EC3

Response to the City of Peterborough's DRAFT Official Plan Update

September 30 2019

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To: Ken Hetherington, Chief Planner, City of Peterborough

Re: Plan It Peterborough – Official Plan Update (UPU)

Dear Colleagues,

The Electric City Culture Council (EC3) is pleased to submit this brief to the City of Peterborough Planning Division for consideration in the ongoing process to update the City's Official Plan. EC3 is the not-for-profit service organization supporting the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector (ACH) in Peterborough and the surrounding region. EC3 launched in 2012 as the signature recommendation put forward in the City's Municipal Cultural Plan – the creation of an arms-length, not-for-profit council to coordinate resources for, raise the profile of, and build capacity in the sector. Since this time, we have built strong and lasting partnerships with numerous organizations both within and outside the sector and a rigorous suite of professional development, award and mentorship programs. We work closely with the City on arts and culture policy development, undertake relevant research and deliver special programs and events such as Artsweek, Canada 150 projects and the Poet Laureate program. EC3 speaks for the **thousands** of Peterborough citizens who are artists, arts managers, producers, organization leaders, curators and other cultural workers in this city and for the art-loving volunteers and audiences who know that the arts make their community vibrant and their city more liveable.

We submit this brief in accordance with our mandate to provide research, leadership and advocacy initiatives that strengthen the arts and heritage community, open up new opportunities for artists, arts organizations and audiences alike and conserve and enhance Peterborough's built heritage assets and the vibrant cultural life of our community. To date, our members have been involved in the Official Plan Update process in a number of ways, including providing comment on draft policies and participating in community design charrettes and other engagement processes. We organized two "Cultural Incubators", (EC3's large-scale thinktank forums on arts and heritage issues) on land use - **RE: Location** and **A Space for US,** bringing together various experts in the field and attended by close to 350 people. However, this brief represents our first official sector-wide contribution to this planning process.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the Official Plan Update by responding to the DRAFT. As you know, the Cultural Industries in Canada **contribute an estimated $58.9 billion dollars to the Canadian economy on an annual basis, 8 times more than sports,** and the arts are widely recognized as a key factor in making cities more "liveable", attracting skilled workforces, building community and identity, as well as growing tourism and revitalizing and enlivening downtown areas. An Official Plan that actively supports the development and capacity of the local arts sector is crucial to ensuring that Peterborough continues to enjoy all the benefits that a healthy and vital ACH community brings to our city.

We were heartened by and appreciative of the strong vision the DRAFT of the Official Plan Update outlines for the role of arts, culture and heritage in the development of our city and our focus is on the statutory/legislative, policy, regulatory and funding tools and vehicles necessary to develop and sustain the infrastructure needed to enable that vision. We recognize the importance of this policy document, which will shape the physical and social fabric of our community over the next twenty years and beyond, and look forward to working with City Planning Staff to support the implementation of land use and development policies that will benefit our sector and the wider Peterborough community. Thank you for all your hard work.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the EC3 Board of Directors,

Sincerely,

Su Ditta — Executive Director (EC3)

Bill Kimball — President (EC3)

cc: Karen Rennie, Manager of Arts, Culture, and Heritage; Sheldon Laidman, Commissioner of Community Services

Introduction

The Arts, Culture, and Heritage (ACH) sector plays an important symbolic and material role in the City of Peterborough as it does in most contemporary municipalities. Symbolically, the sector is a touchstone for the City's cultural identity, as captured in the City's new tagline "Outside the Ordinary". It further plays a crucial role in ongoing processes of place-making. Materially, the sector is a driver of economic development, a position which is enshrined in the City's Municipal Cultural Plan, which states as its first goal "the promotion of economic development through culture" (City of Peterborough, 2012). Further, the sector acts as a major catalyst for community development, health and wellbeing as evidenced in the numerous partnerships between arts organizations, social service agencies and community building organizations operating locally.

While our sector is often recognized as an engine of economic development and place-based revitalization, such strategies can at times place increasing pressure on individual artists and cultural workers, many of whom are precariously employed and live on low or moderate incomes. We value the role we play in local place-making and civic identity formation. However, as economic development and place-based revitalization attract new residents and businesses to our region, and correspondingly increase property values, members of our sector (who act in various ways as creators, producers and performers/presenters of artistic works) risk being displaced to other lower-cost cities and regions to maintain their careers and lifestyles. This displacement can be due to a lack of access to affordable housing, production and/or exhibit spaces.

Our local development context is shifting rapidly. Rates of population growth in our CMA, which had been climbing slowly over the past twenty years, have leapt forward in the past year jumping from 19.8 in 2016-17 to 30.5 in 2017-18 (Statistics Canada, 2019). The past few years have also seen the closure of key cultural spaces and transfer of ownership of many historical buildings in the downtown core. As a result, concerns over the risk of displacement for individual artists and arts-based enterprises in Peterborough are growing. These concerns are further amplified by rising house prices (Canadian Real Estate Association, 2019) and record-low rental vacancy rates (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2018).

The role of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage sector in gentrification – the process by which traditionally lower-cost neighbourhoods or cities become sites for capital investment leading to increased property values and the displacement of existing residents and businesses – is double edged. Individual artists and cultural producers are both possible beneficiaries of gentrification strategies (through commissions, grants, or incentive programs) and possible victims of the success of such strategies (through the loss of affordable housing, production, and exhibition spaces).

It is in this context that EC3 calls on the City of Peterborough to proactively preserve, protect, and secure affordable living space for artists, and arts production and exhibition in our City. In what follows we put forward five recommendations that the City can enact to foster the conditions in which our sector and our members can thrive and continue to contribute to the social, economic, and physical fabric of our City.

Recommendations

1. Recognize the Arts, Culture, and Heritage sector

Current city policies, including the draft policies proposed through the Official Plan update process, consider our sector alongside recreation and leisure activities. It is imperative that the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector be considered in its own right in order to secure the institutional support necessary to achieve its full impact. In particular we ask that the City of Peterborough **recognize artistic practice as a distinct aspect of cultural activity and adopt a definition of professional artist** in line with that of the Canada Council for the Arts - individuals who have specialized training, are recognized as a professional by peers, are committed to devoting more time to artistic activity, if possible financially, and have a history of public presentation or publication[1] - and seek opportunities to embed this definition within policies and programs.

2. Providing infrastructure for the sector

It is essential that the City of Peterborough **maintain an adequate program of policy and financial support for both practicing professional artists and professional arts organizations,** and recognize the importance of many amateur and para-professional arts organizations and practitioners. Such support is essential for ensuring that the Arts, Culture, and

[1] Canada Council for the Arts. (2019). Professional Artist. Accessed from: https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/professional-artist

[2] Ontario Non-Profit Network. (2019). Public Lands and Civic Spaces. Accessed from:

Heritage sector can help to maintain and enhance the unique and vibrant community which is envisioned in the Official Plan.

3. Secure land for the ACH sector

Having adequate and affordable access to land for production, studio, rehearsal and exhibition/presentation/performance space and affordable housing (including live/work space) is critical to support the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector to continue to flourish. To this end, we ask that the City take steps to **establish a 'cultural district' in the downtown core** in consultation with members of the sector. We further ask that the City include policies to **preserve existing public service districts** (e.g. schools, sites of religious assembly), particularly in the downtown core, and include **creative/cultural centres/hubs, non-profit and artist co-op (RGTI) housing** within the permitted uses. Finally, we would welcome investments of time and resources on behalf of the City to enable the initiatives outlined above and to seriously explore the **development of a creative land trust as seen in London and San Francisco**[2], **and to implement a no-net-loss strategy for arts and culture organizations/spaces being displaced by redevelopment**. Ensuring that land and public resources are made available for the creation of both temporary and permanent **public art installations and projects** in diverse forms and locations that enhance our cultural life and provide access to creative expression by professional artists is key.

4. Strengthened role for the ACH sector in development processes

While the Arts, Culture, and Heritage sector is often drawn on to drive development, more work is needed to ensure that development processes are not to the detriment of the sector and in fact can be used to benefit the sector. It is imperative that the City integrate cultural considerations in planning and decision-making, **strengthening the participation of existing advisory committees and EC3 in major development and infrastructure projects**. We further ask that the City work with EC3 to **develop a community benefits framework that considers the needs of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage sector**.

[2] Ontario Non-Profit Network. (2019). Public Lands and Civic Spaces. Accessed from: https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-financing/public-lands-civic-spaces/

5. Transparency and accountability in decision-making.

The Arts, Culture, and Heritage sector can play an important role in the development of our city and region. In order for our members to play this role effectively we need transparent processes and structures of decision-making that enable participation and engagement. We ask that the City **invest in developing user friendly guides and resources for planning and development processes**, including the heritage designation process, community improvement plan incentives, and heritage tax rebate systems. Having access to these resources will ensure that members of our sector and residents more widely have access to the information they need to support land development and heritage preservation processes.

The City of Peterborough is at a critical juncture as it faces increasing development pressures and rates of population growth which have not been seen for the past decade or more. While other areas, notably the Parkdale neighbourhood in Toronto, and much of the City of Hamilton are already feeling the effects of gentrification, we in the City of Peterborough have the opportunity to respond more proactively to this growing threat. It is imperative that City Council manage the burgeoning growth and development interest in our City to the benefit of existing residents and businesses, with particular attention to artists, cultural organizations and spaces who are more vulnerable to the forces of displacement. There is opportunity to capitalize on the increased attention and investment in our community while ensuring that space and resources are secured for those vulnerable to displacement.

The Arts, Culture and Heritage sector plays an important role in the vitality of our City and the sector includes members who may be vulnerable to such displacement. We strongly believe that the recommendations above can help secure the space needed for a thriving Arts, Culture, and Heritage sector in Peterborough. We invite City Council and Staff to review and carefully consider our recommendations as the Official Plan update is finalized. We welcome an ongoing dialogue about these opportunities and look forward to engaging with Staff and Council in this process.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the EC3 Board of Directors,

Su Ditta — EC3 Executive Director

Bill Kimball — EC3 President