

Stakeholder Focus Group Summary

From August 10 – 12, 2010, six focus group sessions were held at the City of Kelowna's Cultural Services boardroom (#133 – 1835 Gordon Drive). Each session consisted of 12 invited guests, representing one of the following community organizations and/or groups:

Participants

- Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art
- Arts Council of the Central Okanagan
- arts educators
- Ballet Kelowna
- Central Okanagan Foundation
- Central Okanagan Heritage Society
- Chamber Music Kelowna
- Okanagan Choral Society
- Cool Arts
- Downtown Kelowna Association
- Economic Development Commission
- Festivals Kelowna
- French Cultural Centre
- Fresh Outlook Foundation
- Habitat
- Intercultural Society
- Interior Health
- Kelowna Art Gallery
- Kelowna City Band
- Kelowna City Council
- Kelowna City Staff
- Kelowna Community Music School
- Kelowna Community Resources
- Kelowna Museums
- local media
- Okanagan Regional Library
- Okanagan Symphony
- Okanagan Wine Festivals
- Public Art Committee
- Rutland Parks Society
- Rutland Residents Association
- Theatre Kelowna Society
- Tourism Kelowna
- UBC- Okanagan
- Viva Musica
- visual and performing artists
- Westbank First Nations
- young artists
- Youth Arts Ambassador

Focus Group Purpose

The focus group sessions started the public dialogue to develop the Kelowna Strategic Cultural Plan. Two other community sessions are planned (see "*Next Steps*"). The purpose was to hear from key community stakeholder groups and individuals about the current cultural scene in Kelowna, its strengths, weaknesses and priorities with the aim to draft plan goals and directions for further community discussion.

Focus Group Responses

Each session began with a brief description of the City's current support and funding for arts, culture and heritage, and an overview of the City's Cultural Services Branch (i.e. mandate and staffing). Following introductions, the participant discussion focused around 3 to 7 general questions.

The summary responses present key points under each of the following discussion questions. The responses are generalized and paraphrased for practicality. To provide an easy to read overview not all comments have been included. Should you wish to read more, the complete focus group session notes are available on the web at www.kelowna.ca/culture or by contacting Cultural Services at 250.469.8474.

Question 1: What does the term “culture mean to you?

- A community at a particular time and place
- The public’s preferences in art and manners
- All shared knowledge and values
- What we wear, read, listen to, and buy
- Multiplicity of a community, its people, history, cultural traditions and activities

Question 2: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Kelowna’s cultural scene?

Strengths

- Excellent facilities in a Cultural District created from community input
- High level of municipal investment
- Diversity of organizations and events
- Strong cultural community passion
- Untapped opportunities and new venues

Weaknesses

- Lack of public awareness about where to find information about what is going on
- People from other cultures are not participating in community activities
- Young people not involved or engaged
- Source of operating funding is an ongoing challenge
- Media’s coverage of community events lacks consistency

Opportunities

- The business community is talking about taking part in cultural enterprises
- Coordinated and consistent information improves community awareness
- Local tourist based industries represent an untapped resource
- Increased downtown mixed uses enhance cultural development
- Streamlined policies and regulations draw investment

Question 3: What does the City of Kelowna need to do to support and enhance its cultural resources?

- Maintain existing resources, funding commitments and build on them
- Integrate arts and culture into the City’s day to day business
- Encourage private/public partnerships that support, enhance and fund community programs
- Advance ongoing positive dialogue about arts and culture
- Ensure that cultural opportunities are available to all ages and diverse groups

Question 4: How does Kelowna benefit from the presence of culture?

- Develops a sense of identity, belonging and puts the community on the map
- Attracts innovation and technological investment and employment
- Brings different cultures together and improves the quality of life
- Creates a balanced, healthy and sustainable community
- Builds tolerance, allows us to explore and imagine, and brings out individual talents

Question 5: What is your vision of Kelowna as a center for innovation, creativity and artistic achievement?

- A community where cultural diversity lives and is celebrated
- An open minded and supportive environment that allows for diverse choices
- Understanding by the City and community of their roles and responsibilities

- Collaboration, interaction, involvement and learning among all age groups
- Downtown and cultural district is one inclusive place

Question 6: Who/what agency should be the “voice” of culture in Kelowna? Who would be the best champion?

- City leads, facilitates and supports all forms of cultural endeavours
- Community leaders voice the same positive message
- An arm’s length independent group advocates and represents community interests and priorities
- Business community is a key benefactor of cultural programming
- Local media consistently writes, reports and informs the public about community activities
- Ensure that Kelowna’s role as a cultural centre is promoted through many outlets, including non-profits, government agencies, businesses, community events, etc.

Question 7: Top 3 cultural priorities for the City to work on in the next 5 years?

- Continued and coordinated information leads to a well-informed public
- Multi-year planning maintains and advances local vitality and growth
- Community outreach ensures equality of access and involvement, especially at the neighbourhood level
- Bring a cultural component to all City endeavours
- Encourage, support and develop collaborations, including with wineries, agriculture and recreational/sports events
- Value and support diversity
- Move the farmer’s market into the city centre
- Better use of the Cultural District – more connected to surrounding area including the downtown, waterfront

Next Steps – Ongoing Public Discussions

There are more opportunities to participate in the development of the City’s cultural plan.

- Visit the City’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/kelownaculturalplan and join in the cultural plan discussions.
- Attend the September 22nd, 2010 workshop to be held at the Kelowna Art Gallery, 4:30 – 6:30 pm to discuss and comment on the outcomes of the focus group sessions (i.e. draft cultural plan vision, goals and future directions).
- Go to the public open house to be held later in the fall to view and comment on the City’s draft strategic cultural plan.

In addition, your comments are welcome on an ongoing basis at the Cultural Services office by submitting your thoughts to culture@kelowna.ca

Thank you for those who have participated to date, and looking forward to hearing from you who have not done so.

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