

UBCM Community Excellence Awards
2006

Leadership & Innovation, Regional District

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Cultural Plan

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George adopted the Regional Cultural Plan in 2006. This Plan reflects the Board's long-term commitment to culture and heritage within our region. It is the intent of the Board to meet the cultural needs of the region by creating a cultural mandate premised on cultural diversity and sustainability. The Plan is intended to guide RDIFFG policy development in the areas of role definition, cultural investment, and culture and heritage facilities and programming. In the next five years the RDIFFG will invest almost \$9,000,000 in culture and heritage within our region. The RDIFFG Board has shown significant leadership, innovation and vision by making long-term political and financial commitments to ensure a secure and sustainable future for culture and heritage in our region.

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REGIONAL DISTRICT
of Fraser-Fort George

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Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Cultural Plan

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George provides funding for nine cultural agencies and a number of cultural projects to serve its 100,000 residents and visitors across a geographic area of 52,000 square kilometres. The budget allocated to culture and heritage in 2006 by the RDFFG is \$1,735,000.

The RDFFG Cultural Plan establishes a five year vision for the sustained growth and management of culture and heritage within the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. The Cultural Plan encourages participation and collaboration amongst our funded agencies, creates financial certainty through a five year secure funding structure for yearly operating, capital investment and a sustainable endowment. The Regional Board is committed to the development and enhancement of cultural resources and increasing the quality of life for residents within the region.

The creation of a cultural plan for the RDFFG is timely. Local government has become aware of the important contributions cultural organizations are making to quality of life and the economy in cities large and small. The creation of a cultural plan will provide enhanced direction to cultural operations and development and focus attention on this important facet of community development.

The overview of cultural resources in the region highlights a diverse listing of cultural organizations serving the communities in the region. The vision for the future of culture and heritage in the RDFFG sees a vibrant and high quality of cultural experience that is being offered and is appreciated by residents for the quality of life it supports and by tourists as a 'must-see' destination.

Purpose of the Cultural Plan

The Purpose of the Cultural Plan is to:

- ✓ Meet the cultural needs of the region by creating a cultural mandate premised on cultural diversity and sustainability;
- ✓ Ensure an efficient and effective process of cultural development and coordination of planning, facility development and support programs;
- ✓ Grow the community social and cultural mosaic by engaging community support and encouraging active and on-going participation in cultural and heritage in our region;
- ✓ Ensure a broad range of high quality cultural services to meet the needs of residents, visitors and individuals seeking to relocate to our region;

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- ✓ Quantify the existing economic value of cultural facilities and programs;
 - ✓ Identify future cultural development and quality of life opportunities;
 - ✓ Develop a cultural brand or theme to assist in strategically preparing regional cultural facilities and activities to maximize return concerning provincial, federal, local government, corporate and philanthropic initiatives;
 - ✓ Provide a coordinated approach to a five-year cultural financial plan dealing with operating, capital investment and the creation of a sustainable endowment fund;
 - ✓ Facilitate the adoption of complimentary member municipality and Regional District culture and heritage funding policies and service contracts; and
 - ✓ Identify methods to provide long-term preservation and security of community cultural property.

Key Concepts of the Cultural Plan

The Plan is intended to guide RDFFG policy development, role definition, cultural investment and culture and heritage facilities and programming. Specifically the Plan proposes to:

- ✓ Shape the infrastructure and support base for regional cultural activities, services and organizations, to sustain and enhance the social and economic benefits of culture and heritage throughout the region;
- ✓ Develop a framework for the region to work with other levels of government, arts, cultural and heritage organizations; and
- ✓ Recommend approaches to achieve the regional objectives concerning the coordination of cultural policies, contracts, for service and investment toward efficiency and effectiveness.

A *Planning Collaborative Model* of leadership directs the cultural plan. The model engages cultural workers and policy-makers to provide the direction, and RDFFG resources to manage the day-to-day requirements. Strategies for increasing use of cultural facilities and programs are described including specific ideas for engaging residents more fully. Similarly, strategies have been developed for increasing tourist use of the facilities and programs.

A variation of a cultural corridor concept has been developed in the form of cultural clustering. Specific cultural clusters have been designated including relationships with clusters outside of RDFFG boundaries, specifically Barkerville and the Fort St. James Historic Site. A cultural precinct concept has been developed for Prince George with both short and long-term actions. Moving forward with this cultural plan requires some strengthening of the human infrastructure. An annual Culture and Heritage Conference will be hosted by the RDFFG to increase communication, region wide collaboration and to help develop the skills of the volunteers and staff.

Annual strategic and financial planning templates have been created for use by each of the cultural agencies. Newly created data collection templates allow for standardized data collection across all of the funded agencies throughout the RDFFG.

The Plan also identifies standardized performance measures that will assist the RDFFG Board in consistently measuring the overall performance of our funded agencies.

Cultural Services Advisory Committee

In response to the Plan the Board has created the Cultural Services Advisory Committee. This committee is tasked with assisting the Board in implementing the recommendations and tasks identified in the Plan.

The Committee is chaired by a Director from the RDFFG Board and consists of representatives from each of the nine funded agencies and our four member municipalities. The purpose of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee is to assist the Board through the following:

- ✓ Recommend the roles and responsibilities of the RDFFG, funded agencies and member municipalities in regard to the implementation of the Cultural Plan;
- ✓ Recommend performance-based evaluation criteria to measure success;
- ✓ Facilitate the development of strategic plans and assist in the development of collaborative and cooperative ventures in programming and marketing etc.; and
- ✓ Recommend local and regional cultural priorities and goals.

The RDFFG Cultural Vision

The RDFFG Board is committed to the long-term sustainability of culture and heritage in our region. The following cultural vision was adopted by the RDFFG Board and represents our commitment and expectations in providing culture and heritage services throughout the region:

“The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George is recognized locally, provincially and nationally for the high quality and diversity of its cultural offerings.

Residents in large numbers attend the events and facilities and are active in telling visitors to the region about the exciting cultural activities offered throughout the Regional District.

Cultural tourists have put the Regional District on their list of places that they must visit, creating a significant positive economic impact on the Regional District.

Cultural institutions and events are experiencing an unprecedented growth because of cultural groups working collaboratively and cooperatively in planning and developing institutions and events.

The cultural vibrancy of the region has resulted in new business locating in the Regional District and existing businesses and institutions are able to attract and retain a highly qualified workforce.”

Conclusion

In the next five years the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George will invest almost \$9,000,000 in culture and heritage in our region. The Board has shown significant leadership and vision by committing to a secure and sustainable five year culture and heritage operating and capital funding plan.

The Board has created effective new relationships with our funded agencies and the RDFFG has ensured the on-going relevance of each agency by including them in the membership of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee. Together with our member municipalities the funded agencies will have the opportunity to recommend an implementation plan to the Board that is reflective of the opportunities highlighted in the Cultural Plan. By allowing the funded agencies and member municipalities to have direct input into the creation of the implementation plan the Board has given an uncommonly high degree of ownership and responsibility to these groups and has placed a great deal of reliance on their individual cultural expertise and their collective ability to assist the Board deliver on a significant cultural mandate.

The RDFFG Cultural Plan provides leadership in and recognition of a new and emerging economic engine in our province and more specifically within our region.

Cultural vibrancy and a commitment to preserve our past requires strong political resolve and a determination to create unique and lasting economic and social opportunities within our region.

The RDFFG Cultural Plan shows leadership, innovation, creativity and underpins a political mandate to ensure the sustainable delivery of cultural and heritage services within our region and beyond.