City of Yorkton
Community
Cultural Plan

STAGE 2: CULTURAL PLANNING REPORT
JUNE 2023
DRAFT

PREPARED BY:
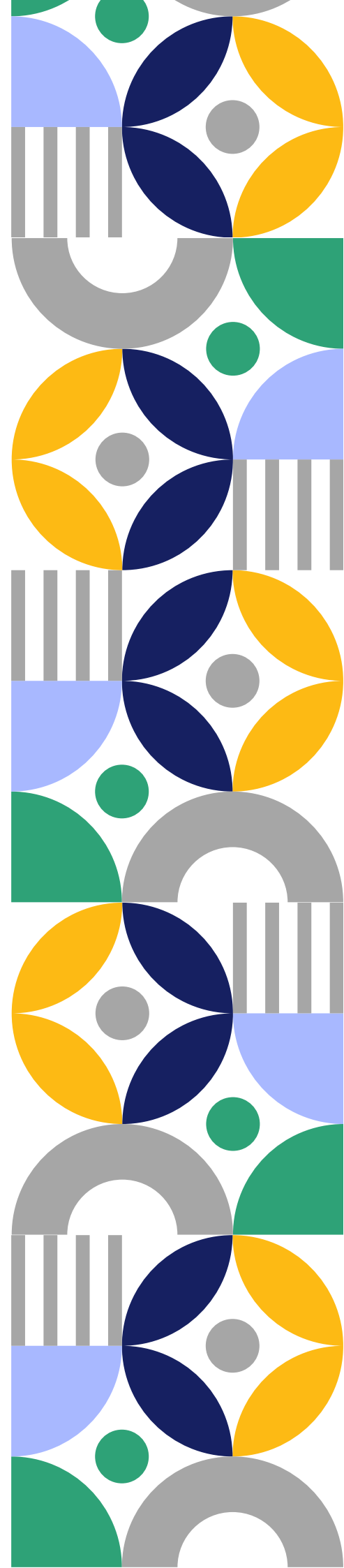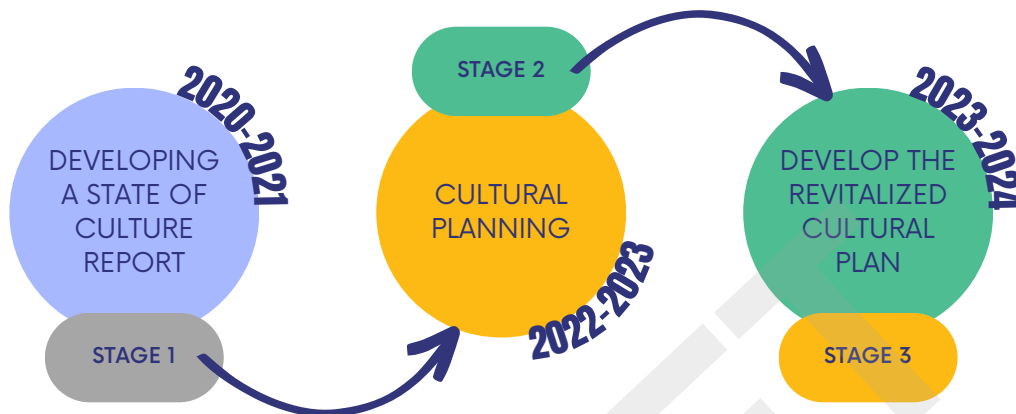
Prairie Wild
CONSULTING
Preparing Communities for the Future

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The City of Yorkton was among the first Saskatchewan communities to create a Municipal Cultural Plan (MCP) in 2009. Yorkton is currently in the process of engaging with the community and stakeholders to revise and rejuvenate its MCP, which is divided into three stages.

- **Stage 1** involved developing a State of Culture Report. This stage included gathering information, engaging with the community, creating an inventory of cultural resources, mapping them out, conducting assessments, analyzing the collected data, and presenting the findings.

- **Stage 2** focused on sharing the findings from Stage 1 and engaging with the community and stakeholders. This engagement aims to build upon the information gathered in Stage 1 and will inform the creation of a cultural vision, goals, and strategies for the community.

- **In Stage 3**, the revitalized Cultural Plan will be developed. This stage will include the creation of a measurement framework to track and evaluate the implementation of the Cultural Plan.

This process is being supported by the City of Yorkton and SaskCulture's Community Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant. Prairie Wild Consulting Co. is working alongside the community to facilitate the process.

CULTURAL PLANNING APPROACH

Guided by an Appreciative Inquiry framework (see David Cooperrider et al.), the Yorkton cultural planning process focuses on the strengths of the community and creates space for everyone to have a voice. It helps participants uncover existing assets, strengths, advantages, and opportunities in their communities, organizations, and teams, enabling them to collectively work toward developing and implementing strategies for improvement.

Discussions are also facilitated using ethical space, which is where disparate worldviews can come together to develop a framework for dialogue between human communities (see Dr. Willie Ermine, the Space of Engagement, 2017).

A Steering Committee that includes representation from City Council and Administration, community stakeholders, and various organizations have been providing on-going guidance and input throughout the process.

The City of Yorkton and member organizations have various plans highlighting culture and have identified opportunities to advance and enhance culture in the community. This cultural planning process is linked to, complements, and builds upon plans and initiatives including, though not limited to:

- City of Yorkton 2020 Strategic Plan
- City of Yorkton Our City: Our Future Official Community Plan
- Yorkton Regional Planning District District Plan
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2023 (Draft)
- Recreation Facilities Master Plan
- Community Safety & Well-Being Initiatives (underway)
- Municipal Heritage Property Designations
- Community Housing Plan
- 2009 Municipal Cultural Action Plan
- Promotional brochures and pamphlets

Stages 1 and 2 have been completed. A summary of the steps for each stage is included on the following page.

Building the Foundation
- Collecting, reviewing, and analysing background information of municipal and organizational plans, policies, documents, and related materials
- Developing a preliminary cultural asset inventory and maps
- Drafting of a cultural profile

Community Engagement
- Hosting of two Steering Committee meetings to discuss cultural planning process, learnings to-date, and gather input on Yorkton's culture today and 25+ years in the future
- Developing and distributing surveys: community and cultural service provider
- Presentation to City Council and Recreation and Community Services Committee to share about the process and learnings to-date, and gather input on Yorkton's culture today and in the future

Drafting the State of Culture Report
- Drafting the report and presenting it to City Council and Administration for review and the opportunity to provide input and feedback

Finalize Report and Prepare for Next Stages
- Incorporating feedback, finalizing report, and submitting to Council and SaskCulture for approval

2020-2021

DEVELOPING A STATE OF CULTURE REPORT

STAGE 1

Community Surveys
- Drafting survey questions based in-part on results from the preliminary engagement carried out in Stage 1
- Conducting intercept surveys with community members on August 30 and 31, 2022
- Coding and analysing survey results

Targeted and Focus Group Sessions
- Targeted interviews with Steering Committee members and key stakeholders from April-October 2022
- Hosting of three focus groups at the Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre on February 15, 2023

STAGE 2

CULTURAL PLANNING

2022-2023

Drafting the What We Learned Stage 2 Engagement Report
- Drafting the report; summarizing what we learned, and presenting it to the Steering Committee, City Council and Administration, City Committees, and various stakeholders for review, input, and feedback

Finalize Report and Prepare for Next Stage
- Incorporating feedback, finalizing report, and submit to Council and SaskCulture for approval

There were over 40 people engaged through Stage 2 of the Cultural Planning process.

33 SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

16 TARGETTED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Results from across these engagement efforts are summarized together in this report along thematic lines.

DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION

Diversity and Cultural Representation were two major themes that remained present throughout engagement efforts. Many comments discussed ways in which multiculturalism is currently expressed in Yorkton, as well as ways in which the community could strive to become more inclusive.

While many comments expressed that Yorkton is a welcoming and diverse community, those same comments would often expand on issues of racism and discrimination present in the community and their desire to have these issues addressed. A lack of cross-cultural exchange and education was outlined by many as a potential root cause for these issues, with ideas on how to foster growth in these areas ranging from more abundant cultural festivals to the formation of new learning opportunities for adults in the community.

> "Kids need choices too."
> –Survey Participant

Matters of representation in terms of age demographics were also common throughout the engagement process. Many comments shared a desire to see concentrated effort on the creation of more safe and welcoming spaces for community members of all ages, with particular emphasis on ensuring that children and teens have a variety of safe, accessible spaces and programming made available to them.

These ideas in particular were primarily driven by two streams of thought; Making Yorkton a more inviting place for young families to move to and settle down in, and ensuring that children in the community feel safe and valued.

HERITAGE

Heritage was a recurring theme during the engagement process, with Yorkton's local history being the major focus of these discussions.

Many comments expressed a strong desire to learn more about Yorkton's history, though finding information of this kind can be challenging. There appears to be significant interest in seeing more publicly accessible historical materials and programs made available through facilities such as public archives and museums.

Preservation of Yorkton's historic buildings and neighbourhoods was often linked to creating a stronger sense of local identity, with historical architecture and public artwork being highlighted as ways in which people may feel more connected to the history of the city. The Godfrey Dean Art Gallery, Yorkton Flour Mill, and Western Development Museum were considered to be vital in maintaining a connection to Yorkton's heritage, with many comments expressing a desire to see more municipal efforts to increase their accessibility and inventory of local historic materials.

EVENTS

Local events were a common topic of discussion, and were often viewed as vital to how culture and multiculturalism is expressed in Yorkton.

June Days and Culture Days are seen by many as cultural highlights for the community, with comments often turning to how more events should emulate what is being done during these festivals, or expressing a desire to have these festivals extended so that more members of the community would be able to engage with them.

When discussing ways in which the City could improve how events are held, community members had three key suggestions:

- Finding ways to reduce barriers for newcomer groups wishing to participate in or create events;

- Increasing event accessibility for young families; and

- Creating comfortable outdoor spaces that would allow for more events to take place during the winter.

SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Many comments shared a focus on the importance of safety and accessibility for community resources and events, with matters of safety and accessibility often being directly linked to one another.

Safety was noted across all demographics. Concerns that were shared included a lack of maintenance increasing the risk of accidents in parks, the need for warm public spaces in the winter, violent crime, and drug addiction. Many of these comments shared a desire to see local governmental organizations visibly working towards a solution, with many sharing that they feel the City of Yorkton's public communication is often lacking.

When discussing safety concerns, community member repeatedly shared hopes that these issue could be managed from a holistic perspective, with ideas such as creating more accessible youth spaces, greater investment in public welfare projects (ex: shelters, safe injection sites, etc.), and more human-centred design being incorporated into public spaces being shared.

The following three types of accessibility in particular were most often highlighted by participants:

- **Physical Accessibility;** Matters such as walkability, condition or availability of accessible infrastructure (ex: handrails, ramps, seating, etc.), parking, and public transportation. These concerns were often shared with the desire to see improvements made to make participating in society easier for the most vulnerable members of the community.

- **Accessibility of Time;** Most often discussed in regard to events and cultural celebrations, where many felt that youth and young family participation has been negatively impacted by scheduling that does not take these groups into account.

- **Accessibility of Cost;** Due to the increasing cost of living, the pricing of events and programming can be the deciding factor for many when assessing whether or not they can participate. Beyond suggestions to keep prices for cultural events and resources low, the need to have low-to-no cost resources better advertised within the community was a recurring topic of discussion, as many felt that finding this information is a challenge at present.

CULTURAL ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic revealed a need for an unexpected level of adaptability within systems of every level. While communities everywhere begin to see normalcy return, the learnings brought on by these events can continue to be utilized and built upon in a way that can foster a stronger, more adaptable community.

Communication was seen by many as a key component in fostering cultural growth, particularly when discussing a desire to see participation return to pre-pandemic levels. Community members shared stories of having difficulty finding information about Yorkton and its goings on. Many of these comments highlighted a need for a centralized information hub that the community can access to both find and share information.

As Yorkton is a diverse community made up of people from many different cultures and age groups, finding ways to make this information accessible to everyone will be a major factor in its success. Broader usage of physical media (ex: posters, banners), and digital literacy workshops were some methods suggested as ways to help achieve this goal.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Regardless of cultural ties, food and agriculture were almost universally linked to the concept of culture for those involved in discussions.

Cultural cuisine quickly distinguished itself as a prominent method of cross-cultural exchange in the community. Events that included food or cooking were commonly included in participants perceptions of what culture is in Yorkton.

For local newcomer demographics, food and agriculture serve as both a way for them to share their culture with their new community and can also provide comfort to those who begin to feel isolated or homesick. Additionally, desires to create businesses growing or preparing cultural foods locally were common, however, many members of the newcomer population stated that gaining access to the resources needed to start such ventures can pose a significant challenge.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Economic opportunity was a recurring theme in many of the discussions held in Stage 2. Many comments shared a desire to see systems put in place that would lower the barrier to entry for members of the community seeking to open local businesses or start their own culture events and programming.

Many of these discussions addressed barriers one might not anticipate when discussing economic opportunity. Some potential ways of overcoming these barriers included:

- **The creation of a makerspace and a community kitchen:** Having these resources accessible to anyone, regardless of economic status, and the networks they create could potentially remove a number of obstacles that have made it challenging for many to be more engaged in Yorkton's economy.

- **Creating greater incentives for those looking to run local businesses:** Doing so was seen as a way to encourage younger members of the community to stay in Yorkton, while also making it a more attractive place for young families to move to.

- **Maintaining a fund to aid local businesses:** More specifically, funding opportunities that would allow local businesses to move to, and then stay in, the downtown area long-term.

Many community members shared hopes that by establishing a stronger downtown core Yorkton can create a more positive and cohesive image for the city centre, in turn allowing for a more well-established community identity to form.

PRELIMINARY CULTURAL PLANNING THEMES

Building upon the insights gained from Stages 1 and 2, preliminary cultural planning themes have emerged. There are some important elements that have been integrated through the process and will be reflected in the Plan and considered upon its implementation. These include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirited+ Calls for Justice.

Participants have contributed valuable input to-date about Yorkton's culture today and hopes for the future. This input is helping to shape actionable steps. The following summary highlights some actions and themes, presented in no specific order. In Stage 3, further input and engagement will be sought to expand upon these themes and establish a clear vision, goals, and actionable strategies.

UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGNEOUS PEOPLES

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CALLS TO ACTION

MMIWG2S+ CALLS FOR JUSTICE

INCLUSIVITY

GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT

EVENTS

SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY

GROWTH

REPRESENTATION

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

HERITAGE

COMMUNICATION

CULTURAL EDUCATION

PRELIMINARY CULTURAL PLANNING THEMES: KEY POINTS - MOVING TO ACTIONS

INCLUSIVITY

- Enhance and implement accessibility standards.
- Create opportunities to come together and share with one another as a community.
- Continue to foster the building of trust and understanding.
- Encourage creative expression and sharing of identity.

SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

- Maintain ongoing communication with at risk groups within the community.
- Understand that building and rebuilding trust is an ongoing process.
- Provide opportunities for members of the community to be involved in helping one another.
- Enable those in need to build the tools needed for long-term growth.

SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Provide opportunities for all members of the community to communicate their needs and concerns.
- Consider the range of abilities of the members of the community.
- Strive towards policies and designs that enable everyone to participate in Yorkton's culture.
- Continuously monitor the status and local perception of public spaces, systems, and policies.

REPRESENTATION

- Create spaces that are inclusive of everyone regardless of age, status, sexuality, identity, ethnicity, or culture.
- Provide opportunities for children in the community to have their voices heard.
- Ensure that less privileged groups are having their voices heard when discussing matters of culture and inclusivity.

COMMUNICATION

- Ensure that information on local programming and events is easily accessible to all.
- Clearly communicate plans for public spaces and programs.
- Create an accessible system for community members to provide feedback directly to the municipal government.
- Utilize local and social media to share stories from the community.
- Provide opportunities for organizations to collaborate.

TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY

- Foster a core identity for Yorkton that is representative of all groups that make up the community.
- Support programming and events that enable newcomers to more easily integrate themselves into the community.
- Encourage continuous cross-cultural education and appreciation within the community.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Create programs that aid in the elimination of barriers for those looking to start local businesses and cultural events.
- Incentivize local business to relocate to and stay in the downtown core.
- Provide guidance and mentorship to newcomers facing challenges entering the local economy.

GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT

- Communicate the intent and reasoning behind decisions made, particularly for those that have a tangible impact on the community.
- Promote dialogues between local individuals, organizations, and city government.
- Create and promote funding for cultural initiatives.

EVENTS

- Seek out ways to grow audiences for existing events.
- Host cultural celebrations throughout the year.
- Create funding opportunities to encourage organizations to host their own events.
- Utilize physical and digital media to promote events.

GROWTH

- Create an extensive metric for measuring growth beyond economic growth.
- Gauge community satisfaction in areas such as quality of life, happiness, and ability to engage with local culture.

CULTURAL EDUCATION

- Work with cultural organizations in creating educational signage.
- Promote newcomers to share their culture in their own ways.
- Highlight the relationship between local culture and local businesses.
- Create opportunities for local organizations to share information about what they are doing with the community.
- Incentivize the creation of cultural organizations for underrepresented groups in the community.

HERITAGE

- Survey community to aid in the growth of a cultural inventory.
- Streamline processes for heritage/historical status applications at the municipal level.
- Promote the sharing of local history through museums, historical tours, and the like.
- Seek out ways to incorporate local art and artists in beautification efforts around the city.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

- Remove barriers for those looking to share their cultural cuisine or cooking methods during festivals through the creation of a community kitchen.
- Encourage the creation of community gardens and homesteading to promote education and food sovereignty.
- Establish ways for newcomers easily and safely sell food locally as a way to more easily integrate themselves into the community and local economy.

MOVING TO STAGE 3: DEVELOP THE REVITALIZED CULTURAL PLAN

This report summarizes the preliminary learnings from Stage 2: Cultural Planning. It included an intercept survey and targeted and focus group sessions.

Moving forward, these insights will serve as a foundation for Stage 3: Develop the Revitalized Cultural Plan. The community will remain actively engaged and collaborate to establish a vision, goals, and actionable strategies for the future of Yorkton's cultural landscape in the coming years. These essential components will be integrated into a draft Cultural Plan, which will undergo review and preparation for adoption by the City of Yorkton.

City of
Yorkton