



# **Corporate** NO: R225

# **Report** COUNCIL DATE: October 16, 2000

## **REGULAR**

**TO: Mayor & Council**    **DATE: October 2, 2000**

**FROM: General Manager of Parks, Recreation  
and Culture**    **FILE: 0046-001**

**SUBJECT: Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development: Business & Implementation Plans**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Council:

1. Receive this report.
2. Not support the Arts levy or structural model as proposed.
3. That Council refer the *Implementation Plan* back to the Inter-Municipal Cultural Steering Committee to further explore: a) a non-governmental inter-municipal service delivery model, b) an alternative funding strategy that includes direct benefits back to the local communities, and c) a phase-in period for achieving the strategies.
4. That Council advise other participating municipal councils that Surrey Council members will participate in an inter-municipal effort to secure additional provincial and federal support for arts and cultural development.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the September 18, 2000 Public Hearing, Council received a request from the GVRD to review the Business and Implementation Plans outlined in the *Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development in Greater Vancouver*. Civic staff have subsequently been asked to comment on the report to Council.

The GVRD Board initiated the cultural strategic regional planning process 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.

In 1997, a Phase One report entitled “*Arts and Culture in Greater Vancouver: Contributing to the Liveable 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 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. On December 8, 1999, the GVRD Board, circulated the “*Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development*” report along with a copy of the “*Next Steps*” report asking councils to respond directly to the Steering Committee with their comments.

On March 6, 2000, Council received this report (CR:R042) and endorsed 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.

## DISCUSSION

The vision of the *Strategies* report is that it forms a foundation for a cultural inter-municipal partnership. From the original twenty-four strategic directions cited in the report, four strategic directions have been selected with the GVRD Board's endorsement. The *Business Plan* is designed to address the priority actions in the *Strategies* report and leverage senior government and other investments. The *Implementation Plan* identifies how the Business Plan's objectives may be achieved.

### The Business Plan

Civic staff support the initiatives within the *Business Plan* and propose that in conjunction with *Surrey's Cultural Strategic Plan (CSP)*, citizens of Surrey will: enjoy increased access to arts and cultural services, build stronger arts and cultural organizations, increase participation of residents and visitors in activities, develop general economic benefits including new jobs, and increase funding support for the arts.

The strategies of the *Business Plan* have been thoroughly vetted in workshops and other settings by stakeholder groups, including municipal councillors. Potential partners have come forward and are ready to participate in the initiatives. *See listing in Appendix A.*

Staff acknowledge that as the Surrey community grows and develops, there is an increasing demand for arts and cultural opportunities and activities. A recent survey conducted by Canadian Facts confirms the following statistic: 43% of Surrey residents feel that arts and cultural activities are very important to the quality of life of their community; 82% agree that arts/cultural activities have a positive impact on our economy; 79% strongly agree that access to arts/culture is important for their children and 84% want more arts events in Surrey.

The *Business Plan* serves as the long term framework to support an inter-municipal partnership of elected officials to better leverage significant investments from senior levels of government, the private sector and others. Opportunities are now defined with the provincial and federal governments who are currently interested in partnering regionally in the cultural information network, cultural tourism and strategic investment partnership. Staff are confident that the community would benefit from this tri-level intergovernmental investment partnership.

## The Implementation Plan

Civic staff are, however, concerned with the organizational entity, the advocacy of a tri-level governmental partnership and the financial demands of the *Implementation Plan*.

The recommended organizational entity, namely an “inter-municipal service delivery model” was supported by the community workshops and the majority of the Regional Cultural Steering Committee. The proposed entity meets the criteria of: a municipally accountable organization with a region serving focus that can achieve a collective perspective, while allowing for operational transparency, flexibility and entrepreneurial approaches. The entity has a relationship with the GVRD to facilitate the management of revenue collection and its distribution to partners. The new provisions in the Local Government Act allow this organization to be custom-designed with a wide range of options available related to its governance and funding.

Staff are concerned that the entity's alignment with the GVRD may preclude it from being fully responsive to the demands and expected growth of potential “non-municipal” memberships, e.g. private sector, non profit organizations and individual workers.

As well, the *Implementation Plan* proposes that the organizational entity would serve to build the partnerships with senior governments and private sector on behalf of the inter-municipal partners. It calls for the immediate creation of staffing positions to facilitate these objectives. However, civic staff acknowledge that municipal councillors are in the best position to advocate for the immediate benefits of a tri-level partnership. This could be through the UBCM Committee and the municipal members of the Regional Cultural Steering Committee. Over the past ten years, the federal government's investment in arts and culture in B.C. has declined to about one-third of what it invests in other provinces on a per capita basis. The combined under-investment of the governments of Canada and B.C. is 50% less than the average provided to other provinces in Canada.

In terms of funding, the *Implementation Plan* proposes a multi-pronged approach. Some of these options, (a visitor surcharge, e-commerce and private sector partnerships), require an extended time frame, so a new and immediate, per capita contribution is proposed to seed the initiative.

While the Canadian Facts survey found that 59% of those surveyed were supportive of an additional annual charge of \$15 per household for arts and culture (20% strongly in support) the draft *Implementation Plan* does not currently outline substantial guarantees of direct financial benefit back to the local community within the first years of implementation. Surrey cultural groups need additional financial investments to develop as per the *Cultural Strategic Plan* and to grow substantially in order to access the benefits of this regional initiative as quickly as other more developed municipalities. Guarantee of a direct financial benefit back to the municipality based upon clear guidelines for its use in the cultural sector should be a requirement of a per capita levy.

## CONCLUSION

The cultural sector makes a substantial contribution to the Region's economic well-being, supporting jobs and business. 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 talents, products and ideas.

The *Business Plan* of Strategies has several benefits for Surrey in continuing to work inter-municipally on this cultural development. In particular, it serves as the long-term framework to support an inter-municipal partnership of elected officials to better leverage significant investments from senior levels of government, the private sector and others.

The *Implementation Plan* needs to be further explored in relationship to how the inter-municipal entity is structured and how funding will be secured. Staff wish to continue to explore alternative models over a phased-in period to ensure that the organizational structure addresses the criteria of flexibility and local community responsiveness.

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Parks, Recreation and Culture

DH/AP:cmc