants for arts, culture, and heritage conservation, with a focus on building sustainable partnerships to support ongoing initiatives.	Long-term (L)



**Recommended Action #4:** Encourage the development of new revenue streams for Castle Kilbride

Action Steps	Timeframe
Consider the benefit of identifying a part-time staff dedicated to fundraising and supporting the development of revenue-generating activities through special programming and partnerships (including maintenance and growth of partnerships with companies such as Guess Where Trips and Ghost Walks, establishment of partnerships with local businesses such as restaurants, and identification of new potential partners).	Medium-term (M)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of meetings with potential private sector partners
- Revenue generated from grants, donations, and private sponsorships
- Number of new public-private partnerships

# Priority 3. Collaborative Community Building

## Outcomes of Achieving Priority 3

- Through direct support from the Township, acting as a leader, network builder, and promoter, cultural enterprises and community organizations can thrive.
- The value of cultural investment and the needs of cultural stakeholders are understood across the different Township departments.
- Township processes minimize permitting barriers, allowing community-led events to flourish.
- Cultural presenters, event organizers, and creatives collaborate directly with the Township, sharing insights and communicating opportunities and needs to assist in decision-making.
- Collaborations between cultural sector stakeholders and private enterprises are fostered.
- Public, private and not-for-profit stakeholders collaborate to develop projects that benefit the Township of Wilmot communities.

## The Challenge (What We Heard)

### A Desire for Increased Coordination

Interviewees frequently expressed a desire for more collaboration and coordination between cultural organizations in Wilmot. Many felt that groups were currently working in silos—despite shared goals and interests—and that this limited the overall impact and visibility of cultural initiatives across the Township. They emphasized the potential for greater collaboration to share resources, cross-promote events, and strengthen community-wide programming.

Stakeholders saw the Township as playing a critical role in facilitating this collaboration. Suggestions included hosting regular networking events or roundtables to bring together cultural organizations, artists, and community groups; creating a centralized communications hub—such as a shared events calendar or newsletter—to increase awareness of what different groups are doing and reduce scheduling conflicts; and providing staff support or a designated liaison to act as a connector between the Township and cultural groups, offering guidance, information, and advocacy.

There was also strong interest in developing more consistent and accessible channels of communication with Township staff. Some interviewees felt that while staff were supportive, it was sometimes unclear who to contact or how to navigate municipal processes. They hoped for a clearer point of contact—ideally someone with a cultural mandate—who could help organizations with permitting, promotion, and accessing municipal resources. This role was seen as key to building trust, improving transparency, and ensuring that community-led cultural efforts receive the support they need to thrive. Ultimately, increased collaboration was viewed as essential to strengthening Wilmot’s cultural ecosystem—enabling more ambitious and inclusive initiatives, fostering a greater sense of shared identity, and positioning the Township as a more vibrant and connected place to live and visit.

## A Need for More Streamlined Permitting Processes

Interviewees recognized the importance of permitting processes in ensuring safety and compliance, but many described them as challenging to navigate, particularly for smaller or volunteer-run cultural groups. Some noted that it can be unclear who to contact, and that requirements for items like food trucks, tents, or road closures are not always communicated consistently. Insurance obligations were also raised as a barrier—especially for low-budget or grassroots events—making it harder for some groups to contribute to the cultural landscape.

While stakeholders understood that recent changes to the permitting system were made to align with insurance and safety regulations, they felt these updates have, on the whole, added complexity without sufficient support. Participants have a strong interest in seeing more clarity and coordination in how permits are administered. Suggestions included introducing a central point of contact within the Township to assist with navigating requirements and ensuring smoother communication across departments.

Ultimately, interviewees hoped for a permitting process that continues to meet regulatory standards but is also more user-friendly, transparent, and responsive to the realities of community-based cultural programming.

## Establishing Dedicated Cultural Leadership

Participants consistently emphasized the need for dedicated staffing at the Township level to support arts and culture. Many noted that, while existing staff are passionate and committed—particularly those connected to Castle Kilbride—there is currently no one with a clear mandate to lead or coordinate cultural initiatives across the Township. This gap was seen as a barrier to strategic planning, partnership development, and consistent support for community-led cultural activities.

Stakeholders expressed that a staff person focused on culture could play a vital role in strengthening communication between the Township and cultural groups, guiding permitting and event logistics, promoting local initiatives, and helping to secure external funding. This role was also seen as key to fostering collaboration between organizations, advancing equity and inclusion, and ensuring that culture is more meaningfully integrated into municipal decision-making.

Overall, there was strong agreement that without dedicated capacity, cultural development in Wilmot will continue to rely heavily on volunteer labour and remain fragmented—limiting its potential to grow and thrive.

## Building Awareness of Culture's Value

Interviewees noted a perceived lack of appreciation for arts and culture within the broader community and among some decision-makers. Several participants shared the view that culture is often seen as non-essential or secondary compared to other municipal priorities, making it harder to build support for cultural investment. This was especially apparent when advocating for funding, infrastructure, or staff capacity related to cultural initiatives.

Many felt that the value of culture—particularly its role in building community, supporting mental health, attracting tourism, and enhancing quality of life—is not always well understood or communicated. There was a sense that while Wilmot has many cultural assets and passionate individuals, these contributions are sometimes overlooked or under-celebrated.

Stakeholders expressed a desire for stronger advocacy and education around the benefits that arts and culture can bring, not only for artists and cultural groups, but for residents of all ages and backgrounds. They hoped the Township would play a more active role in demonstrating the broader impact of culture and integrating it more visibly into community planning and identity.

## What Work Has Already Been Accomplished?

### Planning Process

The Township's willingness to engage in the Arts and Culture Master Plan process was frequently cited by interviewees as a meaningful and encouraging step. Many viewed the process as a clear signal that the Township is interested in listening to the cultural community, understanding its challenges, and co-developing a shared vision for the future. Participants appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives, and expressed hope that this dialogue would lay the foundation for stronger, ongoing relationships between Township staff and cultural stakeholders. The inclusive nature of the process was interpreted as a shift toward a more collaborative and community-centred approach to cultural development, one that values local knowledge and creativity.

### Existing Collaborations

In addition to the planning process, some interviewees pointed to existing collaborations between the Township and local artists or cultural organizations as early examples of cultural partnership in action. These included Township-supported initiatives at Castle Kilbride, such as exhibitions, performances, or artist-led programming, as well as community events and festivals involving local schools, historical groups, or arts organizations. While modest in scale, these collaborations were seen as important stepping stones that demonstrate the Township's openness to engaging with the creative sector. Participants felt that these initiatives could serve as models for future partnerships, helping to build trust and momentum for broader cultural investment and coordination.

## What We Need to Get Us There

- **Goal 1.** Streamline the processes and offer support to allow for people to implement cultural initiatives in their own communities
- **Goal 2.** Facilitate collaborations between cultural stakeholders, providing opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue, collaboration, and mutual support within cultural spaces and initiatives
- **Goal 3.** Enhance municipal capacity and processes for the support of culture

## Goal 1. Streamline the processes and offer support to allow for people to implement cultural initiatives in their own communities

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Streamline permitting and approval processes for cultural initiatives and events to encourage more community-led activities

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collect feedback from event organizers on difficulties encountered when applying for permits.	Short-term (S)
Monitor timelines for processing applications and explore ways to provide quick responses.	Short-term (S)
Explore ways to assist non-profit organizations or community groups in obtaining requested documentation, particularly for events that fulfill the objectives of the Arts and Culture Master Plan.	Medium-term (M)
Create and publish easy-to-read guidelines to help organizations navigate permit applications.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Develop informational resources for event organizers

Action Steps	Timeframe
Develop a cultural toolkit for local artists and event organizers that outlines key steps, resources, and contact information for launching cultural initiatives.	Medium-term (M)
Collect and publish information on available regional, provincial and national grants that might be of interest to event organizers.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #3:** Formalize and deepen collaborations with key event organizers

Action Steps	Timeframe
As recommended in the Community Services Master Plan, meet twice annually with large-event organizers.	Short-term (S)

**Recommended Action #4:** Encourage volunteerism

Action Steps	Timeframe
Encourage volunteerism as a means for new residents to connect and establish a sense of belonging in their community.	Short-term (S)
Create a program designed to attract, train, supervise, evaluate, and recognize volunteers.	Medium-term (M)
Host a volunteer appreciation event.	Medium-term (M)
Create a platform centralizing information on volunteering opportunities in the community.	Medium-term (M)

**Potential Performance Metrics**

- Number of resources created
- Qualitative feedback from local community groups
- Speed of application processes review

## Goal 2. Facilitate collaborations between cultural stakeholders, providing opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue, collaboration, and mutual support within cultural spaces and initiatives

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Foster collaborations and local partnerships between cultural sector and tourism stakeholders

Action Steps	Timeframe
Work with interested community stakeholders to create a collaborative arts and culture forum or working group, bringing together local artists, community groups, and organizations to brainstorm and coordinate new initiatives.	Medium-term (M)
Convene regular networking events, which could be presented twice annually offering an opportunity for cultural stakeholders to share learnings and discuss potential collaborations.	Medium-term (M)
Invite organizations to deliver presentations on their current initiatives, learnings and challenges to encourage partnerships.	Medium-term (M)
Invite local community organizations and, on occasion, external experts, to deliver presentations on topics of interest (e.g., marketing for cultural events, creative placemaking, special programming, winter programming, etc.) to promote capacity building.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Facilitate collaboration between private, public, and non-profit sectors to strengthen cultural initiatives and resource sharing

Action Steps	Timeframe
Organize gatherings of private sector representatives and local cultural enterprises and organizations to discuss potential partnerships.	Medium-term (M)



### **Recommended Action #3:** Promote local artists and creatives

Action Steps	Timeframe
Develop a public inventory of local artists (visual artists, musicians, designers, etc.) and artisans.	Medium-term (M)

### **Potential Performance Metrics**

- Number of meetings
- Number of partnerships formalized as a result of the network building
- Number of presentations

## Goal 3. Enhance municipal capacity and processes for the support of culture

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Establish a governance model to guide the implementation of the Cultural Plan and determine the most effective structure for delivering cultural support within the Township.

Action Steps	Timeframe
Assess the feasibility of utilizing internal Township resources, creating an arm's-length entity, or engaging external partners to serve as designated cultural plan leaders. These leaders would work in collaboration with the Township to coordinate implementation efforts, identify strategic partnerships, monitor progress, and provide sustained support to the cultural sector.	Short-term (S)

**Recommended Action #2:** Build the internal capacity for the delivery of the Arts and Culture Master Plan

Action Steps	Timeframe
Confirm staffing needs for the delivery of the plan.	Medium-term (M)
<p>Create positions required to deliver the Arts and Culture Master Plan or reorganize current staffing. Based on the context analysis, the following are recommended position focuses:</p> <p>Economic Development and Tourism Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading the development and delivery of a tourism strategy</li> <li>• Supervising the marketing and promotion of cultural resources</li> <li>• Furthering cultural mapping</li> <li>• Fostering private-public sector partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Arts and Culture Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational point of contact for cultural enterprises and organizations</li> <li>• Central resource and liaison for special events management, who helps streamline event approvals, guides applicants, and acts as a liaison across departments</li> <li>• In charge of coordinating networking between local cultural stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>These positions could be created as part-time roles, which can be expanded to full-time roles as activities increase.</p>	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #3:** Align internal stakeholders to ensure support for the delivery of the Arts and Culture Master Plan

Action Steps	Timeframe
Promote the Arts and Culture Master Plan across internal Township departments, raising awareness of the potential social and economic benefits of culture.	Short-term (S)
Improve internal communication between departments to facilitate the smooth planning and execution of cultural events and initiatives.	Short-term (S)
Designate one lead person per department who will be the key contact for the Arts and Culture Liaison.	Short-term (S)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Key roles and responsibilities identified by end of year one
- Reported internal knowledge of the Arts and Culture Master Plan objectives
- Creation of required resources

## Priority 4. Foster Inclusion

### Outcomes of Achieving Priority 4

- Community members feel welcome and free to participate in cultural activities.
- Cultural offerings reflect the unique experiences of diverse groups.
- Diverse perspectives and identities are welcomed and celebrated.
- Activities are physically, socially, and economically accessible.
- Offerings address the needs of residents of various backgrounds, ages, and places of residence.
- Community members can access programming that corresponds to their creative desires.
- Relationships between the Township and diverse communities are deepened and strengthened.
- Engagement with diverse cultures is carried out in ways that honour and reflect their traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

### The Challenge (What We Heard)

#### Expanding Representation in Cultural Programming

Interviewees expressed concern that current cultural offerings in Wilmot do not fully reflect the diversity of the Township's population. Several participants noted that programming tends to centre on Eurocentric or settler heritage, with a strong emphasis on local history and long-standing traditions. While these aspects are valued, stakeholders felt they can sometimes overshadow or exclude the voices, stories, and creative contributions of newcomers, Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and other underrepresented groups.

Some interviewees pointed out that while the community is becoming increasingly diverse, this shift has not yet been fully reflected in cultural programming, public art, or community events. As a result, members of equity-deserving communities may feel less visible or welcome in local cultural spaces. Others observed that barriers such as cost, language, accessibility, and limited outreach can prevent broader participation and representation.

Participants expressed a desire to see more visible and meaningful inclusion of Indigenous culture, such as through public art, land acknowledgements with deeper educational context, and the celebration of Indigenous-led events and ceremonies.

There was strong interest in seeing cultural initiatives that are more inclusive, reflective of multiple identities and lived experiences, and intentionally co-created with diverse community members. Participants emphasized that for culture in Wilmot to truly thrive, it must be rooted in values of equity, representation, and belonging.

## **Decentralizing Cultural Access Across the Township**

Interviewees also noted that many cultural offerings in Wilmot are geographically concentrated, with a particular focus on New Hamburg and, to a lesser extent, Baden. While New Hamburg serves as a cultural hub with established venues and events, participants expressed concern that this concentration can lead to uneven access to cultural opportunities across the Township. Residents in smaller or more rural communities may have fewer opportunities to engage with arts and cultural programming close to home.

This imbalance was seen as a barrier to broader participation and as reinforcing the perception that culture is centralized rather than community-wide. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of distributing programming more equitably, including hosting events in a variety of locations, supporting grassroots initiatives in rural areas, and investing in infrastructure or spaces outside the urban core. Doing so, they suggested, would not only increase access, but also affirm the cultural identities and contributions of all Wilmot communities.

## **Broadening the Role of Community Centres in Cultural Life**

Interviewees expressed concern that community centres in Wilmot are primarily oriented toward sports and recreation, with limited space, programming, or resources dedicated to arts and culture. While they acknowledged the importance of sports in community life, many felt that this focus leaves little room for cultural activities such as theatre, visual arts, dance or music. As a result, residents seeking cultural experiences—whether as participants or audience members—often have to travel outside the Township to access them.

This lack of locally available cultural programming was seen as a missed opportunity to build stronger community connections, support creative development, and retain local talent. Stakeholders emphasized that community centres could play a more dynamic role by incorporating flexible, multi-use spaces that serve both cultural and recreational needs. Doing so would not only improve access to the arts, but also help integrate culture more deeply into daily life across Wilmot's neighbourhoods.

## What Work Has Already Been Accomplished?

### Increasing Support for Members of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community

In recent years, the Township of Wilmot has taken important steps to support the 2SLGBTQ+ community, demonstrating a commitment to fostering a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all residents. Notably, Township staff participate in Rainbow Diversity Training through Spectrum, an organization dedicated to helping workplaces become more open, equitable, and accessible to individuals of all sexual and gender identities. This training equips staff with the knowledge and tools needed to better serve and engage with 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, both within the organization and in the broader community. In addition, in a symbolic effort to support the community, Wilmot flies the progress flag at the Township Administration Complex community flagpole for the duration of the month of June, to celebrate Pride Month. Rainbow Pride stickers are also displayed on all Township facility doors.

### Black History Month Acknowledgement

In 2024, the Township of Wilmot encouraged community members to take part in Black History Month events and learn more about Black History. A list of resources and events was shared through the Township website.

### Reconciliation Action Partnership

Along with the Region and other area municipalities, the Township of Wilmot participates in the Reconciliation Action Partnership (RAP), which works closely with Indigenous communities to advance reconciliation.

The Walk to Honour the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, now in its third year, was especially mentioned by participants in the engagement process as a meaningful initiative that has received positive community feedback.

## What We Need to Get Us There

- **Goal 1.** Support initiatives that amplify equity-deserving voices
- **Goal 2.** Enable all residents to have access to cultural offerings
- **Goal 3.** Encourage the development of cultural offerings that reflect diverse communities' desires and needs
- **Goal 4.** Collaborate with local Indigenous groups to showcase cultural programs, initiatives, and events that reflect Indigenous values and traditions, ensuring that they have agency in how their culture is presented
- **Goal 5.** Incorporate Indigenous art, music, dance, and storytelling into public events, festivals, and cultural programming throughout Wilmot, ensuring that Indigenous culture is celebrated alongside other community traditions

## Goal 1. Support initiatives that amplify equity-deserving voices

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Community members from equity-deserving groups are consulted and can influence decision-making

Action Steps	Timeframe
Continually consult with equity-deserving communities to identify needs and develop solutions that ensure wider access to culture.	Medium-term (M)
Ensure the representation of diverse perspectives in groups such as the Heritage Committee that provide guidance on arts, culture, and heritage initiatives.	Medium-term (M)
Ensure diverse communities are consulted when commissioning or acquiring public art.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Showcase the work of organizations supporting equity-deserving groups

Action Steps	Timeframe
Share information through the Township of Wilmot on available resources for equity-deserving groups and community organizations based in the Region of Waterloo that serve equity-deserving groups. These include, for instance, Wilmot Family Resource Centre, LGBTQIA+-focused organizations (e.g., Spectrum <sup>4</sup> , Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition <sup>5</sup> , OK2BME <sup>6</sup> , Gender Variant Working Group <sup>7</sup> , PFLAG: Waterloo Wellington Perth <sup>8</sup> , tri-Pride <sup>9</sup> , Rainbow Reels Queer and Trans Film Festival), Indigenous Resources (e.g., Indigenous Community Resources White Owl <sup>10</sup> , Healing of Seven Generations <sup>11</sup> ), and organizations supporting racialized and multicultural groups (e.g., Kitchener-Waterloo Multi-Cultural Centre, Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region <sup>12</sup> , The African Canadian Association of Waterloo Region <sup>13</sup> , Bring on the Sunshine <sup>14</sup> ).	Short-term (S)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of engagement opportunities
- Representation of diverse perspectives on advisory committees
- Successful creation of a resource list
- Qualitative feedback received from community members

4 Spectrum, <https://ourspectrum.com/>

5 Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition, <https://yourwrrc.ca/>

6 OK2BME, <https://ok2bme.ca/>

7 Gender Variant Working Group, <https://wwgendervariant.wixsite.com/gvwwg/about>

8 tri-Pride, <https://tri-pride.ca/>

9 Indigenous Community Resources White Owl, <https://wona.ca/>

10 Healing of Seven Generations, <https://healingofthesevengenerations.ca/>

11 Kitchener-Waterloo Multi-Cultural Centre, <https://kwmulticultural.ca/>

12 Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region, <https://www.ccawr.ca/>

13 The African Canadian Association of Waterloo Region, <https://africanCanadianassociation.com/>

14 Bring On the Sunshine, <https://www.bringonthesunshine.ca/>



## Goal 2. Enable all residents to have access to cultural offerings

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Collect feedback from diverse stakeholders to assist in decision-making

Action Steps	Timeframe
Engage representatives from diverse communities—including older adults, youth, equity-deserving groups, and newcomers—to better understand barriers to accessing cultural spaces and participating in programming. Use these insights to identify potential improvements and collaborate with external partners to implement and share solutions.	Medium-term (M)
Develop a process to collect data on community participation in cultural activities, barriers to participation, and desires	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Decentralize cultural activities

Action Steps	Timeframe
Expand the presentation of cultural activities beyond Castle Kilbride.	Medium-term (M)
Support the development of activities beyond New Hamburg and Baden.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #3:** Encourage the development of year-round programming

Action Steps	Timeframe
Present winter activities in community centres and at Castle Kilbride.	Medium-term (M)
Support community groups in the development of winter programming.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #4:** Encourage the development of accessible and inclusive events and venues

Action Steps	Timeframe
Encourage presentations on accessibility and inclusion best practices as part of the regular cultural sector networking events.	Short-term (S)
Share resources on accessibility and inclusion best practices through the Township's website.	Short-term (S)

**Recommended Action #5:** Explore opportunities to enhance public transportation and alternative modes of transportation

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collaborate with the Region of Waterloo to enhance public transportation.	Long-term (L)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of engagement opportunities
- Representation of diverse perspectives on advisory committees
- Successful creation of a resource list
- Qualitative feedback received from community members

## Goal 3. Encourage the development of cultural offerings that reflect diverse communities' desires and needs

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Increase the presentation of diverse cultures and communities in Township-led activities

Action Steps	Timeframe
Acknowledge and celebrate a variety of religious and cultural holidays.	Short-term (S)
Ensure diverse experiences are represented as part of Canada Day celebrations.	Short-term (S)
Develop cultural programs for Pride and other events showcasing equity-deserving groups.	Medium-term (M)
Explore the opportunity of developing events for various festivals and holidays at Castle Kilbride.	Medium-term (M)
Collaborate with community groups to develop festivals celebrating varied cultures (e.g., Diwali events).	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #2:** Increase opportunities for children and youth to engage with culture

Action Steps	Timeframe
Increase the number of arts and crafts activities offered in community centres.	Short-term (S)
Collaborate with Region of Waterloo library branches and local community organizers to present more arts and crafts activities.	Short-term (S)

**Recommended Action #3:** Support events developed by diverse community groups

Action Steps	Timeframe
Continue supporting community organizations through the Community Grants Program.	Short-term (S)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Inclusion of diverse perspectives in Township-led events
- Number of arts and crafts activities presented in community centres
- Community members' qualitative feedback

## Goal 4. Collaborate with local Indigenous groups to showcase cultural programs, initiatives, and events that reflect Indigenous values and traditions, ensuring that they have agency in how their culture is presented

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Amplify the visibility of Indigenous creatives, organizations, and businesses

Action Steps	Timeframe
Actively promote Indigenous-led events, programs, initiatives, and organizations to highlight their contributions and foster broader community engagement.	Short-term (S)
Create and maintain a directory of Indigenous organizations, businesses, and creatives to increase awareness and support collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.	Medium-term (M)

**Recommended Action #2:** Deepen public education on Indigenous culture and history

Action Steps	Timeframe
In collaboration with the Region of Waterloo library branches, provide accessible resources that share Indigenous history, culture, and contributions with the public.	Short-term (S)
Incorporate and share Indigenous history and cultural knowledge at all public meetings, events, and programs.	Short-term (S)
Organize presentations and workshops centered on Indigenous culture, history and traditions in community centres and public events.	Medium-term (M)
Offer training sessions and workshops on Indigenous protocols, traditions, and historical context, especially as part of the cultural stakeholder networking events.	Long-term (L)

### Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of resources created
- Number of events presented

## Goal 5. Incorporate Indigenous art, music, dance, and storytelling into public events, festivals, and cultural programming throughout Wilmot, ensuring that Indigenous culture is celebrated alongside other community traditions

### Recommended Actions

**Recommended Action #1:** Acknowledge and observe key Indigenous dates of recognition

Action Steps	Timeframe
Collaborate with Indigenous community partners to present events and share resources on occasions such as National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+), National Indigenous History Month, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and Louis Riel Day.	Short-term (S)

**Recommended Action #2:** Support the identification, recognition, and celebration of Indigenous places, histories, and stories.

Action Steps	Timeframe
Work with Indigenous partners to research local Indigenous histories and identify key sites of importance	Medium-term (M)
Create resources, such as self-directed walking tours, presenting local Indigenous histories.	Medium-term (M)
Include information on the local Indigenous history in public spaces, through the inclusion of Indigenous place names and heritage plaques	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #3:** Showcase Indigenous perspectives in public spaces

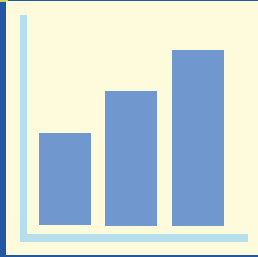
Action Steps	Timeframe
Showcase Indigenous perspectives in public spaces through public artwork	Long-term (L)

**Recommended Action #4:** Partner with Indigenous stakeholders to foster land stewardship and conservation

Action Steps	Timeframe
Organize events, such as medicinal walks presenting Indigenous teachings, to deepen resident and visitor relationships to Wilmot's natural assets and their understanding of their responsibilities as Treaty People	Medium-term (M)
Integrate educational content in natural sites, such as the Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve, through dedicated signage	Long-term (L)

## Potential Performance Metrics

- Number of resources created
- Number of events presented



# Monitoring the Implementation of the Arts and Culture Master Plan





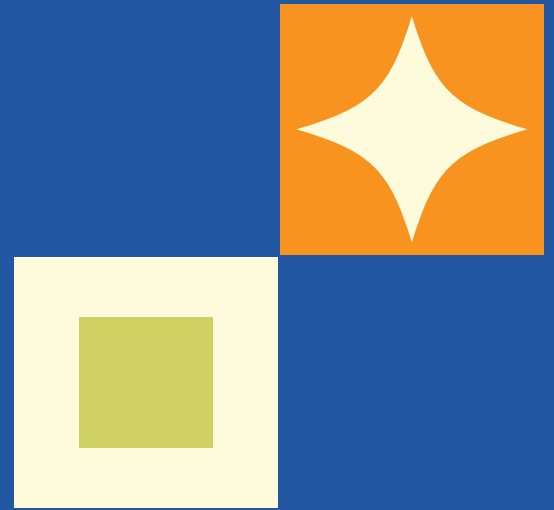
# Monitoring the Implementation of the Arts and Culture Master Plan

## Iterative Approach

We recommend adopting a spirit of testing, piloting, and experimentation as Wilmot works to implement the Arts and Culture Master Plan. While the recommendations outlined in the plan are grounded in research and informed by successful practices from other municipalities, not every action will translate seamlessly to Wilmot's unique context. Piloting initiatives will allow the Township to explore what works well locally, identify areas that may require adjustment, and remain responsive to community feedback. This flexible, adaptive approach will help ensure that cultural strategies are effective, sustainable, and tailored to the needs and opportunities of Wilmot's diverse communities.

## Tracking the Progress

Regularly measuring the progress towards the vision and the priority goals will be imperative for the successful implementation of the Arts and Culture Master Plan. At minimum, the continual collection of relevant data—which can be based on the Performance Metrics suggested for the different actions—and an annual review of the work accomplished to date should be implemented. In addition, progress should be shared with the wider community.



# Funding the Cultural Plan



# Funding the Cultural Plan

To successfully implement the Arts and Culture Master Plan, it is recommended that the Township adopt a diverse and sustainable funding strategy that combines municipal investment with external sources. This approach could include a mix of public funding, user fees, community contributions, partnerships, and grants. While municipal funding is essential—particularly for core infrastructure and staffing—additional support could come from provincial and federal grant programs, as well as private donations and sponsorships from individuals, businesses, and philanthropic partners. The following are various funding options that could be utilized.

## Operating Budget

The Township's operating budget can serve as an important tool for allocating staff time to support the cultural sector and implement the Arts and Culture Master Plan. However, it should not be the sole source of funding. To ensure long-term sustainability, a diversified approach to funding—drawing on multiple sources and opportunities—should be pursued.

## Capital Investment

Municipal funding will be essential for the development of core infrastructure, but should be supported by additional funding leveraged through external support.

## Federal, Provincial and Regional Funding

The Federal and Provincial governments recognize culture, heritage, and tourism as vital components of sustainable community development and offer financial support through a range of grant programs. These funds are often directed toward project-based initiatives and can be leveraged to advance cultural priorities. This funding can be leveraged to support the development of new infrastructure—as with the announced investment from the Government of Ontario for the retrofit and renovation of the New Hamburg Arena.

In addition, project specific grants can help support targeted initiatives. To fully leverage the potential of these funding streams, the Township may wish to dedicate staff capacity to funding research, grant writing, and fundraising support. Moreover, to support community-led efforts, the Township could actively promote relevant funding opportunities and, where possible, offer assistance—such as grant writing support and formal endorsements—for initiatives that align with the goals of the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

## Private Sector Donations

The Township can explore further leveraging private contributions, including from residents with philanthropic interests or external donors. Partnerships can also be pursued with cultural groups like The Community Players of New Hamburg (TCP), who have already demonstrated the capacity to raise significant funds toward a new facility.

## User Fees

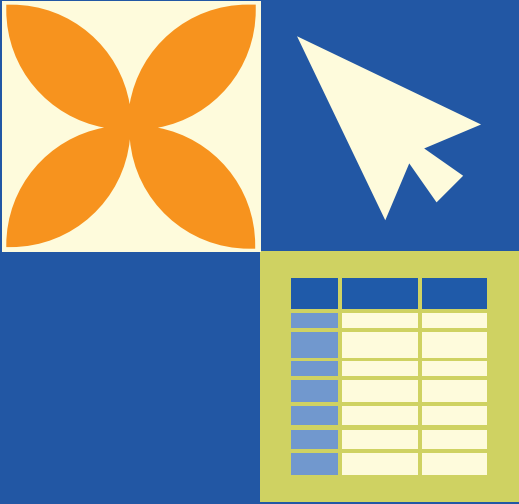
User fees may be considered in specific contexts to support long-term sustainability, but care should be taken to ensure that programs remain financially accessible and equitable.

## Collaborative Models

The Township can also explore collaborative models in which it provides facilities or logistical support, while community organizations contribute programming or in-kind resources.

## Indirect Investments

Integrating culture into municipal policies, plans, and decision-making processes can help build stronger local support for cultural activities. Not all forms of support need to be financial; indirect cultural investments can have a meaningful impact. These may include offering below-market or nominal rent for cultural organizations using Township-owned spaces, providing property tax exemptions for eligible cultural or community groups, and granting access to advertising space on municipal structures at little or no cost. Provision of in-kind services for festivals and events, including permitting, transit, fire, police, EMS, and waste management, can also represent valuable support.



# Appendices



# Appendices

## Appendix A. Overview of Wilmot's Cultural Planning Processes

The planning process for Wilmot's Arts and Culture Master Plan was rooted in an understanding of Wilmot's unique context gained through the following activities:

**Background research** examined the demographic, economic, and labour composition of Wilmot and the Region of Waterloo, alongside national and provincial trends in the cultural sector, as well as the contributions of local cultural industries.

**The planning and policy analysis** involved a review of local and provincial policies to identify best practices and opportunities for aligning with the updated Arts and Culture Master Plan. These insights help shape priorities for conserving and enhancing culture, with a focus on both cultural and natural heritage.

**Community engagement** involved over 200 conversations with three key groups:

1. Township staff, Councillors, and Mayor
2. Cultural resource managers (i.e., businesses, organizations, event organizers, etc.)
3. Members of the public (i.e., local residents, workforce members, students, and visitors)

These activities, detailed in this section, helped understand the strengths, challenges and opportunities of the local cultural sector, and identify the needs and desires of creative sector stakeholders and community members.

### Community Engagement Process

Through the summer and fall of 2024, the Wilmot community was invited to contribute to the development of the Arts and Culture Plan.

The **goals of engagement** were to identify:

- The current governance and decision-making framework
- An asset map of Wilmot's cultural assets
- Strengths, challenges and opportunities for the Wilmot cultural sector
- A shared vision for Wilmot's culture

The following three (3) key stakeholder groups were engaged in Phase 1 of the development of the Cultural Plan:

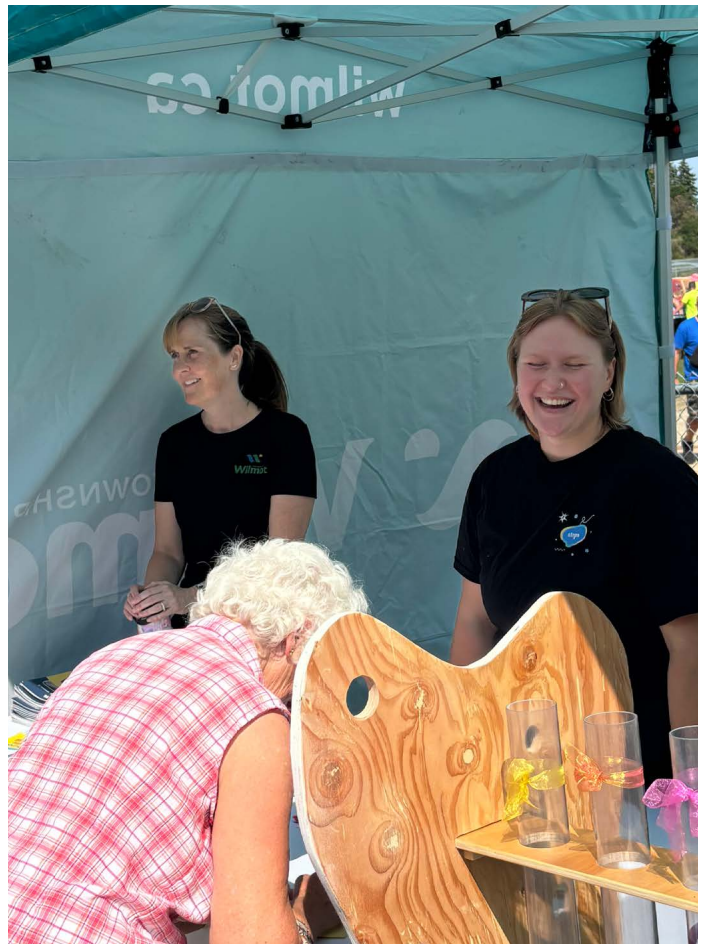
1. Township staff, Councillors, and Mayor
2. Cultural resource managers (i.e., businesses, organizations, event organizers, etc.)
3. Members of the public (i.e., local residents, workforce members, students, and visitors)

STEPS employed the following engagement activities to connect with diverse stakeholders in order to understand Wilmot's current culture, identify cultural resources, and discuss future priorities to advance cultural development in Wilmot. In total, over 230 conversations were conducted.

## Process for Community Engagement

Through a series of diverse and inclusive engagement activities, the Township of Wilmot has gathered feedback from over 230 participants to inform the development of its updated Arts and Culture Master Plan. This engagement included 19 in-depth stakeholder interviews, a community survey, pop-up events, and interactive activities such as Memory Mapping and Visual Voting. These initiatives provided opportunities for residents, visitors, and key stakeholders to share their insights on Wilmot's cultural strengths, challenges, and future opportunities. By incorporating input from a wide range of voices, these efforts ensure that the master plan reflects the vibrant and evolving needs of the community.

**Data Gathering:** At the Fall Fair, STEPS facilitated two interactive engagement activities to gather community feedback on art and culture in Wilmot as part of the Township's updated Arts and Culture Master Plan. These initiatives encouraged participation and provided valuable insights into community priorities.



The data gathering station during the Fall Fair in 2024

The Data Gathering Station invited participants to respond to questions about Wilmot’s current cultural resources, personal definitions of culture, and their vision for a more culturally vibrant future. Participants shared their thoughts by writing or drawing on colour-coded postcards, which were then deposited into transparent tubes. This visual display allowed participants to see the collective feedback in real-time, fostering a sense of connection and shared purpose. The event engaged 200 individuals, with 114 detailed responses collected, including input from approximately 40 youth, 20 seniors, and 20 visitors to Wilmot.

**Site Visit:** On September 27, 2024, the STEPS team conducted site visits to seven key cultural resources in Wilmot, including the Fairgrounds, Castle Kilbride, Puddicombe House, New Hamburg Water Wheel, New Dundee Bandshell, Baden Hotel, and community hubs such as Meme’s Cafe, Mountainoak Cheese, and Baden Coffee Company.

This exploratory tour served as a foundational step in understanding Wilmot’s cultural fabric, contributing to strategic recommendations for the Arts and Culture Master Plan.



The New Dundee Bandshell in New Dundee Community Park



**A Coffee Talk:** The Coffee Talk engagement event, facilitated by the Manager of Community Services and the Castle Kilbride Curator, was hosted by the Wilmot Family Resource Centre and welcomed approximately 45 participants aged 55 and older. This session provided a relaxed, conversational setting for senior community members to share their perspectives on arts and culture in Wilmot. Participants discussed their experiences, identified gaps, and shared ideas for enhancing cultural initiatives to better reflect their needs and interests. The event offered valuable insights into the priorities of an important demographic, contributing to a more inclusive approach to the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

**Virtual Survey:** From September to October 2024, the Township of Wilmot conducted a virtual community survey, available on the Wilmot website, to gather input on the meaning of arts and culture within the community. The survey invited participants to share their thoughts on topics such as culture, heritage, history, theatre, and events, while also identifying current cultural challenges and opportunities for growth.

This initiative was part of the Township's efforts to update its Arts and Culture Master Plan. The survey collected 50 responses from residents, visitors, and those who work, play, and learn in Wilmot, offering valuable insights into the diverse interests and priorities of the community.

The survey was promoted through online platforms, printed handouts distributed at the Fall Fair, and local businesses, including Castle Kilbride, to maximize community engagement. These responses will play a critical role in shaping the future of arts and culture in Wilmot.



Shape the Future of Arts and Culture  
in the Township of Wilmot

Share your feedback through the community survey  
[wilmot.ca/engageartsandculture](https://wilmot.ca/engageartsandculture)

 **Wilmot** TOWNSHIP OF



An example of distributed online materials for participation in the community survey

**Direct Interviews:** STEPS conducted 45-60 minute interviews with 20 key stakeholders, including municipal staff, councillors, the mayor, cultural resource managers, and creatives. These interviews, held via Zoom or telephone, aimed to explore key aspects of Wilmot's cultural landscape. The objectives included clarifying stakeholders' roles and responsibilities related to culture, identifying governance and decision-making frameworks, mapping cultural resources, uncovering challenges and opportunities for cross-department collaboration, fostering internal and external partnerships, and defining a shared vision for the updated Arts and Culture Master Plan. These conversations provided valuable insights to shape a comprehensive and inclusive cultural strategy.

## **List of Stakeholders**

### *City Staff, Council and Committees*

1. Mayor Natasha Salonen
2. Stewart Cressman – Ward 1 Councillor
3. Kris Wilkinson – Ward 2 Councillor
4. Harvir Sidhu – Ward 3 Councillor
5. Lillianne Dunstall – Ward 4 Councillor
6. Steven Martin – Ward 4 Councillor
7. Chris Catania – Director of Community Services
8. Harold O'Krafka – Director of Development Services
9. Greg Clark – Director of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer
10. Manuela O'Krafka – Manager of Community Services
11. Amber Schenck – Project Coordinator for Community Services
12. Nick Bogaert – Chair of Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee
13. Sherri Gropp – Curator
14. Taylor Hynes – Museum Assistant

### *External Stakeholders*

1. Caleb Jukes – President of the New Hamburg Board of Trade
2. John Reimer – Chair of New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale
3. Marie Voisin – Local Historian
4. Nancy Taves – Chairperson for the New Hamburg Art Tour
5. Nicole Cotie – The Community Players, President
6. Rosemary Arthurs – Organizer of the Dundee Arts festival
7. Sherry Robinson – The Community Players, Head of Development
8. Stephanie Susz – Wilmot Agricultural Society Chair
9. Nancy Birss – Women’s Institute
10. Lyle Cressman – New Hamburg Board of Trade Past President and Owner of Puddicombe House Restaurant, Spa and Inn

## **Background Research**

The following section outlines background information on the Township of Wilmot that is relevant to the development of the cultural plan. Topics that are discussed below fall under the following categories: Demographic and Population Trends, Economic and Labour Market, and Cultural Profile. The following is an overview of key takeaways from this research:

- Wilmot Township’s total population was estimated at 22,000 as of 2023 and is expected to increase to 25,055 by the year 2034.
- The Township’s diversity is limited, with approximately 90% of the population identifying as white. Nevertheless, the current population growth is accompanied by a gradual increase in ethnic diversity, a trend which is set to continue as the population grows.
- The income levels in the Township of Wilmot, specifically in areas like New Hamburg and Baden, reflect a relatively affluent population, with a median household income of approximately \$120,400 after tax household income annually (see chart below).
- The township is bordered by the large urban centres of Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge and by Perth County, which encompasses municipalities such as Stratford and St. Mary’s. This direct proximity influences Wilmot’s demographic profile, with residents working in large neighbouring economic centres but residing in Wilmot. It also impacts local cultural participation trends, as Wilmot residents have nearby access to cultural offerings presented in neighbouring municipalities.



Agriculture in the Township of Wilmot

- Agriculture and manufacturing are leading local industries. These non-arts and services-related sectors shape how culture is perceived, produced and consumed by people living in and visiting Wilmot.

Detailed background information collected through the research is outlined in **Appendix C. Research Findings** (p. 97).

## Cultural Profile

### Cultural Economic Landscape

#### Canada's Cultural Economic Trends

In Canada, the cultural industries are significant contributors to the Canadian economy. In 2023, the arts, culture, and heritage had a direct impact on GDP of almost \$61 billion.<sup>15</sup> The cultural sector generated approximately 645,900 full-time and part-time jobs in 2023. Cultural contributors include, but are not limited to, the visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, audiovisual production, and their associated professions.

The Canadian government provides financial incentives to promote culture and has policies focusing on developing Canadian cultural content. These policies and guidelines ensure that these cultural assets and resources are accessible to all Canadians.<sup>16</sup>

#### Ontario's Cultural Economic Trends

Ontario's culture sector added \$26.4 billion to provincial GDP in 2022, which represents 45 percent of the country's culture sector GDP. It also helped support more than 270,528 direct jobs across the province – more than the combined jobs in real estate, auto manufacturing, forestry and mining.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, tourism plays a vital role in Waterloo Region, driving almost 5 million visitors to the region annually, resulting in \$557 million in spending.<sup>18</sup> The area's parks, trails, and cultural events enhance its appeal as a popular destination for both locals and visitors.

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15 Hill Strategies, "Canada's cultural economy in 2023: A broad view", September 24, 2024, <https://statsinsights.hillstrategies.com/p/canadas-cultural-economy-in-2023>

16 New Strategies for Culture and Trade Canadian Culture," The Cultural Industries Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade, Global Affairs Canada (February 1999), last modified November 27, 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/4awjnzdm>

17 Ontario Arts Council, "Backgrounder – Arts Across Ontario preliminary results", October 10, 2024, <https://tinyurl.com/3aj7fu34>

18 Ibidem.

## Wilmot's Cultural Sector and Attractions

### Cultural Sector Highlights

#### Heritage

Castle Kilbride in Baden is the primary cultural landmark in Wilmot. This Victorian home, built in 1877 for flax industrialist and politician James Livingston, features Italianate architectural design and intricate trompe l'oeil murals and ceilings, created by German artist Henry Scharstein, and a belvedere for scenic views. The building was purchased by the township in 1993, with funding from the federal, provincial and municipal levels, as well as local fundraising efforts by the Friends of Castle Kilbride, and has been open to the public as a museum since 1994. It was designated a National Historic Site by the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada in 1995.



An example of distributed online materials for participation in the community survey

In 2023, Castle Kilbride saw a total of 9,031 tracked visitors.<sup>19</sup> Castle Kilbride has shown a consistent increase in visitor numbers each year following the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting a strong recovery trend. The Castle offers a wide range of programming aimed at all different age groups. This includes various curriculum-based programs for children, exploring history through the perspective of the Livingston family's way of living (story times, hands-on activities). Programming also includes several guided tours for older secondary and post-secondary students, such as a History of Furniture tour. The Castle has also presented Ghost Walk tours, plays, craft workshops on weekends, a tea and tour experience, concerts at the castle, Christmas events, and themed pet parades. Additionally, Castle Kilbride occasionally hosts art shows and, through a partnership with Stratford Festival, has exhibited theatre costumes as part of a special exhibition. As a flagship tourist attraction, Castle Kilbride is a member of Explore Waterloo Region and Destination Stratford.

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<sup>19</sup> Report to Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee, Report Number HCAC 02-24, February 13, 2024.



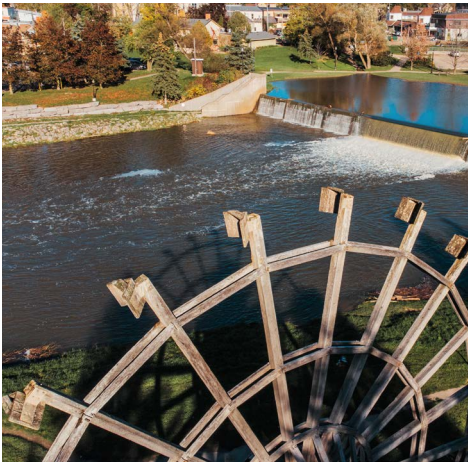
In addition to Castle Kilbride, Wilmot includes other heritage assets. Notably, the New Dundee Bandshell, built in 1944 through the collaborative efforts of the New Dundee Board of Trade, the New Dundee Musical Society Band, the Women’s Institute, and the Softball Association. The New Hamburg downtown core, a designated Heritage Conservation District, boasts buildings in the Italianate style – such as Puddicombe House – as well as Late Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Edwardian, Quebec Classic Revival and Beaux Arts styles, and is anchored by the Hartman Bridge. Along the Nith River, the New Hamburg Heritage Waterwheel – the largest extant in North America, standing at 50 feet – honours the township’s industrial roots and highlights Wilmot’s connections to green energy, as the birthplace of the founder of Ontario Hydro, Sir Adam Beck.

The Grandstand stands as an emblem of the rich history of the fairgrounds. It remains a vital and functional attraction, hosting major community events such as the Relief Sale, Moparfest, and the Fall Fair, which draw visitors from across the region. The rebuild of this important heritage site highlights Wilmot’s commitment to conserving its historical identity while serving as a hub for cultural and social engagement.

Finally, the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades conserve the artifacts of Wilmot’s firefighting history. The Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades boasts a collection of artifacts from the fire services that counts among the finest in Canada, and includes 8 trucks dating back as far as 1936), 3 hand pumpers, hose reels, uniforms and bunker gear, photographs and documents, and so much more. This museum is run by dedicated volunteers.

**Castle Kilbride Visitor Statistics**

Year	Total Number of Patrons
2023	9,031
2022	7,799
2021	1,845
2020	900
2019	11,709



The New Hamburg Heritage Waterwheel

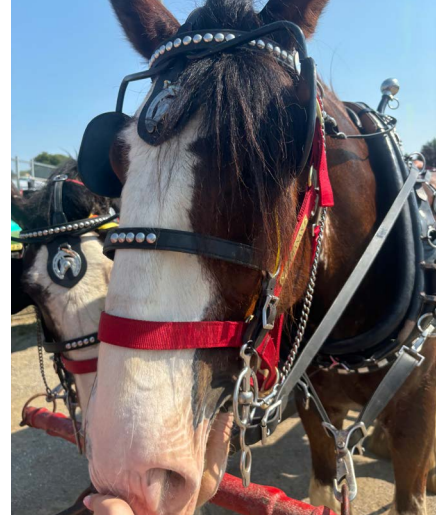


The New Hamburg Grandstand

## Events

A number of large-scale annual events hosted at the New Hamburg Fairgrounds draw in visitors to Wilmot and help celebrate local traditions and connections to agriculture.

The New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, held annually on the last Friday and Saturday of May, features over 40 venues and engages 2,000 volunteers. Since its inception in 1967 by Mennonite churches in southwestern Ontario, the event has raised over \$12 million for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a not-for-profit relief and development agency. With activities like the flagship quilt auction, Treasure Trove Auction, and Voices Together Community Sing Hymn, the sale draws close to 10,000 attendees annually, generating over \$250,000 in revenue each year for more than 25 years. The New Hamburg Fall Fair, organized by the Wilmot Agricultural Society, is a cherished annual event held over four days in September at Norm S. Hill Park. Attracting over 10,000 attendees, the fair offers a vibrant mix of activities for all ages, including an educational day tailored for local students to explore agriculture, a vendor village with around 50 exhibitors showcasing crafts, produce, and services, and homecraft exhibits featuring community talent in baking, crafts, and horticulture.<sup>20</sup> Traditional highlights like the Draft Horse Pull, Demolition Derby, and ProRider FMX shows draw big crowds, while live performances by local talents, including the New Hamburg Concert Band and dance studios, enhance the cultural experience. Children's activities, such as the Ultimutts Dog Show and the Reptile Kingdom Interactive Show, add family-friendly appeal. The fair underscores its agricultural roots while supporting local artisans and businesses and fostering community connections. With affordable admission and free entry for children under four, it remains accessible to all. Volunteers play a vital role in its success, with over 100 individuals contributing to its operations. The New Hamburg Fall Fair stands as a cornerstone of community life, celebrating rural traditions and cultural heritage.



The New Hamburg Fall Fair in 2024

The Canada Day celebration in Wilmot Township is an annual event held in New Hamburg. Organized by the Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force, with support from council members, staff, and community volunteers, the festivities offer a variety of family-friendly activities. The day begins with an Indigenous Sunrise Ceremony, followed by an official opening featuring performances by the New Hamburg Concert Band and local artists. The event culminates with a fireworks display along the river, attracting 5,000 attendees. This celebration reflects Wilmot's strong community spirit and commitment to inclusivity.

The New Dundee Victoria Day Festivities kick off the summer season in Wilmot. This cherished event includes a parade, carnival games, and a fireworks display, drawing families from across the township to celebrate together.

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20 New Hamburg Fall Fair, Vendor Information, <https://commercialnhff.wixsite.com/vendorvillage/meet-the-vendors>

In Petersburg, the Breakfast in the Park and Father's Day Car Show is a highlight of June. This event features a classic car showcase, live music, and a community breakfast, bringing residents together in a relaxed and festive atmosphere.

"Cruisin' at the Pond" is a popular weekly classic car show held every Wednesday evening during the summer in Baden. This event brings together car enthusiasts and community members to showcase vintage vehicles. The gathering fosters community engagement and celebrates automotive heritage, contributing to Wilmot's vibrant cultural scene.

Moparfest, established in 1979, is Canada's largest all-Mopar car show, held annually in New Hamburg, Ontario. The two-day event attracts over 1,000 Mopar vehicles and thousands of enthusiasts from across North America. Highlights include live music, children's activities like Power Wheels drag racing, food trucks, the Engine Blow event, and silent auctions. Beyond its automotive focus, Moparfest has contributed over \$3.45 million to community initiatives, showcasing its commitment to philanthropy. Organized by a dedicated team of volunteers, Moparfest remains a premier event for car enthusiasts.

## **Theatre**

The Community Players of New Hamburg (TCP), established in 1984, are a cornerstone of Wilmot Township's culture, renowned for their community theatre. Each year, TCP stages two major productions: a spring musical and a fall drama. These shows not only entertain but also provide a platform for local talent and foster community engagement. TCP actively reinvests its profits into local projects and charities, emphasizing its commitment to both the arts and community development.

## **Visual Arts**

Although Wilmot does not have a permanent public gallery for the presentation of visual arts, the annual New Hamburg Art Tour, held in September at the New Hamburg Community Centre, features a wide array of artistic creations done by talented local artists spanning Waterloo Region. In addition, the Tour proudly includes the creative young minds and active participation of Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School art students. This arts and culture event contributes to the quality of life for all ages, not only for Wilmot residents but beyond its boundaries, attracting 500 plus patrons annually. The Tour is reciprocally supported by numerous local businesses.

Moreover, the Dundee Artisan Festival, held in May, presents local craftsmanship, and several stores in the township, such as Kathie Jordan Design, present products by local creators. Residents can also access art classes at local studios, such as Dundee Pottery, Alder Creek Studios, and the Dundee Doodle Art Studio.

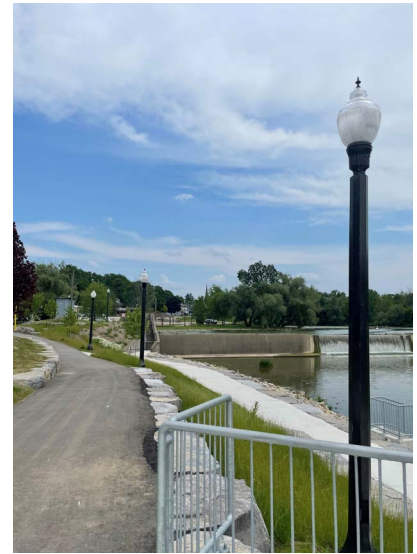


## Literary Arts

The three public library branches operated by the Region of Waterloo Library in the Township of Wilmot are a valuable cultural resource for the township, offering a wide array of community services both in-person and online. These branches are located in Baden, New Hamburg, and New Dundee.

## Natural Heritage

Green spaces and designated parks highlight the township's open outdoor areas and natural beauty. In Wilmot, there are 33 township, settlement, and neighbourhood parks (not including open space lands), totalling approximately 226.8 acres.<sup>21</sup> In addition, in recent years, investments have been made to enhance natural areas and promenades. Notably, following the partnership established in 2019 between the Township of Wilmot and Mike Schout, the Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve was established. This 55 acre natural preserve hosting a vibrant ecosystem features a 1.6 km long boardwalk spanning multiple wetland ponds and several educational components.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the Nith River Promenade and Trail was recently enhanced, with construction finalized in early 2024. The promenade provides access to three key architectural landmarks of New Hamburg: the New Hamburg Reservoir Dam, the New Hamburg Waterwheel, and the Hartman Bridge.



The Nith River Promenade and Trail in New Hamburg

Beyond these developments, Wilmot is home to notable trails and protected natural areas that further enhance outdoor recreation opportunities. The Baden Hills Trails and Walker Woods provide serene hiking experiences, while trail linkages between the Wilmot Recreation Complex (WRC), New Hamburg, Baden, and Waterloo Region facilitate active transportation and connectivity. The Hydro Cut is a popular destination for mountain biking, offering some of the best trail systems in the region. Conservation efforts have also seen success with the rare Charitable Research Reserve facilitating the investment of Schneider Woods, a vital forested area that supports biodiversity and provides recreational opportunities.

In addition, community organizations like the Wilmot Horticultural Society and Let's Tree Wilmot play a vital role in supporting these green spaces. Their mission blends education, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship, teaching the community about the critical role native plants, gardens, and green spaces play in creating healthy, livable communities and a sustainable planet.

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21 Township of Wilmot, Community Services Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2024, p. 75.

<https://facilities.wilmot.ca/?CategoryId=&FacilityTypeId=1&Keywords=&ScrollTo=google-map-trigger&CloseMap=true>.

22 Township of Wilmot website, "Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve Grand Opening Event", posted May 24, 2023.

## **Community-Driven Organizations**

Wilmot has many community organizations that support the art and culture scene. These include various community groups and service associations that play vital roles in fostering arts and culture in Wilmot. These community-driven organizations support local initiatives, events, and projects that celebrate Wilmot's heritage and creativity. They sponsor family-friendly cultural events, fundraise for community improvements, and provide platforms for local artists, performers, and creators to showcase their work. Organizing events such as festivals, art displays, and workshops, enriches the cultural landscape and strengthens community connections, making Wilmot a vibrant hub for cultural engagement.

## **Wilmot's Investment in Arts and Culture**

### **Community Grants Program**

The Township of Wilmot supports local community groups through the Community Grants Program, with a total yearly funding of approximately \$50,000. In 2023, cultural community organizations supported included the New Hamburg Art Tour, the New Hamburg Concert Band, and the Dundee Artisan Festival.

### **Facilities and Programming**

The Township of Wilmot develops and maintains facilities, parks and trails and offers programs and activities within arts and culture.

A significant recent project concerns the New Hamburg Arena. In 2022, the Ontario government granted the township \$4.18 million for the redevelopment of the former arena, with a required township contribution of \$1.52 million. The proposal included a plan for the space to host both recreation and culture activities, with a dedicated stage for local theatre company The Community Players (TCP). The project is currently on hold until further consultation and cost assessment.

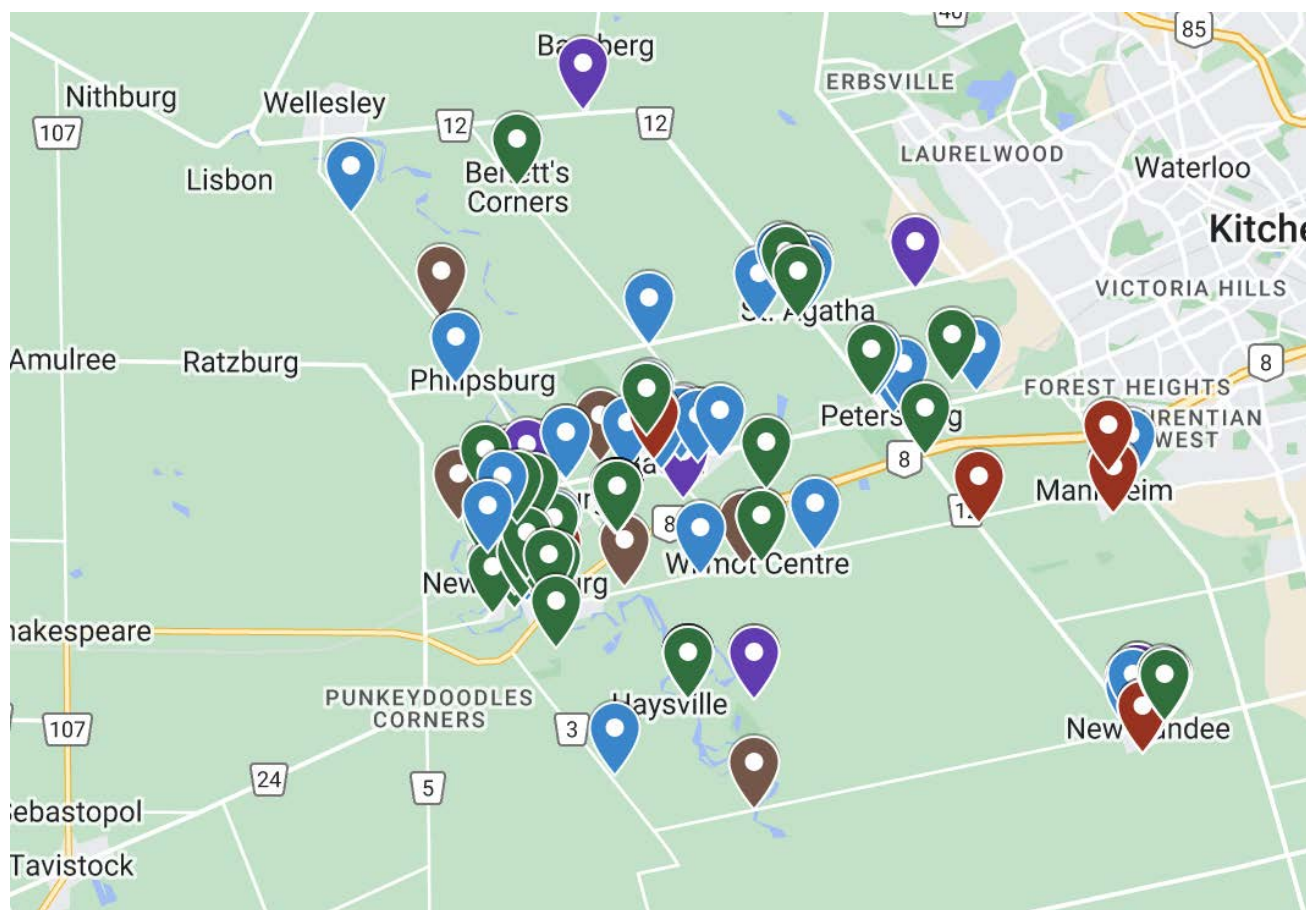
Finally, the Township operates Castle Kilbride and provides educational programming and recreational events and activities on Castle grounds. These well attended, successful programs include the Summer Concert Series, Ghost Walks, Juried Art Show, and seasonal featured exhibits.

## **Community-Driven Organizations**

Wilmot has many community organizations that support the art and culture scene. These include various community groups and service associations that play vital roles in fostering arts and culture in Wilmot. These community-driven organizations support local initiatives, events, and projects that celebrate Wilmot's heritage and creativity. They sponsor family-friendly cultural events, fundraise for community improvements, and provide platforms for local artists, performers, and creators to showcase their work. Organizing events such as festivals, art displays, and workshops, enriches the cultural landscape and strengthens community connections, making Wilmot a vibrant hub for cultural engagement.

## Appendix B. Cultural Inventory

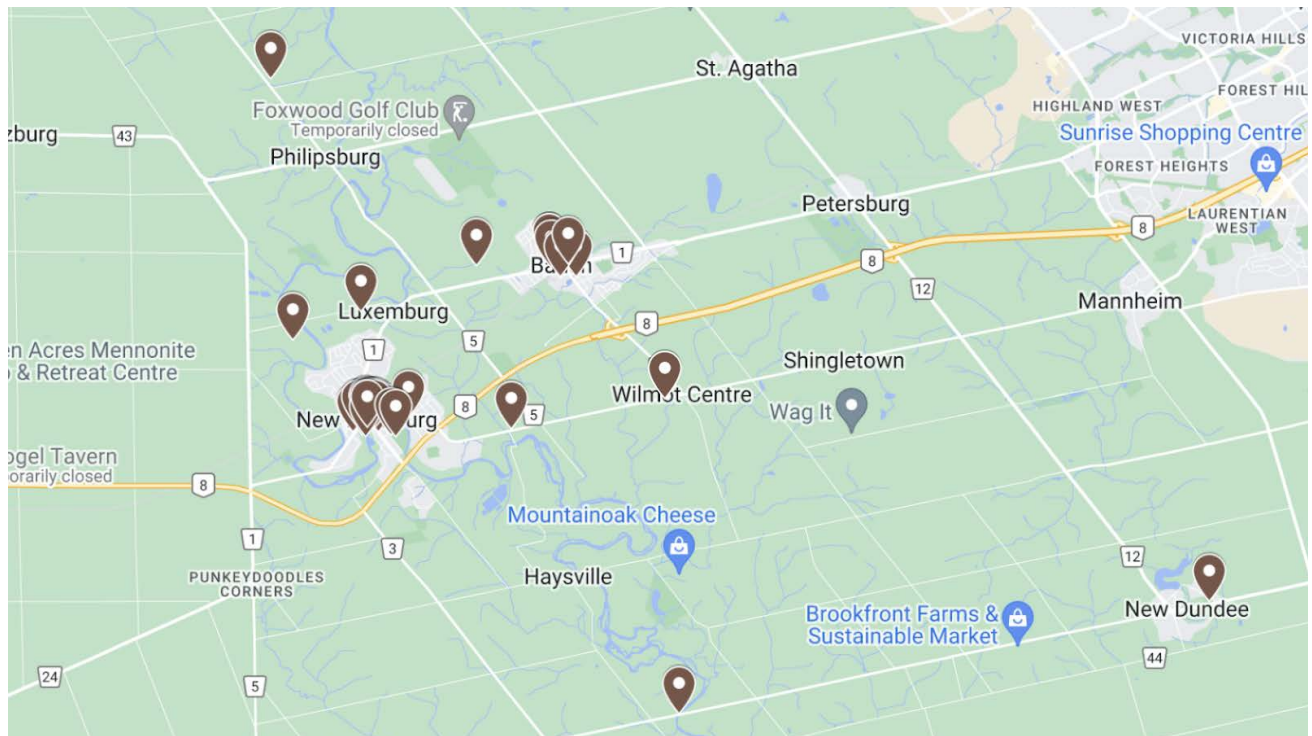
### Wilmot Inventory Map 2024



The resources listed in the following pages are organized per category, using two frameworks:

- Municipalities across Canada and Ontario have used the Cultural Resource Framework (CRF) classifications based on the Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics (CFCs) since it was developed in 2005. The Framework is divided into the following categories: Cultural Occupations, Cultural Enterprises, Community Cultural Organizations, Cultural Festivals and Events, Cultural Spaces and Facilities, Natural Heritage, Cultural Heritage, and Intangible Cultural Assets.
- To complement the CRF framework, the following subcategories were included to capture Wilmot's unique make-up of assets: Organizations/Businesses; Venues, Facilities, Spaces; Galleries and Museums; Landmarks and Public Spaces; Events and Festivals; Art(s) Studios and Workshops; Places of Worship; and Intangible Assets.

## Cultural Heritage



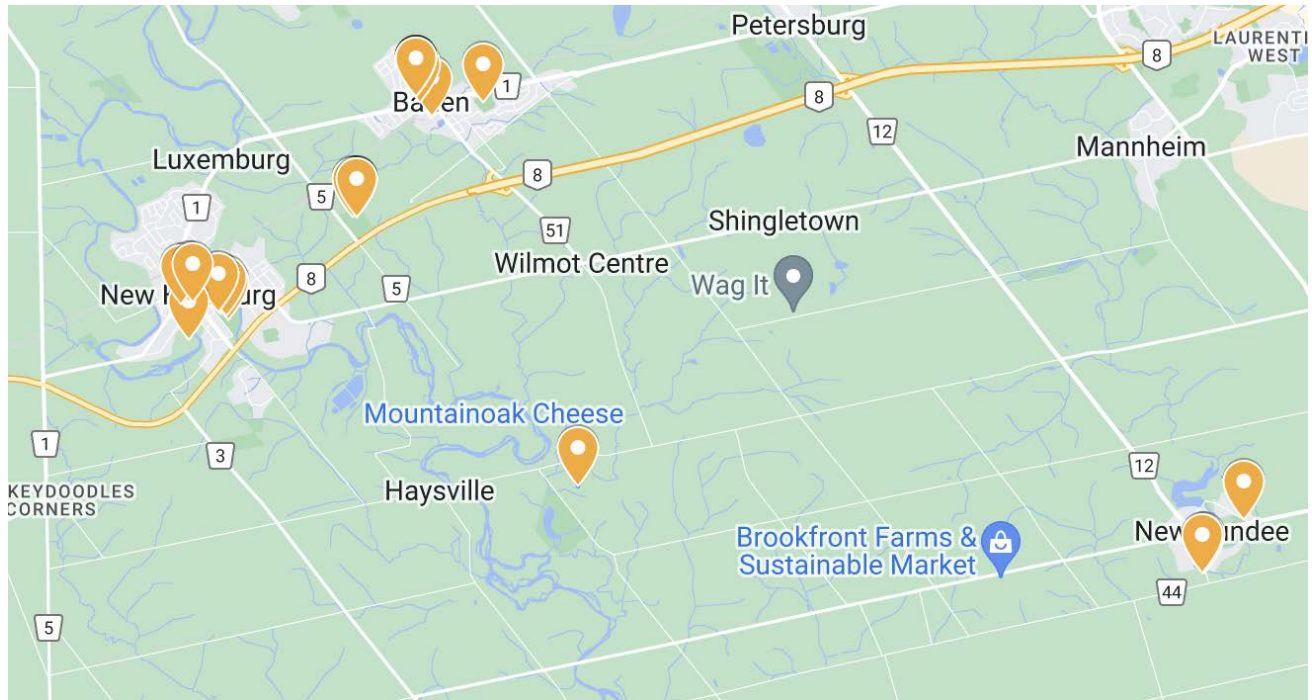
Cultural Heritage Asset	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Grandstand	Landmarks and Public Spaces	251 Jacob Street, New Hamburg, Ontario, New Hamburg
Castle Kilbride	Galleries and Museums	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Puddicombe House	Businesses	145 Peel St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E7
New Hamburg Water Wheel	Landmarks and Public Spaces	315 Grandview Ave, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1L5
Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigade	Galleries and Museums	10 Bell Dr, Wilmot, ON N3A 2S2
Bridge Street Bridge	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Bridge Street Bridge crosses the Nith River (Bridge Street and Tye Rd)

Cultural Heritage Asset	Asset Sub-Category	Address
The New Dundee Bandshell	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1370 Bridge St, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
New Hamburg Heritage Conservation District	Boulee Street bounds the New Hamburg Heritage Conservation District to the south and the River Nith to the north, east and west, in the former Village of New Hamburg	Landmarks and Public Spaces
Sir Adam Beck Archives	Galleries and Museums	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Wagler Property	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1138 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 3K9
Baden Hotel	Businesses	39 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 2M1
Old General Store	Landmarks and Public Spaces	55 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 2R4
Livingston Linseed Oil Mill	Landmarks and Public Spaces	76 Mill St, Baden, ON N3A 2N6
Holwell House	Landmarks and Public Spaces	35 Snyder's Rd E, Baden, ON N3A 2V3
Scott/Schneider Home	Landmarks and Public Spaces	3332 Bleams Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3G6
Hamilton Bank Building	Landmarks and Public Spaces	98 Peel St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E3
Scott/Merner/Kirkpatrick Home/Waterlot	Landmarks and Public Spaces	17 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Christner/Rudy House	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1379 Christner Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3K7
Hostetler/Ritz House	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1145 Christner Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3K7
Killer/Koch/Clarker House	Landmarks and Public Spaces	2541 Nafziger Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3H1
Zoeller/Wagner House	Landmarks and Public Spaces	2791 Bleams Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3J3
Merner/Shantz/Erwin Home	Landmarks and Public Spaces	274 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1J5



Cultural Heritage Asset	Asset Sub-Category	Address
The Hamburg Felt Boot Co.	Landmarks and Public Spaces	166 Peel St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E3
The Carnegie Library	Landmarks and Public Spaces	145 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Cenotaph	Landmarks and Public Spaces	145 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
The Hartman Bridge	Landmarks and Public Spaces	3 Waterloo St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1S3
Luft Block	Landmarks and Public Spaces	100-106 Huron St.St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1S
The Volksblatt and Independent Newspaper Office	Landmarks and Public Spaces	84 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1J3
The Hartman Block	Landmarks and Public Spaces	78-82 Huron St. New Hamburg, ON N3A 1J3
Ernst/Hostetler Block	Landmarks and Public Spaces	65-67 Huron StSt #65, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Imperial Hotel	Landmarks and Public Spaces	60 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1J3
The Lautenschlager Block	Landmarks and Public Spaces	91 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
The Commercial Hotel	Landmarks and Public Spaces	13 Huron St #11, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
The Queen's Hotel	Landmarks and Public Spaces	73 Peel St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E7
The Hamburg Hotel	Landmarks and Public Spaces	87 Peel St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E7
New Hamburg Dam	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Nith River Reservoir Dam, Unnamed Road, New Hamburg, ON N0B
William Tell Block	Landmarks and Public Spaces	79 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Lance Russwurm Mural	Landmarks and Public Spaces	280 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9

## Cultural Festivals and Events

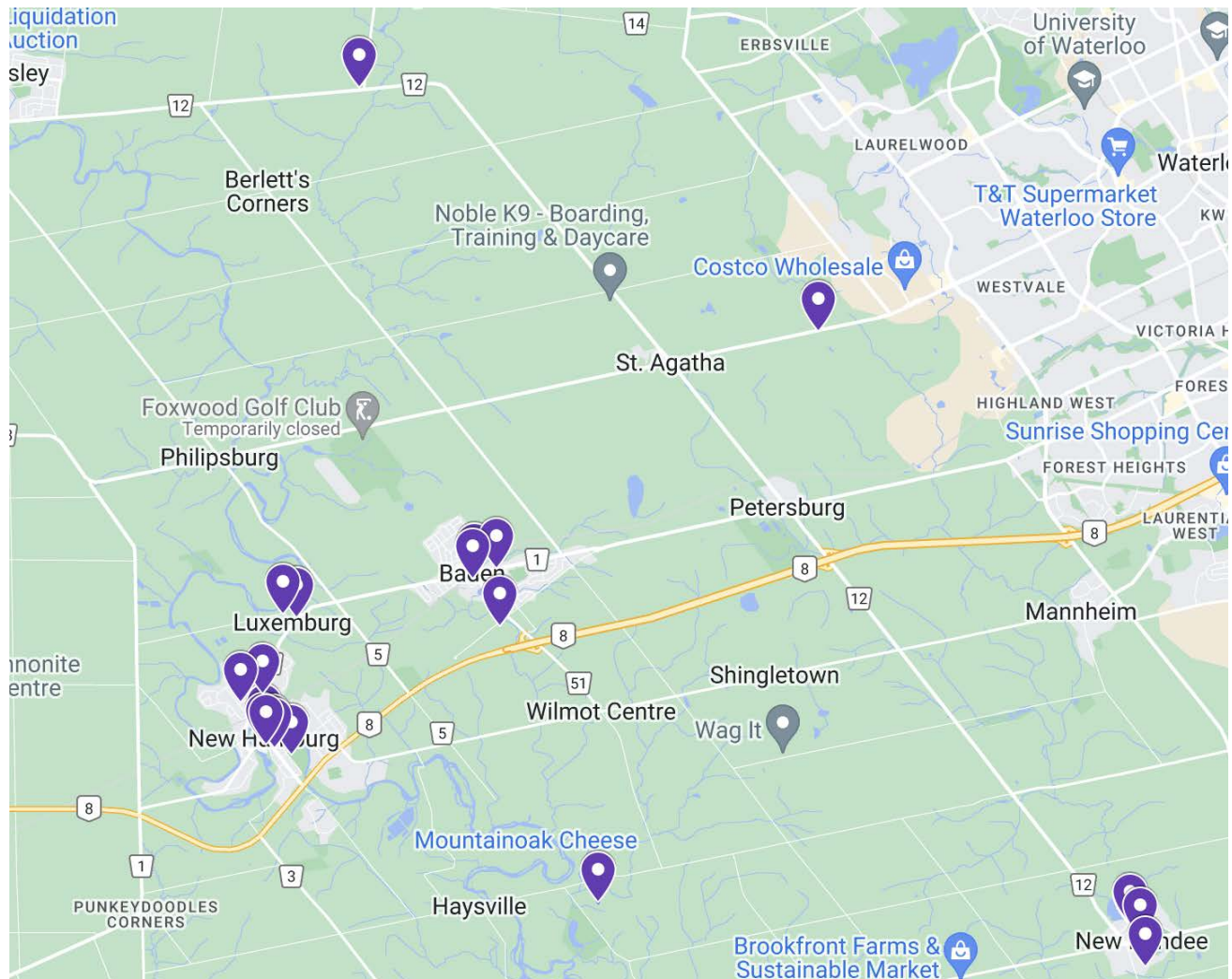


Cultural Festival and Event Asset	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Mennonite Relief Sale	Events and Festivals	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9
Fall Fair	Events and Festivals	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9
Moparfest	Events and Festivals	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9
New Hamburg Art Tour	Events and Festivals	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E1
Canada Day	Events and Festivals	William Scott Park 84 Bleams Rd W, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1G8
New Hamburg Cruise Nights	Events and Festivals	68 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Castle Kilbride Concerts	Events and Festivals	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Dundee Artisan Festival	Events and Festivals	New Dundee Community Park 667 Main St #621, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0

Cultural Festival and Event Asset	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Heritage Wilmot Heritage Day	Events and Festivals	New Dundee Community Centre 1028 Queen St, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
Cruizin' at the Pond - Baden	Events and Festivals	76 Mill St, Baden, ON N3A 2N6
Remembrance Day Ceremonies	Events and Festivals	145 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Christmas Parades	Events and Festivals	parade starts at the South entrance of Norm Hill Park
Petersburg Optimist Breakfast in the park and Father's Day Car show	Events and Festivals	Petersburg Park 1338 Notre Dame Drive, St. Agatha, On,
New Dundee Victoria Day including New Dundee Community Fireworks	Events and Festivals	New Dundee Community Centre 1028 Queen St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3E4
Doors Open	Events and Festivals	Various locations, in 2024 it was at Mountainoak Cheese 3165 Huron Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3C3
Baden Firefighters tournament and concert	Events and Festivals	Sir Adam Beck Community Park 215 Snyder's Rd E, Baden, ON N3A 2V6
Terry Fox Run	Events and Festivals	1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON N3A 0C4
Wilmot Lions/Lioness Tree of Light	Events and Festivals	30 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1J2
Swimming with Santa	Events and Festivals	1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON N3A 0C4
Christmas at the Castle	Events and Festivals	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Whimsical Weekends	Events and Festivals	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Ghost Walks	Events and Festivals	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Floating Pumpkin Patch	Events and Festivals	1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON N3A 0C4
Wilmot Recreation Complex Community Events	Events and Festivals	1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON N3A 0C4



## Cultural Enterprises



Cultural Enterprise Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
The Community Players (TCP)	Art(s) Studio & Workshops	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9
Wilmot Seniors Woodworking and Craft Shop	Art(s) Studios and Workshops	27 Beck St, Baden, ON N3A 2P3
Dundee Doodle Art Studio	Art(s) Studios and Workshops	1454 Bridge St, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
Alder Creek Studio	Art(s) Studios and Workshops	121 Casselholme Crescent, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
Centre Stage Dance Studio	Art(s) Studios and Workshops	73 Hincks St Unit #3, New Hamburg, ON N3A 2A2

## Cultural Facilities and Spaces



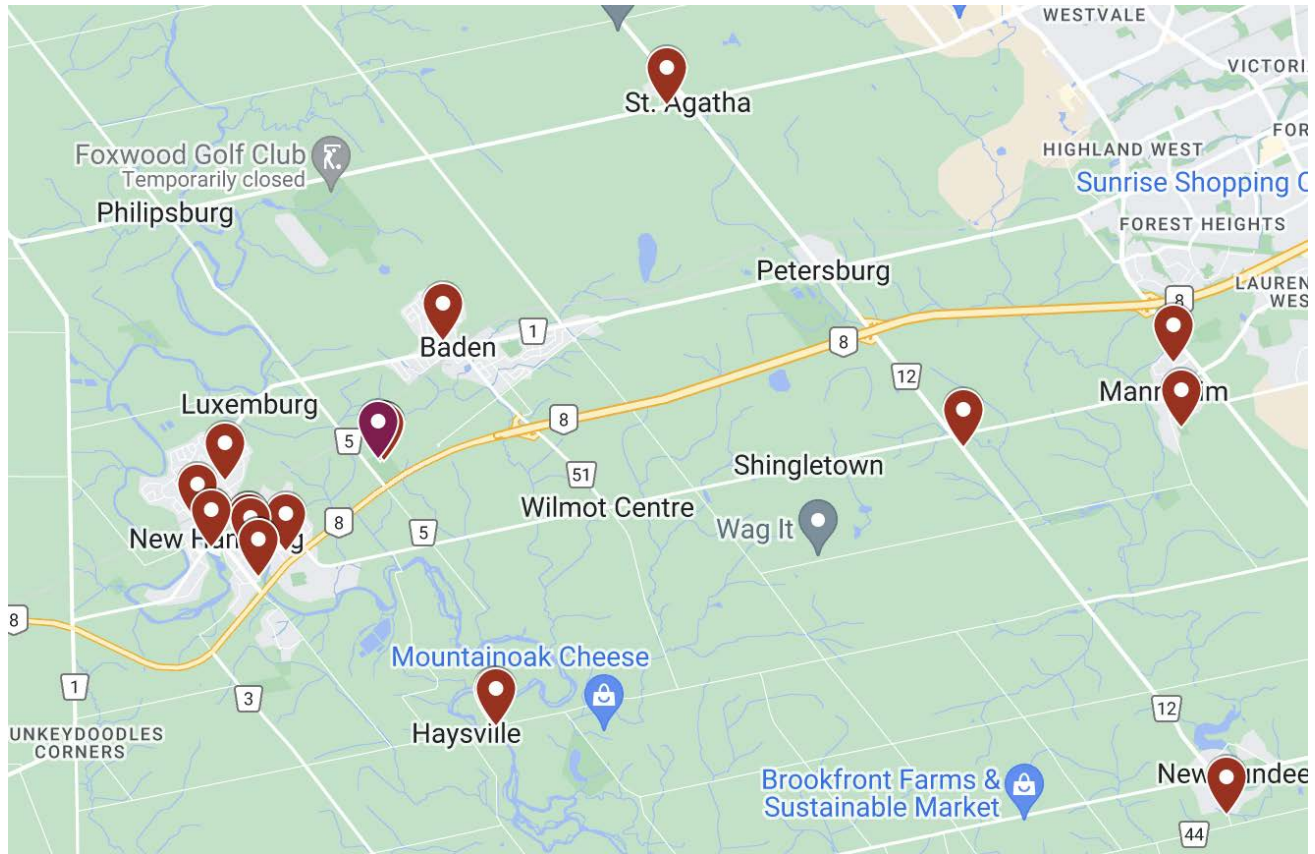
Cultural Facility and Space Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Fair Grounds & New Hamburg Grandstand	Landmarks and Public Spaces	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1G6
Region of Waterloo Library - Baden Branch	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	115 Snyder's Rd E, Baden, ON N3A 2V4
Region of Waterloo Library - New Dundee Branch	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	1176 Queen St N, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
Region of Waterloo Library - New Hamburg Branch	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	145 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Wilmot Recreation Complex	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON N3A 0C4
New Hamburg Community Centre	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E1
Kirkpatrick Park Gazebo	Landmarks and Public Spaces	230 Wilmot St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1H5

Cultural Facility and Space Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Livingston Square Gazebo	Landmarks and Public Spaces	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Operating water wheel	Landmarks and Public Spaces	315 Grandview Ave, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1L5
Haysville Community Centre	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	3433 Huron Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3C4
Mannheim Community Centre & Park	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	1467 Mannheim Rd, Wilmot, ON N0B
New Dundee Community Centre and Doug Fischer Memorial Park	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	1028 Queen St, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
St. Agatha Community Centre	Venues, Facilities, Spaces	1791 Erbs Rd, St. Agatha, ON N0B 2L0
Baden/Sir Adam Beck Community Park	Landmarks and Public Space	215 Snyder's Rd E, Baden, ON N3A 2V6
Brenneman Park	Landmarks and Public Space	9 Brenneman Dr #93, Baden, ON N3A 4M9
Captain MacCallum Park	Landmarks and Public Space	Captain MacCallum Drive, New Hamburg, Ontario
Constitution Park	Landmarks and Public Space	Hincks Street, New Hamburg, Ontario
Goldschmidt Park	Landmarks and Public Space	Goldschmidt Drive, Baden, Ontario
Greenwood Park	Landmarks and Public Space	Greenwood Dr, New Hamburg, ON N3A
Haysville Community Park	Landmarks and Public Space	3433 Huron Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3C4
Heritage Park	Landmarks and Public Space	75 Hunter St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1M1
Kirkpatrick Park	Landmarks and Public Space	230 Wilmot St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1H5
Linear Park	Landmarks and Public Space	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Livingston Square	Landmarks and Public Space	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1
Mannheim Community Park	Landmarks and Public Space	1467 Mannheim Rd, Mannheim, ON N0B 2E0

Cultural Facility and Space Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
New Dundee Community Park	Landmarks and Public Space	1370 Bridge St, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
Norm Hill Flats	Landmarks and Public Spaces	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9
Norm Hill Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	75 Seyler St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E7
Optimist Youth Park	Landmarks and Public Space	200 Theodore Schuler Blvd, Wilmot, ON N3A 4N8
Petersburg Community Park	Landmarks and Public Space	1338 Notre Dame Dr, Baden, ON N3A 4H9
Riverside Park	Landmarks and Public Space	117 Riverside Dr, New Hamburg, ON N3A 2H6
Sararus Park	Landmarks and Public Space	8 Meadowview Pl #32, St. Agatha, ON N0B 2L0
Schneller Park	Landmarks and Public Space	88 Schneller Dr, Baden, ON N3A 2L6
William Scott Park	Landmarks and Public Space	84 Bleams Rd W, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1G8
St. Agatha Lions Community Park	Landmarks and Public Space	1791 Erbs Rd, St. Agatha, ON N0B 2L0



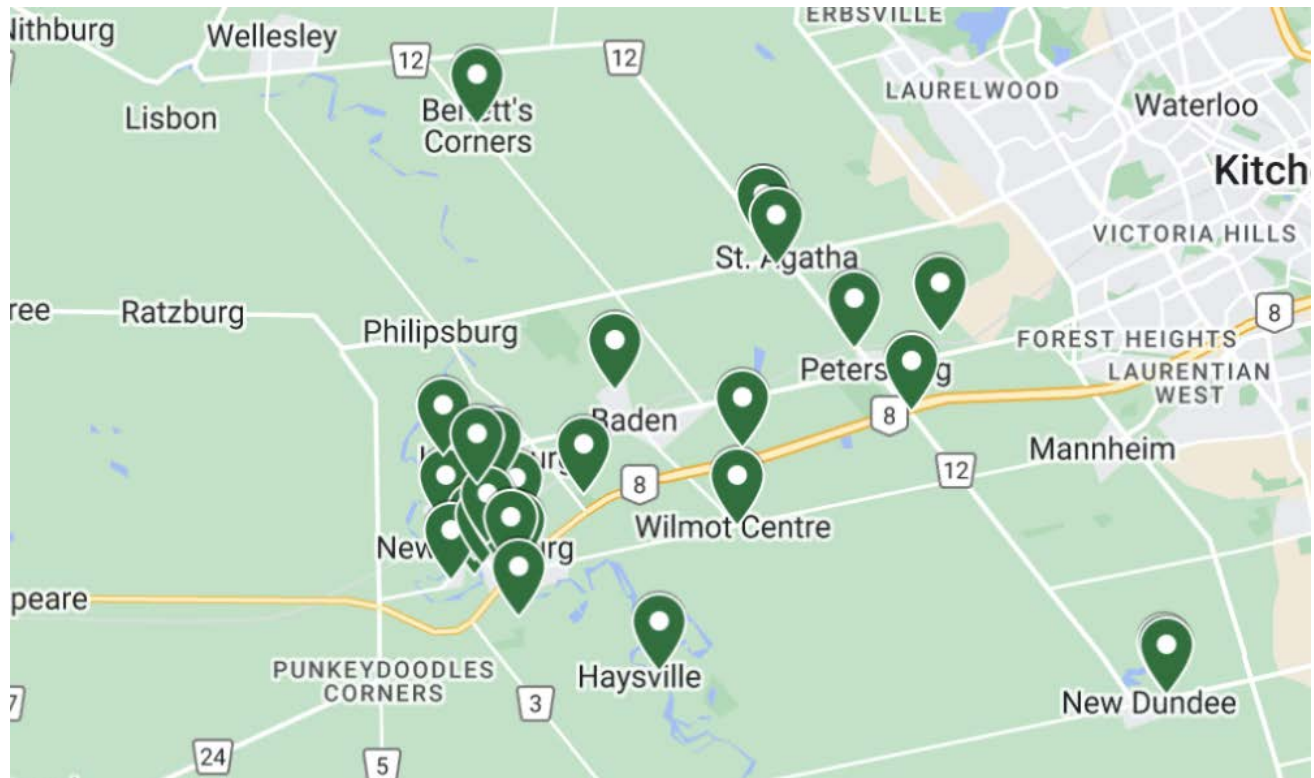
## Community Organizations



Community Organization Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
New Hamburg Board of Trade	Organization	121 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
New Hamburg Optimist Club	Organization	1367 Victoria St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 2K2
New Dundee Women's Institute	Organization	
Royal Canadian Legion, New Hamburg Branch	Organization	65 Boullee St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E1
Wilmot Horticultural Society	Organization	28 Bleams Rd E, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1G4
Wilmot Family Resource Centre	Organization	175 Waterloo St unit 1, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1S3
Baden Community Association	Organization	60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden, ON N3A 1A1

Community Organization Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
New Dundee Optimist Club	Organization	1028 Queen St, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
Mannheim Optimist Club	Organization	1467 Mannheim Rd, Wilmot, ON N0B
Wilmot Optimist Club	Organization	67 Victoria St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1W1
Wilmot Rotary Club	Organization	
Wilmot Lions Lioness Club	Organization	65 Boullee St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E1
Wilmot Agricultural Society	Organization	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9
Let's Tree Wilmot	Organization	Wilmot Horticultural Society c/o, 28 Bleams Rd E, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1G4
New Dundee Board of Trade	Organization	121 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
Petersburg Optimist Club	Organization	P.O. Box 111, Petersburg,
ON N0B 2H0, Canada		
New Hamburg Concert Band	Organization	121 Huron St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1K1
4H Club	Organization	1791 Erbs Rd, St. Agatha, ON N0B 2L0
Girl Guides	Organization	1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON N3A 0C4 and 3433 Huron Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3C4
Scouts	Organization	3433 Huron Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3C4

## Natural Heritage



Natural Heritage Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Mike Schout Wetlands	Landmarks and Public Spaces	28 Smith's Creek Dr, New Hamburg, ON N3A 0B3
William Scott Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	84 Bleams Rd W, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1G8
Oasis in the Centre	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1549 Wilmot Centre Rd, Baden, ON N3A 3K2
Nith River Promenade and Trail	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Unnamed Road, New Hamburg, ON N0B
New Dundee Community Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	667 Main St #621, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0
Captain MacCallum Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Captain MacCallum Drive, New Hamburg, Ontario
Christner Trail	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Hostetler Road to Christner Road, New Hamburg

Natural Heritage Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Constitution Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Hincks Street, New Hamburg, Ontario
Goldschmidt Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Goldschmidt Drive, Baden, Ontario
Greenwood Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Greenwood Dr, New Hamburg, ON N3A
Haysville Community Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	3433 Huron Rd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3C4
Kirkpatrick Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	230 Wilmot St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1H5
Laschinger Woods	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Ingold Ave & Laschinger Blvd, New Hamburg, ON N3A 2G8
Morningside Trail	Landmarks and Public Spaces	Bergey Ct, New Hamburg, ON N3A 2E4
Norm Hill Flats	Landmarks and Public Spaces	251 Jacob St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1B9
Norm Hill Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	75 Seyler St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E7
Optimist Youth Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	200 Theodore Schuler Blvd, New Hamburg, Ontario
Riverside Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	117 Riverside Drive, New Hamburg, Ontario
Walker Woods	Landmarks and Public Spaces	89 Bonaventure Drive, New Hamburg
Petersburg Community Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1338 Notre Dame Dr, St. Agatha, ON N3A 4H9
Petersburg Crown Lands	Landmarks and Public Spaces	2703 Queen St #2665, Wilmot, ON N0B 2H0
SararusPark	Landmarks and Public Spaces	23 Meadowview Pl, St. Agatha, ON N0B 2L0
St. Agatha Lions Community Park	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1791 Erbs Rd, St. Agatha, ON N0B 2L0
New Hamburg Arboretum	Landmarks and Public Spaces	470 Waterloo St, New Hamburg, ON N3A 4M1
New Dundee Park and Bandshell	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1370 Bridge St, New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0



Natural Heritage Assets	Asset Sub-Category	Address
Avon Trail	Landmarks and Public Spaces	2495 Township Rd 2 #2799, Wellesley, ON N0B 2T0
Baden Hills trails	Landmarks and Public Spaces	2733 Sandhills Rd, Wilmot, ON N3A 3B6
Petersburg Regional Forest	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1974 Snyder's Rd E, Petersburg, ON N0B 2H0
Schmidt Woods	Landmarks and Public Spaces	1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON N3A 0C4

## Intangible Cultural Resources

Intangible Cultural Resource Assets	Asset Sub-Category
Creative community and residents	Key Intangible Resources
Local German & Pennsylvania Dutch Heritage	Key Intangible Resources
Wilmot's diversifying community	Key Intangible Resources
Agricultural knowledge	Key Intangible Resources
Indigenous Knowledge, History, Traditions and Culture	Key Intangible Resources
Storytellers	Key Intangible Resources
Amish and Mennonite history	Key Intangible Resources
Local Live Music in Pubs	Key Intangible Resources

## Appendix C. Planning Policy Context

The following is a review of provincial and municipal planning and policy documents related to cultural development in the Township of Wilmot. The key documents below were reviewed for their relevance to cultural planning in the Township of Wilmot.

### Provincial Policies and Strategies

Report	Overview	Importance to Culture
Provincial Planning Statement (2024)	The Planning Act is provincial legislation that outlines all land use planning rules and regulations in Ontario. The Act outlines the roles and responsibilities of the province and municipalities.	<p>The Planning Act outlines the overarching protection of cultural interests. The Planning Act has identified various cultural assets to be protected across the province of Ontario through provincial and municipal legislation.</p> <p>These cultural assets include, but are not limited to: agricultural resources, architectural significance, archaeological significance, scientific interest, and the development of safe and healthy communities.</p> <p>In addition, the Planning Act mandates that municipalities create official plans that include provisions for cultural facilities and heritage conservation and emphasizes transparency and public involvement by requiring municipalities to make planning information available to the public.</p>
Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 <sup>23</sup>	The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) outlines policy direction focusing on provincial interests, with a specific focus on the provincial policies related to land use and development.	<p>The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) encourages municipalities to protect their culture by developing planning documents. These documents include cultural plans, archeological management plans, and heritage plans.</p> <p>During planning processes, authorities must engage with Indigenous communities to identify and protect cultural heritage. This process allows municipalities to preserve and enhance Indigenous culture and heritage.</p>

23 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, "Provincial Policy Statement" (2020), <https://tinyurl.com/5n8jvw8s>

Report	Overview	Importance to Culture
Ontario Heritage Act (R.S.O. 1990) <sup>24</sup>	The Ontario Heritage Act provides a set of heritage standards and guidelines for the province of Ontario.	<p>The Ontario Heritage Act highlights the importance of supporting, encouraging, and facilitating the conservation, preservation, and protection of heritage across the province.</p> <p>This includes the preservation, maintenance, reconstruction, and management of properties with historical, architectural, archeological, recreational, and aesthetic interests.</p>
Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling our Stories, Growing our Economy, 2015 [Archived] <sup>25</sup>	The Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling our Stories, Growing our Economy reflects the input received from stakeholder engagement and research. The strategy outlines a set of four (4) overarching goals for Ontario over the next five (5) years.	<p>The Ontario Culture Strategy identifies that the province of Ontario has a rich and diverse culture. This diverse culture has resulted in unique communities across the province of Ontario, many of which have a unique identity, character, and an enhanced sense of place and pride (p. 8).</p> <p>The Ontario Cultural Strategy outlines how these unique features will continue to be enhanced across the province. While Ontario's Culture Strategy has been implemented and is now archived, the basis of the plan can continue to help us understand the best practices for enhancing culture across the province of Ontario.</p>

24 Province of Ontario, Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>.

25 Government of Ontario (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport), "The Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling our Stories, Growing our Economy" (2015), [https://files.ontario.ca/ontarios\\_culture\\_strategy\\_en2\\_aoda\\_final-s.pdf](https://files.ontario.ca/ontarios_culture_strategy_en2_aoda_final-s.pdf)

## Regional Policies and Strategies

Report	Overview	Importance to Culture
Region of Waterloo Strategic Plan 2023-2027 <sup>26</sup>	The Region of Waterloo Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is a guide for the region as its population grows towards 1 million in the upcoming decades (currently at approximately 690,000 people).	The plan is divided into four key areas: addressing housing/homelessness crisis; growing sustainably while adapting to climate change; making services and opportunities more equitable for all; cultivating an organization that supports staff well-being and service to better support residents. The 2024 budget includes increased investments in housing, transit services, paramedic services and more.
Region of Waterloo Tourism Master Plan 2023-2030 <sup>27</sup>	The Waterloo Region Tourism Master Plan (2023-2030) aims to position the region as one of Ontario's premier destinations for leisure, business events, and sport hosting.	The plan emphasizes resilience and sustainability post-COVID-19 and identifies key growth pillars: Brand, Product, Access, Sustainability, and Communication. These pillars guide strategic initiatives to enhance tourism offerings, strengthen regional branding, improve transportation connectivity, promote sustainable tourism, and align community efforts. Collaboration with stakeholders and alignment with government plans are crucial for success.

26 Region of Waterloo, 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, Growing with Care, <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/strategic-plan-2023-2027.aspx>

27 Region of Waterloo, Tourism Master Plan, 2023-2030, <https://tinyurl.com/4zcchsr2>

## Municipal Policies and Strategies

### Township of Wilmot, Arts and Culture Master Plan, 2018<sup>28</sup>

Overview	Importance to Culture
<p>The former Arts and Culture Master Plan was intended to provide directions for culture in Wilmot over a period of five years (2019-2023).</p> <p>The plan was informed by engagement and by several municipal policies, foremost among which the Township of Wilmot Strategic Plan (2013), which lists goals for the community as well as strategies on how to achieve them.</p>	<p>The former Master Plan recommended establishing a Municipal Arts and Culture Advisory Committee; providing an increment to the funding available to the arts, culture and heritage organizations; creating additional municipally-provided incubator facilities for artists and craftspeople; creating additional staff resources devoted to the arts, culture and heritage that are specifically dedicated, and exploring the possibility of creating a medium sized performing arts facility.</p> <p>Finally, the Master Plan proposed a balanced approach, noting that Wilmot's geographic location, surrounded by large-scale municipalities, while it offered a potential opportunity to draw in visitors from these centres, also meant Wilmot residents have easy access to activities in other cities, so that Wilmot does not need to be "all things to all people."<sup>29</sup></p> <p>The new Arts and Culture Master Plan will provide updated directions.</p>

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28 Township of Wilmot, Arts and Culture Master Plan, <https://tinyurl.com/7wufj37c>

29 Ibidem, p. 18.

Township of Wilmot Strategic Plan update, 2024<sup>30</sup>

Overview	Importance to Culture
<p>The Township of Wilmot’s Strategic Plan 2024 Update offered a roadmap for future growth and development.</p> <p>This update built on the 2020 plan and reflected extensive community consultations conducted throughout 2024. Key goals include Financial Stability, Healthy Community, Prosperous Business &amp; Balanced Growth, Trustworthy Leadership. An effective Strategic Plan needs to achieve these outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That incorporates input from the community, Council, and staff;</li><li>• Clearly articulate overarching goals and priorities;</li><li>• Establish a “roadmap for action” providing direction for budgets, projects, and operations; and</li><li>• Accomplish buy-in and shared vision among Members of Council and the management team.</li></ul>	<p>The plan included recommendations pertaining to support for arts and culture, as part of its list of actions to be implemented to support the first goal, “quality of life.”</p> <p>Recommendations included in the plan were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a Public Art Policy</li><li>• Lead consultation on the Prime Ministers Path project</li><li>• Assess the inventory of cultural heritage landscapes throughout Wilmot and promote their long-term conservation and protection</li><li>• Identify and promote local history through external signage</li><li>• Investigate the feasibility of a performing arts facility as part of the 2024 Arts and Culture Master Plan update</li></ul>

30 Township of Wilmot, Strategic Plan Update, <https://tinyurl.com/4pwp53w9>

# Township of Wilmot, Community Services Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2024

Overview	Importance to Culture
<p>The Community Services Parks and Recreation Master Plan, approved by Council in September 2024, will guide decision-making across all aspects of parks and recreation over the next five to ten years.</p> <p>The plan offers recommendations for the management of green spaces and recreational facilities, in the following areas: aquatics; asset management; community centres and halls; ice pads; parks and outdoor facilities; programming and events; policy, administration and communication.</p>	<p>The plan recognizes the central importance of culture for residents’ well-being, and outlines several recommendations that are directly pertinent to arts and culture.</p> <p>The plan includes a series of recommendations for the use of community centres. Two options suggested for the future of the New Hamburg Community Centre, which has been at the centre of discussions between the Township and The Community Players, and recommends as a preferred option the “redesign of the arena component of the facility, on its existing footprint, to proactively accommodate multiple uses.”<sup>31</sup> In the short term, the plan recommends for the Township to enter into a joint venture agreement with The Community Players.</p> <p>Additionally, the plan includes recommendations for programming, oriented around five core principles: something for everyone, affordability and accountability, partnerships, sustainability, quality assurance. Recommended actions are meant to ensure the continued assessment of service delivery, collaborative reasoning, and the provision of programs meeting community needs.</p> <p>This section also recognizes the role played by third-party event organizers in bringing together residents and drawing tourists. It suggests two key recommendations to increase Township support for event organizers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Meet with large event organizers twice annually (‘Event Fair’); once to assist with event preparation and administration, and once following the event to record opportunities to improve in subsequent years.”</li> <li>• “Create a database at the point of Event booking for ‘recurring’ events that allow hosts to rollover requirements from year-to-year (where possible) with a view to reducing annual administrative burden.”<sup>32</sup></li> </ul>

31 Ibidem, p. 20.  
32 Ibidem, p. 61.

Overview	Importance to Culture
	<p>Other recommendations pertinent to culture, which will be further explored in the updated Arts and Culture Master Plan, include<sup>33</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of events programming, maximizing the use of resources when Castle Kilbride is closed for visitors: "Consider options to increase the coordination and provision of events with Castle Kilbride. This could include outreach for event hosting in other locations, enhanced hosting of special events, filming, tours, movie nights etc. Consideration for more STEAM programs and events should be part of the master plan process."</li> <li>• Increasing public art installations.</li> <li>• Enhancing tourism through increased communication on key assets: "Work with Economic Development (tourism) to assess options to promote destination day trips; Castle Kilbride, Mike Shout Wetlands Preserve, New Hamburg Water Wheel (in conjunction with the Grand River Conservation Authority)".</li> <li>• "Assess the provision of annual Canada Day celebration to ensure appropriate resourcing – both for the Township and if being supported by volunteers."</li> <li>• "Work with Service Clubs and organizations to determine if similar events are needed in each settlement area, if there are options to share or merge resources, if some events have lost their historic appeal. Assist with new areas of focus as identified."</li> </ul>

33 Ibidem, p. 62.



## Appendix D. Research Findings

### Demographics and Population Trends in Wilmot

This section provides an overview of the population demographics of Wilmot, based on the most recent census data from Statistics Canada<sup>34</sup> and the community profile information gathered by the Township of Wilmot development services.<sup>35</sup>

Wilmot Township's total population was estimated at 21,825 as of 2024 and is expected to increase to 25,055 by the year 2034. Situated in Waterloo Region in proximity to Kitchener-Waterloo, the Township is comprised of a mix of farmland and urban areas, with the majority of residents living in New Hamburg (approximately 9,000 residents in 2023) and Baden (approximately 5,000), followed by the smaller communities of St. Agatha, Petersburg, Mannheim, New Dundee, Philipsburg, Shingletown, Wilmot Centre, Haysville, Luxemburg, Lisbon, Sunfish Lake and Foxboro Green. The current population density is 117 people per square kilometre.

#### Age

According to the 2021 Census, the Township of Wilmot has a diverse age distribution, with a significant proportion of the population in the working-age category (15-64 years), which suggests a stable labour force. The youth population, comprising children and adolescents aged 0-14 years, represents a smaller segment of the population, reflecting a common trend in rural and suburban areas where family sizes tend to be smaller. In contrast, the senior population (aged 65 years and older) is increasing, in line with national trends in Canada, which could have important implications for community services and healthcare. The median age in Wilmot is higher than the national average, indicating a demographic shift towards an older population. Specifically, about 18% of the population is aged 0-14 years, approximately 60% falls within the 15-64 age range, and roughly 20% of residents are 65 years or older.

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34 Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population"

35 Township of Wilmot Development Services, Population Estimates, December 31, 2023, <https://tinyurl.com/575mw3ad>

## Percentage of the population by broad age groups 2021<sup>36</sup>

Location	15-64 Years Old (%)	0-14 Years Old (%)	65 Years and Older (%)
Wilmot Township	60.2%	18.8%	21.0%
City of Cambridge	66.3%	17.7%	16.0%
City of Kitchener	67.8%	17.5%	14.7%
City of Waterloo	70.1%	14.5%	15.4%
Township of North Dumfries	65.0%	18.3%	16.7%
Township of Wellesley	61.5%	24.5%	14.1%
Township of Woolwich	61.6%	20.8%	17.6%
Perth County	61.1%	17.7%	21.1%
City of Guelph	67.2%	16.3%	16.4%
Blandford-Blenheim Township	65.1%	17.5%	17.4%
Ontario	65.6%	15.8%	18.5%
Canada	64.8%	16.3%	19.0%

**Working Age (15-64 Years) – 60.2%:** Wilmot has a lower percentage of working-aged residents compared to most neighbouring cities like Cambridge (66.3%) and Kitchener (67.8%). That said, it is similar to rural townships like Wellesley (61.5%) and Woolwich (61.6%).

**Children (0-14) – 18.8%:** The percentage of children in Wilmot is higher than the Ontario (15.8%) and Canada averages (16.3%), reflecting the presence of numerous families in the area. This percentage is comparable to North Dumfries (18.3%) and slightly less than Wellesley (24.5%).

**Seniors (65+) – 21%:** Wilmot has a larger senior population than urban centers like Kitchener (14.7%) and Waterloo (15.4%) and exceeds both the provincial (18.5%) and national (19%) averages, aligning more closely with Perth County (21.1%).

## Wilmot Township Income Analysis

### Median Household Income

The median after tax household income in Wilmot is approximately \$120,400 annually, a figure that exceeds the provincial average, as outlined in the table below, based on the 2021 Canadian Census.<sup>37</sup>

Location	Average After-tax Income of Economic Family in 2020 (\$)
Wilmot Township	\$120,400
City of Cambridge	\$104,400
City of Kitchener	\$102,600
City of Waterloo	\$120,800
Township of North Dumfries	\$131,400
Township of Wellesley	\$125,600
Township of Woolwich	\$125,000
Perth County	\$100,500
Blandford-Blenheim Township	\$111,800
City of Guelph	\$110,700
Ontario	\$112,200

The median after-tax income of Canadian families and unattached individuals was \$68,400 in 2021.

In comparison:

- **Above Provincial Average:** Wilmot Township's average after-tax income (\$120,400) exceeds the Ontario average, highlighting its affluence.
- **Comparison with Urban Centers:** Wilmot's average after tax income is higher than nearby cities such as Cambridge (\$104,400), Kitchener (\$102,600), and Perth County (\$100,500), reflecting a more prosperous population.
- **Comparable to Nearby Affluent Rural Areas and to Waterloo:** Wilmot's income is similar to other affluent rural municipalities like Wellesley (\$125,600) and Woolwich (\$125,000), though slightly below North Dumfries (\$131,400). Wilmot's income is nearly equal to the City of Waterloo (\$120,800), a major economic and academic hub.
- **Regional Affluence:** Wilmot's economic stability is likely supported by high-income professions, suburban living, and lower housing costs compared to urban centers.

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<sup>37</sup> Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, 2021,  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230502/dq230502a-eng.htm>

The income levels in the Township of Wilmot, specifically in areas like New Hamburg and Baden, reflect a relatively affluent population, largely influenced by the proximity to Kitchener-Waterloo and the availability of professional employment opportunities in that region. Its strong income levels, comparable to neighbouring affluent areas, make it an attractive location for families seeking financial stability and a high quality of life.

The higher income level in Wilmot suggests a generally elevated standard of living and reflects the presence of professionals who, while employed in the rapidly growing industries of Kitchener-Waterloo, choose to reside in more suburban or rural communities such as Wilmot. Indeed, a high proportion of Wilmot residents commute to other communities for work: according to 2021 Census Data, 54% commute to a different census subdivision within the census division of residence and 14.6% commute to a different census division within their province of residence, as opposed 34.2% and 18.3% who do so in Waterloo Region and 17.3% and 23.5% who do so in Ontario.

## **Income Distribution**

While the median household income in Wilmot is relatively high, income distribution is not uniform across all residents. Certain areas, particularly those with older or rural populations, may exhibit lower average income levels. Many households in the township are dual-income, contributing to the higher-than-average overall household income.

Additionally, Wilmot benefits from a long history of family-owned farms and agriculture-based businesses.

## Ethnicity

The ethnic composition of the Township of Wilmot, particularly in areas such as New Hamburg and Baden, remains predominantly white, though increasing diversity has been observed in recent years. Below are detailed statistics on the region's ethnic demographics:

- **Caucasian Population:** Approximately 96% of Wilmot's population identifies as a non-visible minority.<sup>38</sup> This percentage, significantly higher than the Ontario average (62.8%), is comparable to other neighbouring small rural municipalities, such as the Townships of Wellesley (97.5%), North Dumfries (93.3%), and Blandford-Blenheim (96.8%).
- **Visible Minority Groups:** Visible minorities constitute roughly 4% of the population, with notable groups including:
  - **South Asian:** This group is the largest among visible minorities, in line with broader national trends in Canada.
  - **South East Asian:** This is the second largest visible minority.
  - **Black and African:** A smaller yet growing community, particularly among families who have relocated from urban centers in search of a suburban lifestyle.
  - **Latin American and Asian:** These groups are also present, though in smaller numbers.
- **Indigenous Population:** The Indigenous population, comprising First Nations, and Métis, represents a small fraction of the total population, approximately 2%. Efforts are underway to promote cultural recognition and inclusion through community initiatives.
- **Recent Trends:** The township has seen a gradual increase in ethnic diversity, driven by immigration and urban sprawl from the nearby metropolitan areas of Kitchener-Waterloo. This trend is expected to persist as the township continues to grow and attract new residents.
- **Languages Spoken:** While English remains the predominant language spoken at home (about 98%), there is a growing number of residents who speak other languages, including German, Spanish, Punjabi, and Mandarin, reflecting the multicultural composition of newer populations.

The below tables summarize the latest available census data for Wilmot, and for comparable municipalities<sup>39</sup>:

## 2021 Census Data – Ethnic or Cultural Origin

Location	Total Caucasian Population (%)	Total Visible Minority (%)	Indigenous Population (%)
Wilmot Township	96%	4%	1%
City of Cambridge	76.1%	23.9%	1.9%
City of Kitchener	66.4%	31.7%	1.9%
City of Waterloo	63.7%	35.0%	1.3%
Township of North Dumfries	93.3%	6.7%	1%
Township of Wellesley	97.5%	1.5%	1%
Township of Woolwich	95%	5.0%	1.2%
Perth County	96%	2.5%	1.5%
City of Guelph	72.3%	26.1%	1.6%
Blandford-Blenheim Township	96.8%	1.7%	1.5%
Ontario	62.8%	34.4%	2.8%
Canada	67.4%	26.6%	5.0%

## 2021 Census Data – Visible Minorities

Location	Largest Visible Minority Group	Smallest Visible Minority Group	Other Present Group
Wilmot Township	South Asian (3.5%)	Japanese (0.1%)	Black (1.5%), Chinese (1.0%), Filipino (0.8%), Latin American (0.7%), Southeast Asian (0.5%)
City of Cambridge	South Asian (11.7%)	Korean population (0.2%)	Latin American (1.7%), Filipino (1.3%), Southeast Asian (1.2%), Arab (1.1%), and Chinese (0.9%) populations.

39 Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

Location	Largest Visible Minority Group	Smallest Visible Minority Group	Other Present Group
City of Kitchener	South Asian (9.9%)	Black population, (6.9%)	Latin American (3.1%), Southeast Asian (3.7%), Chinese (1.8%), Arab (2.4%), West Asian (1.3%), and Filipino (1.1%) populations.
City of Waterloo	South Asian (10.7%)	Filipino (1.0%)	Chinese (9.2%), Black (3.1%), Arab (2.7%), Latin American (1.9%), West Asian (1.7%), Southeast Asian (1.4%), and Korean (1.4%) populations.
Township of North Dumfries	South Asian (2.6%)	Japanese (0.1%)	Chinese (0.5%), Black (0.9%), Filipino (0.1%), Arab (0.6%), Latin American (0.7%), Southeast Asian (0.5%), and Korean (0.0%) populations.
Township of Wellesley	South Asian (0.5%)	Korean (0.1%)	Black (0.3%), Chinese (0.2%), and Filipino (0.2%) populations.
Township of Woolwich	South Asian (1.5%)	Japanese (0.1%)	Black (0.9%), Chinese (0.7%), Filipino (0.5%), Latin American (0.4%), Southeast Asian (0.3%), and Arab (0.2%) populations.
Perth County	South Asian (0.7%)	Filipino (0.2%)	Black (0.6%) and Arab (0.4%) populations.
City of Guelph	South Asian (6.3%)	Japanese (0.1%)	Black (3.6%), Chinese (3.0%), Filipino (2.1%), Arab (2.0%), Latin American (1.8%), Southeast Asian (1.5%), West Asian (1.0%), Korean (0.5%), and multiple visible minorities (0.7%).
Blandford-Blenheim Township	South Asian (0.5%)	Chinese (0.1%)	Black (0.4%), Filipino (0.3%), and Latin American (0.2%) populations.

Location	Largest Visible Minority Group	Smallest Visible Minority Group	Other Present Group
Ontario	South Asian (10.7%)	Japanese (0.1%)	<p>Chinese: 6.1% (approximately 867,000 individuals)</p> <p>Black: 5.5% (approximately 783,000 individuals)</p> <p>Filipino: 3.0% (approximately 426,000 individuals)</p> <p>Arab: 2.9% (approximately 413,000 individuals)</p> <p>Latin American: 2.6% (approximately 370,000 individuals)</p> <p>Southeast Asian: 2.2% (approximately 313,000 individuals)</p> <p>West Asian: 1.6% (approximately 228,000 individuals)</p> <p>Korean: 0.8% (approximately 114,000 individuals)</p> <p>Visible minority, n.i.e.: 0.5% (approximately 71,000 individuals)</p> <p>Multiple visible minorities: 0.9% (approximately 128,000 individuals)</p>



Location	Largest Visible Minority Group	Smallest Visible Minority Group	Other Present Group
Canada	South Asian (7.1%)	Japanese (0.3%)	<p>Chinese: 4.7% (approximately 1,715,770 individuals)</p> <p>Black: 4.3% (approximately 1,547,870 individuals)</p> <p>Filipino: 2.6% (approximately 957,355 individuals)</p> <p>Arab: 1.9% (approximately 694,015 individuals)</p> <p>Latin American: 1.6% (approximately 580,235 individuals)</p> <p>Southeast Asian: 1.1% (approximately 390,340 individuals)</p> <p>West Asian: 1.0% (approximately 360,495 individuals)</p> <p>Korean: 0.6% (approximately 218,140 individuals)</p> <p>Multiple visible minorities: 0.9% (approximately 331,805 individuals)</p> <p>Visible minority, n.i.e.: 0.5% (approximately 172,885 individuals)</p>

## Economic and Labour Market in Wilmot

The table below shows the percentage of the labour force aged 15 years and over by industry according to 2021 Census Data in Wilmot, Waterloo Region, Ontario, and Canada.

### 2021 Census Data – Percentage of the labour force aged 15 years and over by industry

Geographic Area/Industry	Wilmot (%)	Waterloo Region (%)	Ontario (%)	Canada (%)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	4.7%	1.4%	1.4%	2.3%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	1.2%
Utilities	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%
Construction	12%	7.1%	7.3%	7.6%
Manufacturing	11.6%	15.1%	8.9%	8%
Wholesale trade	3.5%	3.6%	3.3%	3.2%
Retail trade	8.9%	10.4%	10.8%	11.1%
Transportation and warehousing	3.3%	4.7%	5.1%	5.1%
Information and cultural industries	2.2%	2.6%	2.3%	2.1%
Finance and insurance	6%	5.7%	5.4%	4.2%
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.6%	1.5%	2.1%	1.8%
Professional, scientific and technical services	7.4%	9.2%	9.2%	8.1%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	3.2%	4.1%	4.4%	4.1%
Educational services	8.7%	8.5%	7.2%	7.3%
Health care and social assistance	10.8%	10%	11.6%	12.7%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.9%	1.3%	1.8%	1.8%
Accommodation and food services	4%	4.8%	5.3%	5.6%
Other services (except public administration)	3.4%	3.4%	3.8%	4.1%
Public administration	4.8%	3.1%	5.8%	6.2%

The construction and manufacturing sectors play a key role, employing approximately 12% and 11.6% of the local workforce.

The prominence of manufacturing reflects the vitality of this industry in the Waterloo Region overall: Manufacturing is the region's largest sector and the Waterloo Region manufacturing sector is the fourth largest in Canada<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, the high percentage of workers employed in the construction industry is explained in part by the rapid growth of Waterloo. Between 2016 and 2021, Waterloo's population grew by 9.7%, at a significantly higher rate than the national (5.2%) and regional (5.8%) rates.<sup>41</sup> In 2023, Waterloo was the fastest-growing community in Canada, boasting a remarkable growth rate of 6.15%.<sup>42</sup> This rapid expansion has directly contributed to a surge in construction activity, fueled by significant residential developments and ambitious infrastructure projects.

Other industries employing a significant portion of the local labour force include, in decreasing order, healthcare and social assistance (10.8%), retail trade (8.9%), educational services (8.7%), professional, scientific and technical services (7.4%).

Reflecting Wilmot's agricultural roots, the percentage of the workforce employed in agriculture (4.7%) is notably higher than regional (1.4%) and provincial (1.4%) percentages. In 2021, 264 farms were recensed in Wilmot, out of a total of 1,409 in Waterloo Region, with Wilmot being the third community in the region, behind Wellesley (438) and Woolwich (442) in terms of number of farms.<sup>43</sup> Agriculture provided a total revenue of 181.9 million dollars in Wilmot in 2020.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the proportions of workers employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation (1.9%) and information and cultural industries (2.2%) are comparable to the regional, provincial and national rates.

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40 Region of Waterloo website, Diverse resilient economy, <https://tinyurl.com/yp9n9xpf>

41 Statistics Canada, Censuses of 2016 and 2021.

42 Statistics Canada, data summarized by Waterloo EDC, "Waterloo is Canada's Fastest-Growing Population", published May 23, 2024, <https://www.waterlooeedc.ca/blog/waterloo-fastest-growing-community-canada-2024>

43 Region of Waterloo, Census Bulletin 2021, Agriculture.

44 Ibidem.

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