



KELOWNA CREATES CULTURAL PLAN

Vision, Strategic Priorities and Key Actions Summary

syilx/Okanagan Territorial Acknowledgement

The City of Kelowna is committed to reconciliation and building meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the syilx Okanagan People.

The City of Kelowna is strengthened by the rich history and ongoing contributions of the syilx Okanagan Nation, whose ancestors have cared for these lands since time immemorial. We also recognize the many Indigenous Peoples who call Kelowna home today, as well as those from around the world who contribute to the city's vibrancy and diversity.

Acknowledging the land is an act of respect and gratitude to the syilx Okanagan People, whose stewardship has shaped these lands. It reminds us of our shared responsibility to honour this history, deepen our understanding of the past, and actively engage in reconciliation for a more inclusive and equitable future.



Vision and Strategic Priorities



Vision and Strategic Priorities

Overall key themes that emerged from community, key interest-holders, Indigenous partners, and City of Kelowna staff engagement helped to shape the updated *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan*. The Vision, Values and Drivers, and Strategic Priorities were then further developed in collaboration with the Community and Staff Working Groups.

Vision

Kelowna Creates

Kelowna Creates...Together.

Kelowna Creates...Every Day.

Kelowna Creates...Culture.

Kelowna is a leader in cultural vibrancy in British Columbia, building on our shared success to shape a sustainable creative future.

We invest in a creative ecosystem that strengthens our economy, inspires innovation, and enriches our quality of life and pride of place.

Together, creativity and community nurture the belonging, connection, and well-being that define our city.

*Photos: Creative Okanagan
(Page 3) Artist in Residence: Erin Scott and Cole Mash
(Front Cover, clockwise from top left) Global Citizen Events Society:
Taste of Home, Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, ARTSCO
Light-Up Kelowna (Back Cover, Clockwise from top left) Rotary
Centre for the Arts: ARTSCO KCT Urban Screens*

Values and Drivers

- **Innovation**
We support creative experimentation, emerging artistic practices, and bold ideas, encouraging thoughtful risks that strengthen Kelowna's creative ecosystem.
- **Curiosity**
We invest in lifelong learning through arts, culture and heritage, supporting programming, mentorship, and cross-disciplinary collaboration that invite people of all ages and backgrounds to explore and share knowledge.
- **Inclusion**
We make space for diverse voices, perspectives, and cultural traditions; supporting intercultural exchange, equitable access, and artistic work that strengthens belonging across our communities.
- **Identity**
We recognize artists and cultural workers as shapers of our city's character, celebrating the heritage and creative expression that gives Kelowna its distinct sense of place and story.
- **Resilience**
We uphold arts, culture and heritage as essential infrastructure, supporting sustainable careers, stable organizations, and adaptive cultural spaces so the sector can respond to change and continue contributing to Kelowna's vitality.
- **Community Wellness**
We prioritize culturally, physically, and psychologically safer environments in venues, programs, and partnerships; supporting artistic work that contributes to mental health, social connection, and collective well-being.



Photo: Okanagan Symphony Orchestra

Rationale and Overview of the Four Priority Areas

The four priority areas provide an integrated framework for advancing culture in Kelowna. They reflect the conditions needed for a strong cultural ecosystem:

- a stable foundation of people, spaces, and access;
- meaningful connections between culture, communities, and place;
- greater recognition of the value and impact of arts, culture, and heritage; and
- the capacity to innovate in response to social, economic, environmental, and technological change.

Together, these priorities move the *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan* beyond individual programs or projects and toward a coordinated approach to long-term cultural development. They recognize that cultural vitality depends not only on creative production, but also on leadership, infrastructure, affordability, participation, partnerships, public awareness, policy alignment, investment, and future readiness.

How the Priorities Work Together

The four priorities are intentionally interconnected and cyclical. A strong foundation enables broader community connection; connection builds participation, visibility, and co-creation of a shared vision; amplification demonstrates value and informs better decisions; and innovation ensures the cultural sector can adapt, grow, and remain relevant and grounded over time. As each priority advances, it reinforces the others, co-creating a continuous cycle of cultural vitality, community belonging, and creative momentum.

Cultural Performance Indicators

A number of cultural performance indicators are provided as a menu of KPIs commonly used for measuring cultural development performance within municipalities and arts and cultural organizations. The City and user groups may choose which indicators best apply depending on the action item and are encouraged to balance both quantitative and qualitative measures to reflect a holistic view in the implementation of the *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan*.

Planning Framework

The updated *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan* aims to uplift our City's resiliency and vibrancy by creating a focused architecture that will set the path forward for Kelowna becoming a creative city.

Strategic Priorities, each with a specific rationale, reflect the key focus areas and desired outcomes that emerged from the strategic planning process.

Objectives are outcome-driven and present what is expected to be accomplished over the life of the plan. Each objective is realized through Key Actions.

Key Actions support the objectives and may reflect new initiatives as well as ongoing work. These actions may include specific items consistent with cultural plan implementation, while other actions may be higher level in keeping with the nature of development work. These actions also reflect the many contributions of the community, Indigenous partners, staff, and align with cultural sector trends.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities reflect the interconnected nature of implementing the *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan*. The City, community groups, arts and cultural organizations, other levels of government, and business in the private sector all play a role along with audiences and patrons and participants in the successful implementation of the cultural plan and are served by the plan. In the spirit of community cultural development, actions will involve one or more of these following interest-holders identified by their respective icon.

Photo: Ponderosa Fibre Arts Guild




Community groups, including grassroots organizations as well as Indigenous and equity-deserving individuals


Artists and Cultural Workers


Non-profit Organizations


The City and Other Levels of Government


Private Sector

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



BUILD
 Build on a Solid Foundation

Core conditions that allow culture to thrive will be prioritized. There will be a focus on strengthening the people, organizations, resources, spaces, and access points that support cultural activity across the city.

By investing in leadership, capacity, infrastructure, affordability, and equitable participation, Kelowna can retain creative talent, support sustainable organizations, and ensure residents can take part in cultural life regardless of background, income, age, ability, or neighbourhood.



AMPLIFY
 Amplify for Impact

Arts, culture, and heritage need to be better understood, measured, communicated, and integrated into civic decision-making. This priority focuses on storytelling, data, advocacy, impact measurement, coordinated communications, and stronger alignment with planning, policy, investment, and service delivery.

By amplifying the value of culture, Kelowna can strengthen public awareness, inform better decisions, and demonstrate how cultural development contributes to social, economic, and community well-being.



CONNECT
 Connect the Broader Community

Culture is most powerful when it is visible, accessible, and connected to everyday community life. It focuses on growing audiences, animating public spaces and neighbourhoods, connecting to the land, strengthening the Cultural District, recognizing the relationship of the syilx/Okanagan people to place and identity, and creating partnerships and reciprocal relationships that link arts and culture with business, tourism, education, technology, wellness, recreation, and community development.

By connecting culture to people and place, Kelowna can deepen belonging, expand participation, and strengthen local identity.



INNOVATE
 Innovate for a Stronger Future

Culture is positioned as a driver of adaptation, creativity, and future resilience. This priority focuses on emerging trends, creative worker attraction and retention, environmental sustainability, digital innovation, responsible use of technology, arts-based well-being, creative enterprise development, market growth, fair compensation, financial resilience, and advancing Indigenous cultural knowledge, perspectives, and creative expression.

By supporting innovation, Kelowna can help the cultural sector respond to change, create new opportunities, strengthen cultural identity, and contribute to a stronger, more inclusive, and resilient local economy.



BUILD

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

Build on a Solid Foundation



Photo: Cultural District: Rotary Centre for the Arts

Rationale

Rooted in the rich cultural heritage and enduring presence of the syilx/Okanagan people, Kelowna's identity has long been built by the stories, knowledge, and creativity of this land. In recent years, Kelowna's creative industries continue to grow, establishing itself more prominently among Canadian mid-sized cities. In 2026, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Business Data Lab ranked Kelowna as #2 Overall in its Arts Vibrancy Index, a comparison of 22 census metropolitan areas. Kelowna was recently designated as Canada's first UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, and is becoming a destination for prominent Western Canadian music events. The coming years present an opportunity to build on Kelowna's increasing visibility and strong reputation, further solidifying its position as a creative city.

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Build cultural leadership and capacity.

OBJECTIVE 2: Build and maintain cultural infrastructure and spaces.

OBJECTIVE 3: Build equitable access to cultural life, participation, and creative experiences.

OBJECTIVE 1: Build cultural leadership and capacity.

OUTCOME: Resiliency, Vibrancy & Sustainability

Kelowna fosters a resilient and future-ready cultural sector where organizations, artists, and creative workers have the capacity, resources, and career pathways to succeed. Through leadership development, workforce supports, mentorship, education and equitable access to opportunities, the community retains creative talent and strengthens a vibrant cultural economy.

Key Actions

1. Facilitate access to shared resources that strengthen organizational and leadership capacity, supporting sector sustainability.
2. Offer training and resources on social enterprise development, sponsorship, emerging and alternative funding models that enhance adaptability and financial stability within the sector.
3. Support capacity-building initiatives tailored to meeting organizations at various stages in their lifecycle.
4. Create initiatives to address burnout and workload pressures in the cultural sector, focusing on staffing sustainability and fair compensation strategies.
5. Develop targeted mentorship networks and professional development opportunities for creative workers that provide support at all career stages.
6. Foster partnerships between post-secondary institutions and the cultural sector to align student training, skills development, and hands-on applied learning with emerging career opportunities, practical experience, and community leadership.
7. Reduce barriers to resources, career pathways, and professional advancement for indigenous, syilx/Okanagan and equity-deserving artists, emerging artists, and underrepresented artistic disciplines.



Photo: Inspired City Summit

OBJECTIVE 2:
Build and maintain cultural infrastructure and spaces.

OUTCOME:
Resiliency & Future-focused

Kelowna's cultural spaces and infrastructure are maintained, adapted, and expanded to strengthen Kelowna as a creative city, with flexible spaces that enable artists, organizations, and communities to create, experiment, innovate, and connect.

Key Actions

1. Identify and increase access to affordable, flexible production, exhibition and studio spaces for artists, creative entrepreneurs and workers.
2. Connect property owners and developers with artists and community groups to activate underused spaces.
3. Review and amend zoning bylaws, event permitting and booking processes to better support community cultural activities, creative use, and arts entrepreneurship.
4. Ensure cultural facilities and spaces reflect and welcome Kelowna's changing community in how they are designed, programmed, and activated.
5. Prioritize equitable access to cultural infrastructure and spaces across neighbourhoods.
6. Protect, conserve, and advocate for the preservation of sylix heritage, intangible cultural heritage, built heritage, cultural facilities, and cultural infrastructure.



Photo: Knowles Heritage Park

OBJECTIVE 3:
Build equitable access to cultural life, participation, and creative experiences.

OUTCOME:
Sense of Identity, Belonging & Inclusion

Kelowna is a community where cultural participation is accessible, affordable, and inclusive, and where people can easily find and engage in creative experiences that reflect their interests and strengthen belonging across all neighbourhoods.

Key Actions

1. Identify and address gaps in cultural programming to reflect demographic change, affordability needs, and evolving community priorities through ongoing engagement and feedback.
2. Reduce systemic, institutional, and geographic barriers to cultural participation, creative expression, and decision-making, ensuring all residents can access, contribute to, and shape Kelowna's cultural life.
3. Strengthen youth and intergenerational participation in cultural planning, delivery, and evaluation to ensure inclusive civic engagement in the cultural sector.
4. Support and advance Indigenous-led cultural expression, leadership, and participation in cultural life.



Photo: Le Centre Culturel Francophone de l'Okanagan Maplefest

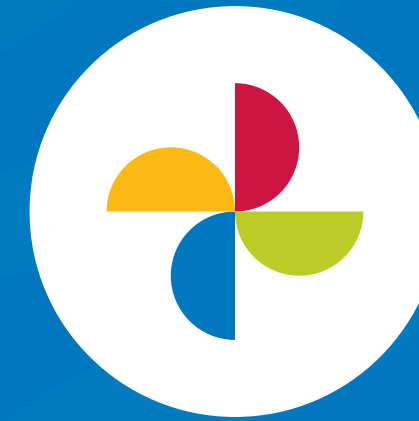


Photo: Cultural District: Kelowna Art Gallery

KPIs

Cultural performance indicators for this strategic priority could include:

- Number of hours of professional development undertaken by local creative workers
- Number of participants who participate in peer learning and other training opportunities
- Number of access/downloads of shared resources
- Number of professional development opportunities for artists and cultural workers
- Establishment of new capacity-building programs/opportunities
- Staff turnover rate within non-profit arts organizations
- Percentage of employees paid a living wage within the non-profit cultural sector
- Number mentorship placements for local creative workers
- Number of mentorship programs/matches that connect students and youth with established creative professionals
- Number of small, emerging, and under-served organizations and practitioners receiving funding supports
- Number of funding opportunities and resources available to equity-deserving communities
- Square footage of community space available for artistic production and presentation
- Average cost per square foot of community space available for production/presentation space
- Presentation of temporary cultural activities in vacant and underused spaces
- Number of cultural activations and programming in City-owned spaces
- Investment in technical infrastructure needs to support culture presentation and production
- Number of cultural activations and programming per neighbourhood
- Net change in primary cultural infrastructure and assets (spaces lost are outweighed by spaces gained)
- Development of formal and informal partnerships with business, tourism, and donors
- Youth are co-developing, leading and contributing to arts and culture initiatives
- Number of Indigenous-led cultural expression initiatives supported or presented annually
- Number of Artist in Residence programs/artists engaged



CONNECT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

Connect the Broader Community



Photo: Africans of the Okanagan: Naija Wedding

Rationale

Rooted in the teachings of the syilx/Okanagan people, a connected community is built through reciprocal relationships, collective responsibility, and a deep connection to the land and place. A thriving cultural landscape that encourages and celebrates artistic practices extends throughout Kelowna's diverse neighbourhoods and coalesces in Kelowna's Cultural District where well-being and belonging are supported through shared experiences and participation. Widening participation and deepening collaborations generate an interwoven and cohesive community identity. Social cohesion is the glue that binds a community, underpinned by trust and belonging, active participation, supportive policies and infrastructure, and easy access.

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Connect with audiences.

OBJECTIVE 2: Connect to place-based culture through animated community spaces.

OBJECTIVE 3: Connect through collaborations and partnerships.

OBJECTIVE 1:
Connect with audiences.

OUTCOME:
**Sense of Identity, Belonging
& Inclusion**

Kelowna's cultural sector attracts, engages, and retains diverse audiences.

Key Actions

1. Enhance representation and visibility within public art, placemaking, and community events.
2. Encourage audiences to explore different genres, artistic disciplines, cultures, and creative experiences through “try-it” campaigns, education and experimentation.
3. Strengthen arts education by involving local arts practitioners in schools and connecting students with arts facilities and events.
4. Implement innovative ticketing models, such as bulk tickets, festival passes, and multi-organization options.
5. Enhance social media presence, audience development, and digital strategies for audience growth.



Photo: Niteo Africa Society: Stories Around the World

OBJECTIVE 2:
**Connect to place-based
culture through animated
community spaces.**

OUTCOME:
**Placemaking, Sense of Identity
& Belonging**

Kelowna's public spaces, neighbourhoods, and Cultural District are vibrant cultural destinations where residents and visitors can easily discover, experience, and connect with local arts, heritage, creative expression, and the living cultural traditions of the syilx/Okanagan peoples that contribute to a strong sense of place and belonging.

Key Actions

1. Implement strategies to better leverage and promote Kelowna's Cultural District as an asset to cultural tourism.
2. Animate everyday nontraditional, outdoor spaces, public art, built heritage and intangible cultural assets through tours, workshops, storytelling, and other engagement activities.
3. Support the development, implementation and strategies associated with the Public Art Strategy.
4. Incorporate creative wayfinding elements including, where appropriate, nsyilxcən (syilx/Okanagan) language to improve navigability and visibility and strengthen connections to place in cultural events, venues, spaces, and urban design.
5. Engage local businesses, BIAs, and neighbourhood associations in cultural initiatives that connect creative experiences to the unique identity and character of the neighbourhoods and commercial areas where they are located.



Photo: Community Art Grant: In-Tension

OBJECTIVE 3:
Connect through
collaborations and
partnerships.

OUTCOME:
Vibrancy, Resiliency &
Future-focused

Kelowna's cultural sector is connected through strong cross-sector, cross-cultural, and regional partnerships that expand opportunities, strengthen creative enterprises, and integrate arts and culture into community and economic development.

Key Actions

1. Strengthen sector convening and senior-level strategic dialogue to support sector collaboration on shared priorities and challenges.
2. Nurture collaborations and connections with economic development groups, business associations, neighbourhood associations, tourism representatives, technology leaders, wellness advocates, sports and recreation organizations, and educational institutions.
3. Deepen relationships with diverse cultural communities and promote intercultural exchange through cross-cultural networks and collaborations.
4. Promote shared use of creative technologies and deepen partnerships with the technology sector.
5. Leverage the UNESCO City of Gastronomy designation to highlight culinary arts and locally produced food and beverage in events, programs, and cultural performances.
6. Build strategic relationships that expand local and regional programming throughout the Okanagan.
7. Embed arts in non-arts mandated organizations, events, and programming, with a focus on the development of new partnerships that elevate the community impact of the arts.



Photo: Pride Festival



Photo: Global Citizen Events Society: Taste of Home

KPIs

Cultural performance indicators for this strategic priority could include:

- Number of public art, placemaking, and community event initiatives, including implementation of Public Art Strategy actions, featuring underrepresented artists or communities
- Net change in audience participation, including engagement through social media, digital channels, and cultural tourism/visitation
- Number of participants reached and converted through accessible or innovative ticketing programs
- Number of students and participants engaged in arts learning, professional development, and peer learning opportunities with local practitioners
- Number of free arts experiences, signature festivals, and culinary/ gastronomy-focused cultural events delivered annually
- Number of underutilized spaces activated and partnerships developed (including regional, inter-sectoral, business, and non-arts organizations)
- Participation in inter-sectoral working groups, roundtables, and collaborative initiatives
- Number of intercultural collaboration initiatives and stories shared from equity-deserving communities
- Number and diversity of creators engaged in cultural programs and initiatives



AMPLIFY

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

Amplify for Impact



Photo: Ballet Kelowna (Photo by Abigail Wiens)

Rationale

Kelowna's cultural sector is entering a period of significant transformation shaped by rapid population growth, demographic change, urbanization, affordability pressures, and shifting community needs. As one of Canada's fastest-growing mid-sized cities, Kelowna requires a cultural ecosystem that is resilient, collaborative, and responsive to changing social, economic, and environmental conditions over the next five years.

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Amplify the voice, value, and impact of culture.

OBJECTIVE 2: Amplify the role of cultural development in shaping community priorities and decisions.

OBJECTIVE 1: Amplify the voice, value, and impact of culture.

OUTCOME: Resiliency, Vibrancy, Placemaking & Future-focused

Kelowna's cultural sector is widely recognized, understood, and valued for its social, cultural, and economic contributions. Through shared data, impact measurement, storytelling, advocacy, and coordinated communications, the community strengthens public awareness, inform decision-making, respond to community needs, and demonstrate the relevance of arts, culture and heritage in everyday civic life.

Key Actions

1. Support the development of systems, tools and knowledge to measure and articulate data that can be used to refine community programming and amplify community impact.
2. Share the economic, social and cultural value of the cultural sector in relevant and timely ways.
3. Encourage public officials, Council members, syilx/ Okanagan elders, community leaders, and possible donors to the cultural sector to attend arts and cultural events.
4. Develop coordinated marketing, communications, and media campaigns that use preferred languages, culturally relevant methods, and multiple channels to build audiences, promote arts achievements and opportunities.
5. Promote the cultural sector beyond city limits by building and sharing a compelling narrative that strengthens the city's identity and reputation as a vibrant creative hub.



Photo: Inspired City Summit

OBJECTIVE 2:
Amplify the role of cultural development in shaping community priorities and decisions.

OUTCOME:
Vibrancy, Sustainability & Resiliency

Cultural development is embedded as a shared civic responsibility across planning, policy, investment, and service delivery. Through stronger sector leadership, cross-departmental collaboration, sustainable funding practices, and transparent implementation, Kelowna advances an interconnected cultural ecosystem that informs community priorities, supports equitable access, and strengthens the well-being, identity, and belonging of all residents.

Key Actions

1. Empower arts service organizations to lead, support, convene and advocate for sector development at a strategic level.
2. Integrate and align cultural space needs, artist affordability, and accessibility into broader municipal planning, decision making and service delivery earlier in the planning processes.
3. Strengthen collaboration across City of Kelowna departments, Indigenous communities, cultural organizations, and non-arts mandated partners to integrate arts, culture, and heritage into decision-making, planning, programs, services, and everyday experiences.
4. Conduct an environmental scan and granting framework review to identify opportunities to better support sector stability and sustainable funding models, ensure equitable practices, and streamline reporting requirements within and across granting programs.
5. Develop implementation strategies that align *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan* priorities and objectives with available resources, clear actions, timelines, evaluation measures, and regular progress reporting to support transparency and accountability.



Photo: New Vintage Theatre Society



Photo: Le Centre Culturel Francophone de l'Okanagan Maplefest

KPIs

Cultural performance indicators for this strategic priority could include:

- Number of shared resources downloads or accesses by local artists and organizations
- Number of organizations accessing the Kelowna Cultural Sector Economic Impact Assessment report
- Number of public officials, Council members, syilx/Okanagan elders, community leaders, and potential donors attending arts and cultural events annually
- Increase in audience reach, engagement, or participation driven by culturally relevant, multilingual, and multi-channel marketing
- Number of external promotional features, partnerships, or campaigns showcasing Kelowna's cultural sector beyond city limits
- Number of community stories and data points shared with the public
- Percentage of funded projects with KPIs and evaluation metrics embedded in program design
- Number of planning initiatives that integrate arts, culture, or heritage through cross-departmental or cross-sector collaboration
- Alignment of the Cultural Grant program with the *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan*
- Percentage of *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan* implementation actions with assigned resources, timelines, evaluation measures, and completed annual progress reporting
- Establishment of and participation in a local Creator/ Creative Advisory Committee
- Number of new cross-sector collaborations



INNOVATE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

Innovate for a Stronger Future



Photo: French Cultural Centre: Nuit Blanche

Rationale

A sustainable future means building on the momentum emerging in creative and cultural workforce development, capacity-building, and cultural infrastructure, while aligning policies, partnerships, and investments to support a sustainable sector where artists and creative workers can live, work, and create. It also requires deeper cross-sector strategic collaboration to enable innovation and expand opportunities, alongside a strong understanding of sector pressures to ensure timely, relevant and adaptive responses to changing needs.

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Innovate in response to emerging trends impacting cultural development.

OBJECTIVE 2: Innovate to drive economic development and sector-wide financial resilience.

OBJECTIVE 1: Innovate in response to emerging trends impacting cultural development.

OUTCOME: Resiliency & Future-focused

Kelowna's cultural sector is adaptive, forward-looking, and resilient, with the capacity to respond to emerging trends and opportunities. Through innovation in workforce development, sustainability, digital practices, and creative industries, the sector advances community well-being, drives economic growth, and remains responsive in a rapidly changing environment.

Key Actions

1. Strengthen the attraction and retention of creative workers, including artists, cultural practitioners, and syilx/Okanagan artists and knowledge keepers.
2. Recognize the framework for reconciliation through the British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) and set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada, in collaboration with syilx/Okanagan partners.
3. Support volunteerism, research and arts-based initiatives that advance well-being, inspire positive social change, and demonstrate the impact of arts participation on health and well-being.
4. Embed climate-conscious and sustainable practices across cultural programs, facilities, and events.
5. Encourage the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital transformation while promoting ethical, transparent, and human-centred applications.
6. Strengthen the sector's ability to anticipate and respond to emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges.



Photo: Eco Dye Workshop

OBJECTIVE 2:
**Innovate to drive economic
development and sector-wide
financial resilience.**

OUTCOME:
**Sustainability, Vibrancy
& Placemaking**

Through targeted investment, business supports, creative enterprise development, market expansion, fair compensation practices, and stronger partnerships with funders, businesses, and philanthropists Kelowna's cultural sector is financially resilient, entrepreneurial, and has the resources, skills, and opportunities to grow sustainable careers, enterprises, and community-serving cultural initiatives.

Key Actions

1. Accelerate emerging creative enterprises through business supports, business incubators, seed funding programs and access to micro-loans.
2. Strengthen revenue diversification by enabling organizations to leverage public investment to attract alternative funding, partnerships, and new market opportunities.
3. Drive the growth of high-potential creative industries, expanding opportunities for economic development.
4. Expand markets by increasing opportunities for promotion, distribution, cultural tourism, export, and "buy local" initiatives.
5. Advance fair compensation standards for creative workers, including artists, cultural practitioners, and syilx/Okanagan artists and knowledge keepers.
6. Collaboratively develop a fund that attracts business investment and philanthropy to reinvest in community cultural initiatives.

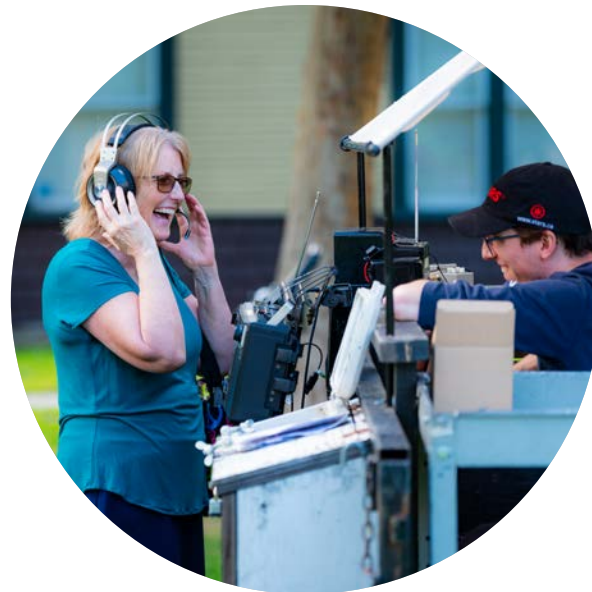


Photo: Artist in Residence: Lucas Glen



Photo: Central Okanagan Performing Arts Festival

KPIs

Cultural performance indicators for this strategic priority could include:

- Creative worker attraction and retention rate within Kelowna's cultural sector
- Perceptions of community and individual well-being through arts and culture
- Percentage of cultural programs, facilities, and events that incorporate climate-conscious or sustainable practices
- Percentage of funded organizations that have responsible AI use policies and guidelines
- Number of emerging creative enterprises supported through business incubation, seed funding, micro-loans, or business development services
- Value of alternative funding, partnerships, sponsorships, or earned revenue leveraged by cultural organizations
- Number of creative enterprises supported through business development, market expansion, or investment readiness initiatives
- Market reach, sales, or tourism-related participation resulting from promotion, distribution, export, or buy-local initiatives
- Creation of a community arts and culture fund
- Value of business investment and philanthropic contributions secured for the community arts and culture fund
- Number of cultural initiatives, partnerships, policies, and programs that demonstrate alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)



Going Forward: Framing this Plan

Going Forward: Framing this Plan

Family of Plans

The *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan* lives within an ecosystem of plans and operates under the direction of the *Official Community Plan (OCP)*, a powerful growth management tool grounded in the community's vision for the future. It is also informed by *Imagine Kelowna*, a community vision developed by residents that is guided by the principles of being connected, smarter, responsible, and collaborative.

The Plan is shaped by, and intersects with, the regional *Roadmap to Resiliency: Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) Strategy* as well as the City's *Transportation Master Plan* in regards to improving access to urban centres. The *Roadmap to Resiliency COEDC Strategy* includes strategic directions around driving economic resilience, building a skilled workforce, and promoting innovation, all of which are reflected in this Plan.

The Plan is informed by *Weaving our Collective Threads: Offering a Pathway for Syilx Creativity Within the City of Kelowna*, prepared by Carrie Terbasket of Stands Above Consulting. The report highlights the importance of advancing syilx creativity, strengthening relationships with the syilx Okanagan Nation, and recognizing the deep connections between culture, land, language, and community. It reinforces the value of reciprocal relationships, collective responsibility, and Indigenous ways of knowing as foundational elements of a vibrant and inclusive cultural future.

The *Kelowna Creates Cultural Plan* is also intended to bolster and support Kelowna's *Event Strategy*, *Heritage Strategy*, forthcoming *Public Art Plan*, and the regional *Music Strategy*. In other words, this Plan aims to provide high-level support for the actions and objectives identified in these strategies and plans without duplicating existing efforts.

Photo: (Page 26) OCCA Spring Lantern Festival

KELOWNA CREATES CULTURAL PLAN



*The *Roadmap to Resiliency: COEDC Strategy* was produced by the Central Okanagan Development Commission.
***Weaving our Collective Threads: Offering a Pathway for Syilx Creativity Within the City of Kelowna* was prepared by Carrie Terbasket, Stands Above Consulting.
***The *Public Art Plan* is forthcoming.
****The *Central Okanagan Music Strategy* was produced by Creative Okanagan.

Future Considerations: Building a Culture for Culture

The City of Kelowna has invested in cultural infrastructure and excels at cultural administration. Building on this is the need for broadening leadership and fostering a “culture for culture” by further integrating cultural development into the City’s work at a strategic level. The coming years present an opportunity for the City to safeguard its investment to date while building out capacity in the community.

By continuing to incorporate culture more broadly into decision making across the City outside of the Cultural Services branch will help to achieve a more integrated lens on cultural development. Information-sharing and collaborative projects between branches and departments can leverage existing human resources and skills without necessarily needing to increase staffing levels.

By playing a leadership role in cultural development, encouraging information sharing and facilitating capacity-building in the broader community, the City can extend a 'culture for culture' beyond City Hall and throughout the community.

“The arts and culture sector enriches every aspect of Canadian life. It fields economic growth, attracts talent, fosters belonging, and strengthens our communities.”¹
— AUBREY REEVES, President and CEO of Business/Arts

¹ Aubrey Reeves, October 28, 2025, as quoted in “Arts and Culture Sector Contributes \$131 Billion to Canada’s Economy.” Canadian Chamber of Commerce. <https://chamber.ca/news/arts-and-culture-sector-contributes-131-billion-to-canadas-economy>



Photo: Kelowna Community Music School: 50th Anniversary Concert

Plan Monitoring

As identified in Section 1, this Plan serves as a “bridge” between the 2020–2025 Cultural Plan and a future Plan. An update was needed to address the current political, economic, and cultural landscapes. The goal is to build a resilient foundation during turbulent times, and encourage a strong cultural ecosystem that can be stabilized further in future years.

While the City plays a central role in the development and implementation of this Plan, its fulsome implementation will require collaboration with non-profit organizations, individual creatives and arts-appreciators, the broader community, other levels of government, and the private sector. Progress will continue to be monitored and reported on via the bi-annual Cultural Plan Progress Report Card. This plan establishes the priorities and key actions; the next step will be to develop a detailed approach for phasing, resourcing, and outcome measurement on these actions.

