



# **Corporate** NO: R042

# **Report** COUNCIL DATE: February 28, 2000\_

## **REGULAR**

**TO: Mayor & Council**    **DATE: February 22, 2000**

**FROM: General Manager,**    **FILE: 0046-001**

**Parks, Recreation and Culture**

**SUBJECT: Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development in Greater Vancouver: Report 1999 September**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive this report and endorse the ongoing participation of the City of Surrey in preparing options for implementing the *Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development* and for the development of a inter-municipal cultural partnership in Greater Vancouver.

## **BACKGROUND**

On December 8, 1999 the GVRD Board corresponded to Councils directly, circulating the “*Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development*” report along with a copy of the “*Next Steps*” report to the GVRD Board, asking Councils to respond directly to the Steering Committee with their comments. Civic staff have subsequently been asked to comment on the report to Council.

The GVRD Board approved the cultural strategic regional planning initiative in 1995 in recognition of arts and culture's importance to Greater Vancouver's social and economic development. This is an inter-municipal initiative with the GVRD assisting with the process. The Steering Committee is composed of staff from member municipalities, with the Manager, Art Services representing Surrey. A phased work plan was structured to develop strategies to meet the cultural needs and opportunities in Greater Vancouver.

In 1997, a Phase One report entitled “*Arts and Culture in Greater Vancouver: Contributing to the Livable Region*” was completed and endorsed. The report summarized the statistical research undertaken through a series of studies. Subsequently, extensive stakeholder consultation was conducted to identify major issues and opportunities in the sector culminating in the Phase Two circulated report “*Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development in Greater Vancouver*”.

On November 10, 1999, the GVRD Board endorsed the *Strategies* document and the Steering Committee's recommendations for next steps. These included an implementation plan to formalize the inter-municipal cultural partnership, and business plans to initiate four recommended strategic directions. The implementation plan includes an initial three year business plan with options for appropriate funding sources and options for the form and governance of the structure best able to achieve the business plan.

## DISCUSSION

The vision of *Strategies* is that the strategies form a foundation for a cultural inter-municipal partnership. From the original twenty-four strategic directions sited in the report, four strategic directions have been selected, with the GVRD Board's endorsement, as the highest priorities for the implementation plan. The four strategic directions are to:

1. **Improve the financial environment** for region-serving arts and cultural organizations in Greater Vancouver to secure their quality and sustainability and provide for growth.
2. **Develop a “Greater Vancouver Cultural Information Network”** to improve the exchange of information about arts and culture region-wide.
3. **Develop and implement a cultural tourism strategy** to increase and enhance region-wide distribution of, the social and economic benefits of tourism.
4. **Review in detail the challenges and obstacles to regional touring of performing and visual arts and heritage exhibitions**, and develop a program to enhance access to existing arts and cultural activities region-wide.

Underpinning the *Strategies* is a further recommendation that Greater Vancouver's municipalities together take a pro-active role in implementing key actions and take the initiative in facilitating implementation of the report.

These strategies are being discussed in stakeholder focus groups and workshops. Surrey City Council members will be invited to participate in the workshops. There will be further stakeholder consultation, particularly with public and private sectors groups and organizations identified as potential partners. It is expected that the implementation plan will be submitted to the GVRD Board within six months, followed by circulation to the individual municipalities.

**Principles:** Implementation of the *Strategies* includes a fundamental set of principles designed to maximize the benefits region-wide. The proposed principles are that:

- The initiative is inter-municipal;
- The strategies must deliver local social and economic benefits;
- Partner commitments must be secured;
- Local autonomy must be respected;
- The strategies must be achievable;
- Delivery must be efficient and effective, with careful allocation and use of resources; and
- There must be accountability - progress and results will be reported annually.

**Benefits:** There are several benefits for Surrey in continuing to work inter-municipally on cultural development. The primary benefits are:

- Partnering on shared strategic objectives will assist Surrey in achieving its community objectives identified in the Cultural Strategic Plan.
- The four chosen directions of the Strategies document echo several of Surrey's Cultural Strategic Plan (CSP) SRA's; working together on these will improve overall effectiveness and efficiencies for cultural development.
- Partnering regionally will assist in leveraging increased support from Provincial and Federal governments.

## CONCLUSION

The cultural sector makes a substantial contribution to the Region's economic well-being, supporting jobs and businesses. This contribution will be even more important as the Region's new economy increasingly focuses on tourism, film, television, high technology, community-oriented services and other activities that draw on diverse creative talent, products and ideas.

Surrey's continued involvement and endorsement of the work of the Regional Cultural Steering Committee in areas of collective inter-municipal interest will enhance the implementation of *Surrey's Cultural Strategic Plan* through: leveraging regionally for increased provincial and federal support; increasing effectiveness and efficiencies through the non-duplication of cultural development work; and partnering on programs and marketing to complement local initiatives.

The recommended inter-municipal partnership would facilitate collaborative community partnerships, initiate action on inter-municipal cultural interests and work with senior governments on region-wide cultural interests.

Don Hunter, General Manager

Parks, Recreation and Culture

DH:dlg