

7. Arts and Culture

Arts can stimulate, inspire, entertain, and more recently, are seen to contribute to cities' quality of life as well as their social and economic vitality. The arts are an important factor in attracting talented people, jobs and investment to communities (Florida, Richard, 2004). A recent Canadian Council of Chief Executives report noted that "there is growing evidence that artistic and cultural creativity plays an important role in transforming communities into destinations of choice for skilled people in any occupation" ('From Bronze to Gold,' 2006).

To be successful in this emerging creative age, regions must develop, attract and retain talented and creative people who develop technology-intensive industries and power economic growth. For example, the 'Making the Case for Culture' website contains brief summaries of how the arts contribute to six aspects of Canadian life: the economy; urban renewal; community identity and pride; positive change in communities; quality of life and quality of place; and youth development.

Winnipeg Context

The City of Winnipeg has long been known as the "city of the arts," having the second highest artistic concentration in the Prairies (Artists in Large Cities, 2006). Winnipeg's arts history is long and varied. For example, it possesses an arts industry featured in Paris; an orchestra chosen to represent Canada at Carnegie Hall; an internationally recognized film industry and a world renowned ballet company. Further, Winnipeg has performance and exhibition centres among the best in Canada; one of the best-preserved, if not the only, historic downtown districts in Northern America; cutting edge musical, arts, entertainment and festival scenes such as the Winnipeg Folk Fest — many thanks to the vision of its early civic leaders and the persistence of its civic advocates.

Winnipeg has also been recognized nationally for successful development of community and public art towards social transformation. Community art has flourished through long-standing organizations such as Art City, Graffiti Gallery, ArtBeat and Arts Junction. Artists work within social and grassroots agencies such as the "Poor Penny" video project launched by the Social Planning Council or workshops and community art sales through Art from the Heart (the AMB is proud to feature an Art from the Heart artist on this year's cover), offering artists opportunities showcase their work and to use their communication skills towards social change. Public art projects have become more common with several large permanent installations through the Winnipeg Arts Council and Manitoba Arts Council focus in recent years on public art.

Creative Communities and Industries

Our spending will help develop cultural facilities for professional community-based arts activities, co-op housing/studios for artists connected to cultural sectors and suburban community arts facilities. Public officials are learning that they can plant the seeds of urban renewal and, at the same time, promote their city's culture and arts. This not only renews our neighborhoods and downtowns, but also attracts tourists and private investment. Our goal is to expand the scope of the Winnipeg Arts Council to include increased advocacy and policy abilities so it can inform City Council of achievements and issues in the Winnipeg Arts Community; recommend activities for the stabilization and strengthening of the arts community; liaise with and act as a point of contact for the members of the arts community regarding issues that affect the arts community.

The following spending and revenue generating policies support Winnipeg's cultural and artistic capacity, making it a smarter and attractive place to live.

A Cultural and Economic Development Plan for the Arts in Winnipeg

Stewardship

To confirm the City of Winnipeg's stewardship role in creating the context for culture and the arts to thrive, the Alternative Budget restores previous cuts to existing arts spending that have taken place over the last 5 years, including inflation. It also supports the objectives of Winnipeg Arts Council with a directive to increase funding towards community art, significantly increasing opportunities for broadening audiences, and expanding public art programs which highlight Winnipeg talent. The AMB also recommends a new funding formula that increases the annual allocation from approximately \$6 per capita to \$12 per capita, in order to double funding over the course of five years, along with the request for a formal agreement between the City and the Winnipeg Arts Council for the allocation of funds and provision of services.

New Expenditures:

- Restore funding cuts and adjust for inflation: \$4,582,552
- Increase funding for expansion: \$500,000 (annual increase)

Place-making and Public Art

In order to market cultural and historical features of Winnipeg including the Exchange District, the 1919 General Strike, St. Boniface, Selkirk Street, the Riel Rebellion and The Forks, the AMB dedicates funds to expand Winnipeg's Innovative Public Arts Policy. This policy would include a continuous "Outdoor Public Gallery" as part of free walking tours of Winnipeg and ensure that the majority of the works are by local artists.

New Expenditure:

- Expand Winnipeg's Innovative Public Arts Policy: \$500,000 (annually)

Recommendations for Increased Revenue for the Arts

1. Currently the regular billboard tax is \$1.50/square foot; an increase to \$5.70, as recommended by the City in 2012 would increase the amount collected per sign to \$1,140. (Winnipeg Free Press, Dec. 1, 2012). There are an estimated 620 signs in Winnipeg (<http://mediaincanada.com/2007/05/22/billboard-20070522/>), making the total to be collected \$706,800/year. The charge per/square foot increase would result in an extra \$520,800/year that could be dedicated to the arts community.
2. According to *Maclean's* magazine, digital billboards generate tax revenue of \$1,000/billboard. Estimating that there 200 billboards in Winnipeg, total revenues currently come in at \$200,000/year. By increasing the rate so that total revenues per sign increase to \$2,500/sign, the Alternative Budget will collect an additional 300,000/year.
3. Further, a recommendation following this tax increase would be to take 1/3 of its accumulation and place it in an interest account to generate future capital funding for public arts programs or for a WAC Infrastructure Development Seed Fund.
4. Allocate 1 per cent of all new building budgets to the commissioning of a work of art to be located in a public place, either outdoors or in a lobby. All new civic buildings will be contribute as well so as to put positive peer pressure on other new building projects to do the same. If \$100,000 per property at an average of \$1million budget were contributed and if 50 new buildings were built per year, the 1per cent tax accumulation would be \$500,000 per year.

Total Expenditures and Revenues

Revenues

- Billboard Tax: \$ 820,800
- 1 per cent New Building Tax: \$500,000

Total: \$1,320,800

Expenditures

- Inflation Increase to WAC operating budget: \$4,582,552
- Community Arts programming increase: \$500,000
- Public Art Program: \$500,000

Total: \$5,582,552

Net new spending: \$4,261,752.