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INTRODUCTION

St. Catharines is planning a major investment in a new downtown arts centre, the cornerstone project of municipal plans to revitalize the urban core of Niagara. The arts building project is led by the City of St. Catharines and Brock University. It will establish the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts in the Canada Hair Cloth Building and build a new Arts Centre behind it with an entrance on St. Paul Street. At the heart of this new facility and its success will be the existing arts activity of St. Catharines and Niagara.

As vibrant as the arts of St. Catharines have become over the last ten years, growth of the arts sector is essential to maximize the value of a new arts facility. The need for capacity-building of the arts community has been identified in both grassroots research and the recent Plan for a Cultural and Academic Arts Centre in Downtown St. Catharines. The 2008 Community Needs Assessment for Performing Arts Space in St. Catharines confirmed the concerns local arts organizations have about increased facility costs in a new facility. The Assessment noted that arts organizations need to grow revenues and increase audiences in order to be “ready” for a new arts centre.

This plan recommends strategies to strengthen the local arts sector. The plan emphasizes both the stewardship of existing practices and commits to collaboration, innovation and growth. Ultimately, the goal is to grow the ability of the arts sector to stimulate visitors to downtown with the creation of original made-in-Niagara events and productions, engage residents in arts activities that will stimulate creativity and engagement, and develop local talent that can be “exported” to other markets.

A strong arts sector will serve the success of the future arts centre as well as grow Niagara’s creative economy. Artists in other communities are considered “good neighbours” - they gentrify neighbourhoods, create jobs, initiate creative community experiences and actively participate in community as active citizens. A healthy arts community contributes to the social, economic and environmental vitality of a community. Plans for an arts centre in downtown St. Catharines displays foresight on the part of local leadership seeking a sustainable future. The implementation of this plan supports this goal, and will maximize future success of this bold new St. Catharines and Niagara.
A Capacity Building Plan from the Community

This plan was developed by the Arts Community Development Committee (ACDC). ACDC is a subcommittee of the Niagara Centre for the Arts Task Force, a Committee of St. Catharines City Council. ACDC is comprised of representatives from the Task Force, the arts community, the City’s Culture Committee, the St. Catharines and Area Arts Council, Brock University and City staff. Details of committee membership are provided in the Appendices.
CONSULTATION PROCESS

In December 2008 the committee undertook a survey of the arts community to identify key interest areas for learning, and in March 2009 the committee coordinated a community roundtable to explore key topics in a collaborative setting. Arts community representatives were invited to brainstorm the many challenges and opportunities that exist for future development. 36 people participated in a session on Growing Your Audience, and five key topics were discussed to explore how to grow future arts audiences:

- New audience development
- Encouraging audience loyalty
- Working with local media
- Partnering with other arts organizations
- Working with community partners

Key opportunities and challenges faced by the arts sector of St. Catharines emerged from this Roundtable and shed light on the recommended strategies within this plan.

Identified Challenges

- Arts organizations in St. Catharines are extremely varied in their “state” of development. The sector is made up of emerging, mid-career and established organizations across disciplines with diverse needs from each other.

Many organizations struggle with human and financial constraints that hinder efforts to focus on their mandates, missions and core activities. This is compounded by heavy reliance on project grants that result in more human resources but redirect focus from core programs and increase reporting burdens. Particularly, organizations look to limited-term project grants and capacity-building grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, a key source of funding for the arts community of St. Catharines.

- There is limited access to long term operating funds that will allow organizations to recruit and retain permanent management and administrative staff for arts organizations.
- The current economic environment and the three major fundraising campaigns taking place for Brock, the hospital and the future arts centre may make it more challenging for individual arts organizations to raise funds through sponsorships and donations.
- The public is often unaware of available arts events and participation opportunities. There is a lack of a coordinated forum in which these opportunities can be listed and promoted (i.e. online culture calendar).
• The arts community is not satisfied with the level and type of promotion and coverage it receives from local media outlets.
• Access to new forms of on-line marketing (social media, e-marketing) is limited due to the learning curve for individual organizations and lack of audience familiarity with these outlets (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
• The arts community’s growth has been stunted by a lack of suitable facilities. In particular, the community needs incubator spaces (rehearsal space, studios) to develop the skill sets of creators (performers, directors, writers, composers, producers etc.) in order to be ready to perform in, and program for, the new arts centre venues.
• There are limited financial and human resources to invest in market research, develop the existing (consumer) market, collect customer data and develop and implement strategies to attract new markets.

**Identified Opportunities**

• The planned relocation of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts to downtown St. Catharines and construction of a new purpose-built performing arts centre will provide a showcase for the richness and variety of the local arts sector.
• St. Catharines is rich with a variety of arts organizations and companies.
• Arts organizations are learning to partner with businesses and tap into private resources.
• The collaborative spirit within the community is being translated into some exciting trends. Several organizations have entered into new partnerships, like the Downtown Alliance of Performing Arts (DAPA) and the Arts Mosh Pit (AMP), working together on issues of promotions, advocacy, creative projects and resource sharing.
• The proposed arts centre business plan includes provisions for services that local organizations cannot easily access at present.
• Plans are in the works for an exciting initiative through a partnership between Niagara College, nGen, the City of St. Catharines and the St. Catharines and Area Arts Council, to create an online calendar of cultural events: [www.cultureinniagara.com](http://www.cultureinniagara.com).
• The education sector is acknowledging the value of arts-based learning in St. Catharines. Local learning centres ranging from elementary schools to post-secondary institutions are supporting the work of arts organizations and artists in the community. These institutions are potential partners in advocacy to the general public for the value and benefit of arts activity in St. Catharines.
• The Niagara Region is developing a regional culture plan which will potentially stimulate further development of the cultural sector across Niagara.
• Resources for project and operating funding have experienced a slight increase in recent years:
  ○ The St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program has represented an important source of funding for the community for the last five years. City Council increased the SCCIP investment by 20%.
  ○ As of 2008 the Ontario Arts Council has more funds to distribute and this has translated into first-time operating funding for two local organizations in addition to increases for other arts organizations in St. Catharines.
  ○ The Trillium Foundation continues to support and invest in local arts organizations and projects, having noted a marked increase in requests from the arts sector this past year.
• Culture and the arts are being recognized and promoted as key destination attributes by the St. Catharines Tourism Department. Tourist interest in culture and the arts is an excellent opportunity to develop new markets and patrons for St. Catharines’ artistic and cultural programs.

Common Goals in the Arts Sector
These opportunities and challenges lead to a series of goals, objectives, strategies and actions to support the arts community’s efforts to:
• sustain well-run and fiscally sound organizations;
• improve management capacity of local arts organizations;
• develop effective marketing and community outreach strategies;
• pursue opportunities for professional development;
• link the arts community and the future management team of the arts centre; and
• develop essential resources and communication strategies.

By focusing on increasing the strength – or “capacity building” - of arts organizations, this plan extends its focus beyond the creation of a new performing arts centre. Follow-through of this plan will lead to the overall enhancement of the cultural sector in St. Catharines and, by extension, Niagara. Opportunities will be created for Niagara’s cultural workers and participants: artists and creators, managers and governors, volunteers and patrons. In turn, a ripple effect of enhanced creativity and innovation across multiple sectors is both viable, and likely.

Arts-active people live healthier, more engaged lives.
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTION TIMELINES

Goals and Objectives
This plan was initiated to strengthen the performing arts community’s ability to pay increased rent and to build audiences. In the course of community consultation, the Committee discovered far-reaching issues in the sector that will affect success. The following long-term goals and objectives were developed to respond to all these issues:

**Goal #1:** Increase participation, attendance and access to the arts of Niagara.
*Objective:* Market the arts

**Goal #2:** Develop professional arts managers and arts management practices in Niagara.
*Objective:* Strengthen the skill sets of the arts community

**Goal #3:** Build community awareness and support for local arts organizations.
*Objectives:* Grow financial resources
Advocate for the Arts

In 2010, as work moves forward on the arts centre, the last goal is also shared – and essential – the arts sector:

**Goal #4**
Develop an arts centre that effectively serves the arts sector, audiences and the citizens of Niagara
*Objective:* Prepare for the Arts Centre

The arts community voiced artistic-related goals during the consultation, too, but given the original scope of this project the Committee determined these goals were best addressed in other forums.

It is anticipated – and hoped – that as this plan is implemented there will be significant spillover effects into the arts community across Niagara. The first priority – in St. Catharines – is the capacity-building of arts organizations that will use the future arts centre. However, the whole of the cultural sector in our community can benefit from the enclosed recommendations.
Objective: Market the Arts

St. Catharines boasts a vibrant arts community; increasing the visibility of this community and growing the resources needed to market and promote these organizations and activities must be a priority.

Strategy: Develop cultureiniagara.com (In Progress)

A creative partnership has been formed between several organizations and institutions to initiate the development of a website that will create an online resource of cultural activities and organizations. The online calendar will consolidate all of the cultural offerings in the region for arts consumers and organizations alike, thus addressing a need that has been identified throughout the creation of this plan by the stakeholders.

Action Timeline:

Year 1
- Develop concept, logo and design
- Test site developed
- Confirm resources for marketing campaign

Year 2
- Soft launch to arts organization to populate site
- Develop and roll-out campaign to market website to residents of Niagara

Year 3
- Continue marketing the website
- Expand market to tourism market

A healthy arts-ecosystem requires a supportive community. In return, the arts will stimulate community vitality and engagement
Strategy: Strengthen Media Relations
Encourage the type and amount of media coverage of local arts organizations and arts activities within the media across Niagara and beyond.

Action Timeline:
Year 1
- Form a group of representatives to speak on behalf of the arts community
- Consult with: Editorial Board at Osprey Media; Niagara this Week; Cogeco; and Astral Media
- Determine what other media outlets should be contacted
- Develop FAM tour and editorial contacts and strategy
- Investigate media services offered by Tourism Niagara
- Draft recommendations for media and the arts community

Year 2
- Media Action Group continues to act as a liaison with media outlets and follows up on year 1 discussions
- Identify outcomes and evaluate success of recommendations

Strategy: Undertake Market Research
Participation in a Market Research Study such as the *Engage St. Catharines* project will provide essential marketing data to the new arts centre, the Centre for the Arts at Brock University, other arts providers and the City of St. Catharines.

Action Timeline:
Year 1
- Identify arts community participants
- Undertake consumer marketing research and analysis studies

Year 2
- Continue study
- Evaluate research
- Use collected market research to inform marketing strategies for individual and collective marketing plans
Year 3

- Roll out recommended strategies from market research

**Strategy: Develop Collective Marketing Initiatives**
Collective marketing will increase the visibility of the arts through research, cross-pollination, expanded reach and an increase in overall marketing activity.

**Action Timeline:**

**Year 1**

- Research and evaluate the impact of existing initiatives undertaken by DAPA and AMP
- Engage in conversations about collective ad buys with the arts community
- Strategize with Brock Centre for the Arts around the eyeGo program for high school students
- Identify local agencies involved in market research

**Year 2**

- Confirm resources available and explore potential partnerships with City of St. Catharines departments and other agencies
- Negotiate a collective ad campaign with media outlets
- Develop collective Marketing Strategy based on Market Research Study and other market research initiatives.

**Year 3**

- Review marketing strategy and act on new avenues for marketing based on the data found through Market Study and other marketing initiatives
Objective: Strengthen the Skill Sets of the Arts Community

The goal of this strategy is to assist with the advancement of management practices in the arts by creating accessible workshops, online resources and programs to enhance the arts community’s management capacity and to better prepare the sector for the opening of the Niagara Centre for the Arts. Strategies should be developed for managers, artists, governors, and other cultural workers and volunteers and will include consideration of the rapidly changing face of technology in the sector.

Strategy: Expand Existing Professional Development Series

A structured development series, building on the existing efforts of the St. Catharines & Area Arts Council, will enhance the skills of arts administrators, governance volunteers and artists.

Action Timeline:

Year 1
- Extend the St. Catharines & Area Art Council’s partnership with the St. Catharines Enterprise Centre
- In consultation with the arts community, and using the results from the December 2008 survey and March 2009 roundtable, prioritize appropriate professional development topics to be covered in Years 2 and 3

Year 2
- Research funding opportunities to support and expand the St. Catharines & Area Arts Council’s professional development series based on availability, access and priority issues identified above.
- Identify the means to host a conference or multi-day workshop on business planning
- Confirm topics and resources for Year 3

Year 3
- Formalize a funding and administrative plan for a sustainable professional development series
- Evaluate the professional development initiatives undertaken over the first three years and engage in a discussion with all the stakeholders regarding the future professional development needs of the arts community
Strategy: Identify Outside Resources for Skills Development
Specialized arts expertise cannot always be found in Niagara – connecting local organizations with external resources can benefit the growth of skill sets in Niagara.

Action Timeline:
Year 1
- Identify other professional development resources locally and investigate strategies for encouraging use by community (ie. Sheridan College, Brock’s School of Business, Business Education Council of Niagara etc.)
- Connect with specialized arts management and training programs across Ontario, Canada and in the United States and consider mechanisms for “sharing” these resources with local organizations
- Find relevant webinars that may be of interest to local community and coordinate pilot engagement program
- Identify community partners to “host” invited workshops, speakers in Niagara

Year 2
- Encourage increased local knowledge of the skill sets required to run an effective arts organizations
- Identify opportunities to promote learning in the community, including building relationships with external resources

Strategy: Showcase Best Practices
Local organizations are resourceful and creative in their strategies to develop, promote and manage arts creation. Networking and sharing success stories can inspire and encourage growth in the sector, help celebrate local achievements, and allow emerging artists and organizations to learn from the stories of their more experienced peers.

Action Timeline:
Year 1
- Identify skill-set exchange opportunities within the community
- Establish a process to showcase best practices within the arts sector and beyond
Objective: Grow Financial Resources

The St. Catharines Cultural Investment Plan has fostered the delivery of arts activities for the past five years. This investment has had a multiplier effect, as arts organizations have been more successful in attracting other funds to the area thanks to the support from the City. This strategy aims to identify other means of enhancing revenue generation.

Strategy: Grow Earned Revenues

Arts organizations survive on more or less earned revenue, depending on the nature of the arts activity, size of audience and the wealth of their patrons. Growing these revenues is the perpetual goal of most organizations and collective strategies will support this aim.

Action Timeline:

Year 1

- Begin discussion on level of ticket prices in Niagara
- Develop a strategy to educate audiences on to the real cost of the arts
- Undertake Focus Groups to seek audience input
- Plan to raise ticket prices, while maintaining accessibility strategies for the under-employed, students etc.
- Incorporate investigation of cost-capacity of local community in Market Research Study

Year 2

- Move forward on audience education/ticket pricing strategy, as per research in Study and consultation
- Review event management practices in arts community
- Identify innovative and best practices for other earned revenue development elsewhere and promote to arts community
- Identify collective revenue generating strategies

Year 3

- Measure response to education and ticket pricing strategy and respond
- Connect professional development series to targeted areas of skills development that will serve earned revenue, including events management, ticket sales strategies and other forms of sales
Strategy: Encourage the creation of an Endowment for the Arts at the Niagara Community Foundation
A targeted endowment with the Niagara Community Foundation will increase the pool of funds available to support individual projects and arts organizations.

*Action Timeline:*

**Year 1**
- Initiate discussions with the Niagara Community Foundation regarding the feasibility and requirements of such an Endowment
- Develop a strategy to fund the endowment and determine an implementation timeline
- Identify leadership for this initiative.

Strategy: Grow the Fundraising Capacity of the Arts Community
Building the fundraising skills and capacities within the community will be essential for the long-term stability of many arts organizations in St. Catharines. This action is linked to the skill-building strategy, and will capitalize on its success.

*Action Timeline*

**Year 1**
- Evaluate the results of the current efforts being undertaken by CUAG to understand the current environment for fundraising in Niagara
- Assess existing fundraising practices and successes within arts community and determine areas that require improvement.
- Establish benchmarks and success indicators with which to measure improvement.
- Identify potential partnership opportunities with City’s fundraising campaign for the arts centre.

**Year 2**
- Determine if the St. Catharines & Area Arts Council pilot project that hired a fundraiser to provide expertise to the sector can be extended or expanded
- Offer effective grant, report and corporate-appeal writing workshops in partnership with the professional development series
- Investigate mechanisms for increasing philanthropic awareness in the business and corporate sector of Niagara (ie. can Artsvest be re-introduced?)

**Year 3**
- Investigate collective fundraising strategies and initiate development, if feasible
Strategy: Assess public support of the arts in St. Catharines-Niagara
Additional streams of public funding will strengthen the growth and sustainability of the local arts organizations that will populate the Niagara Centre for the Arts. A comparative analysis of existing support, and advocacy for new support, can ensure the arts sector is able to serve our community more effectively.

Action Timeline
Year 1
- Evaluate the level of public support provided by the City of St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program, in comparison to other municipalities, and assess its effectiveness in capacity-building of the arts sector.
- Initiate a conversation with Regional staff and the Regional Culture Committee to encourage and advocate for regional funding support to develop and strengthen the sector and its ability to work with the broader community.
- Assess provincial and federal investment in the local arts community and identify strategies for increasing this investment, where feasible.

Year 2
- As identified, make recommendations for change to the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program to maximize its capacity-building potential.
- Continue advocacy efforts at other levels of government and in community as required.
Objective: Advocate for the Arts

Advocacy is an ongoing requirement of successful arts communities and requires concerted, coordinated effort to a variety of bodies. While many components of this plan already function as advocacy strategies, additional work is encouraged.

Strategy: Encourage Arts in Education

Over the past 15 years the arts in the school system have experienced massive cuts. Studies link arts audiences and patrons to their experience of the arts in school.

Action Timeline

Year 1
- Identify leaders in arts education in Niagara and coordinate amongst them
- Review new provincial arts curriculum and identify opportunities for local arts community
- Encourage creative means with which to engage the School Boards of Niagara with the arts community

Year 2
- Consider advocacy efforts to regional and provincial governments to encourage more arts activity in the class room
- Seek other mechanism to grow arts activity for school children

Strategy: Get People Talking

Dialogue about the arts encourages creative thinking, self-reflection, and healthy debate in a community.

Actions
- Identify efforts already underway to engage the community in dialogue – ie. Rodman Hall’s Hot Talks, Niagara Artists Centre, Brock University, the Canadian Federation of University Women’s monthly lecture series etc.
- Seek new partners to encourage lecture series, panels and workshops that encourage learning and debate about the arts
- Investigate cross-pollination opportunities between community partners to draw new participants to the discussion
- Celebrate controversy
Strategy: Emphasize Participation in the Arts
The arts are for everyone, whether as a pastime at home, with a community group, or as a visitor to a gallery or audience member. Many residents of Niagara have little or no experience of the local arts – and are missing opportunities for personal growth and community engagement.

Actions
- Identify arts participation opportunities for residents of all ages
- Ensure local agencies such as PRO Kids, FACS etc have appropriate information on arts opportunities in the community
- Identify strategies for encouraging participation in the arts, including expansion of existing programs that could serve a broader population
- Build on early efforts to develop community art practices in the region, including the United Way Innovation Fund, projects sponsored by the YWCA and Start me Up, and the City of St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP)
Objective: Prepare for the Arts Centre
The Niagara Centre for the Arts will play an important role in the growth of the arts sector in St. Catharines. The arts community must work with NCFA management and the City of St. Catharines in order to take advantage of the synergies that will be created by the presence of the Centre. Preparedness, for all stakeholders, will maximize the benefits of the future development.

Strategy: Confirm the arts community’s role in project planning
Good communication will be integral to the success of the project. This strategy encourages clear channels of communication between artists, arts organizations, the project management team and the central operating entity of the Arts Centre.

Action Timeline:
Year 1
- Include the Community User Advisory Group (CUAG) in the City’s reporting structure
- Include meaningful arts representation in decision-making teams associated with: the selection of project management, architect and design team/s; facility and technical development; governance design and development; management and operating model; and related policy

Year 2
- Ensure that policy development for the arts centre includes and highlights the centre’s role in the development of a healthy, sustainable arts community
- Develop components for the Municipal Cultural Policy that will serve the development of the arts community alongside the future arts centre.

Strategy: Develop a mechanism for rental access at the new Arts Centre
One of the recommendations of the recent feasibility study is that a fund be developed to ensure rental rates are accessible for local user groups. It further states that significant reductions in rent, while essential to the arts community, are detrimental to the business plan for the centre. A clear plan is required to create, fund and eventually administer an “arts facility access fund.”

Action Timeline:
Year 1
- Research existing models with other Arts Centres and fundraising experts
- Develop a strategy for the creation and maintenance of the fund with the Niagara Centre for the Arts Project Management Team
- Develop a fund development plan, if required
Year 2
- Start gathering financial and administrative resources for the fund
- Set administrative parameters for rental subsidies at the Centre, including eligibility criteria and evaluation process

Year 3
- Secure funding for the subsidy
- Work with NCFA management to implement the administration policy for the fund

*See Strategy: Grow Fundraising Capacity of the Arts Community*
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Potential Partners

While the “what” is relatively clear, the “who” of this plan is more complex. There are potentially a large number of partners and collaborators that are needed to respond to this plan. Coordinating the involvement and commitment of these partners is a significant requirement of success and is discussed in more detail in the next section. A better understanding of the range of partners required for success will help shape the solution for how the plan moves forward.

In order to begin the collaborative process, this plan acknowledges participation in several ways, with varying degrees of responsibility, resource contribution and commitment. Through the consultation process many organizations and agencies have expressed interest in being included in these plans. Shaping these partnerships will be the first task, and essential to success will be clear partnership agreements. We propose the following categories as the starting point for all partnerships.

**Lead Partner:** For each Strategy within the Plan, one organization will play the lead role, invest resources, initiate the specific project and facilitate all community involvement. Leads will identify key partners who are essential for a project or action to move forward, will seek out additional resources as required, and will encourage Collaborators and Participants as appropriate. The Lead Partner is responsible for moving the Strategy and Action Timeline forward.

**Key Partner:** An organization or agency that provides a distinct skill set, or resource base, that is essential to the Strategy or project’s ability to move forward. There may be up to 2 – 4 Key Partners on any Strategy and they will usually provide additional resources – human, financial, equipment or knowledge-base – that are required to achieve success.

**Collaborators:** Many organizations have experience that will serve a new project. Collaborators will participate in meetings, provide input as required, undertake tasks in support of the project, and assist with broad-based communication, as required.

**Participants:** Many additional individuals and organizations will be essential to moving some of the plan’s strategies forward. Participants will assist with tasks such as: completing a survey, participating in a focus group or distributing information to audiences, members or other organizations.

Many organizations and agencies will likely be involved as the plan’s objectives and strategies are pursued. The following list is by no means inclusive but provides an idea of the level of community involvement this plan requires.
Brock University:
Centre for the Arts, Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Rodman Hall Art Centre

City of St. Catharines:
Divisions and Departments: Cultural Services, Economic Development and Tourism, Niagara Centre for the Arts Project Management Team, St. Catharines Enterprise Centre
Committees: Arts Community Development Committee, Community User Advisory Group, Culture Committee, Niagara Centre for the Arts Task Force, Public Art Advisory Committee

Other Niagara Arts Organizations:
Arts Council of Fort Erie, Ontario Presenting Network (CCI), Shaw Festival

Other Niagara Entities:
nGen – Niagara Interactive Media Generator, Niagara College, Niagara Community Foundation, St. Catharines Downtown Business Association

Regional Municipality of Niagara:
Niagara Economic Development Corporation, Niagara Region Culture Committee, Tourism Niagara

St. Catharines’ Arts Community (including but not limited to):

St. Catharines & Area Arts Council

Leadership for the Plan
Ideally, one agency would lead the coordination, resource-identification and commitment of this many partners. In addition, managing communication between partners, and reporting back to the community on progress will be important to maintain buy-in of the sector.

In the development of this plan, as with much of the work on the arts centre project to date, the St. Catharines arts community has been coordinated, consulted and supported through the City of St. Catharines’ Cultural Services Department. This Division of the Recreation and Community Services Department has Council direction and oversight through the Municipal Cultural Policy (2000) and the Recreation Facility Masterplan (2008).

A draft of this plan was reviewed with two of the City’s Committees of Council – the Culture Committee and NCAT. It was noted that much of this plan does not directly respond to either of
these two sources of Council direction. Since the City is already growing its service commitment with the development of the arts centre, but has no plans to grow its staff resource base at this time, the City’s Cultural Services Division does not have the capacity to take on significant new work, as identified in this plan. Nor is it practical to assume this plan could be led by a Volunteer Committee without staff resources.

Since 2001 the arts community has also been represented and served by the St. Catharines & Area Arts Council. The Arts Council is a membership-based charity that supports the cultural life of St. Catharines through service to the arts community, and public programs that build audiences for the arts. The Arts Council is a broadly based arts service organization, representing performing, visual, media and literary artists and arts organizations that represent a spectrum of practice, from recreational to professional. All established St. Catharines arts organizations, as well as many emerging arts groups and a range of individual artists, are Arts Council members.

In the Arts Council’s draft strategic plan for 2009-2012, the organization identified its goals as: offering programs and services which strengthen the capacity of the arts and culture sector, providing a voice for the sector, and communicating the value of arts and culture. It also identified, in brief, its values as: the belief in the social and economic value of the arts, collaboration with community partners, embracing diversity, and responsiveness to the needs of its members and the community.

Given that the Arts Council’s goals and values align closely with the goals and actions of this plan, the Arts Council is being proposed as the primary body to provide leadership for the plan as a whole. The Arts Council’s Board of Directors is expected to review the plan and proposal for leadership, and respond early in 2010.
NEXT STEPS

Since this plan has been a broad-reaching effort, a fair number of groups and agencies require final consultation before it can truly move ahead. ACDC, the lead Committee on this initiative, are moving forward with presentations to:

Niagara Centre for the Arts Task Force
St. Catharines Culture Committee
Community User Advisory Group
Region of Niagara Culture Plan Oversight Committee

Once the above groups have been consulted, and further discussion has taken place with the leadership of the St. Catharines and Area Arts Council, ACDC will present the plan to St. Catharines City Council, through the Niagara Centre for the Arts Task Force.

There will be resource implications for the Arts Council, although they have informally acknowledged that much of this plan aligns well with their current strategic plan. It is hoped that the City will continue to work with the Arts Council leadership to ensure this plan moves forward successfully. The writers of this plan acknowledge that this plan has considerable fluidity – new ideas and opportunities will emerge, and priorities may shift accordingly. However, the ultimate aim will not change: the building of a strong arts sector ready for an exciting new flagship for the community – the future arts centre in the heart of downtown St. Catharines.

Lyndesfarne Theatre Projects

Albertine in Five Times by Micheal Tremblay
Strategies and Partnerships Underway

As this plan was written some of the strategies were initiated, or are at a stage where partnerships are being investigated and resources sought. The following partnerships have been identified to date in association with the enclosed strategies:

Strategy: Develop cultureinniagara.com
- **Lead Partner:** City of St. Catharines, Cultural Services
- **Key Partners:** St. Catharines and Area Arts Council, Niagara College
- **Collaborators:** nGen, City of St. Catharines Tourism Services
- **Participants:** All producers of arts and cultural events in Niagara.

Strategy: Undertake Market Research
- **Lead Partner:** CCI (Ontario Presenters Network)
- **Key Partners:** Centre for the Arts, Brock University, City of St. Catharines Cultural Services
- **Collaborators:** TBD
- **Participants:** TBD

Strategy: Expand Existing Professional Development Series
- **Lead Partner:** St. Catharines and Area Arts Council
- **Key Partners:** City of St. Catharines – Enterprise Centre, Cultural Services
- **Collaborators:**
- **Participants:**

Strategy: Encourage Arts in Education
- **Lead Partner:** Carousel Players
- **Key Partners:** District School Board of Niagara, Niagara Catholic School Board
- **Collaborators:**
- **Participants:**
Strategy: Confirm the arts community’s role in project planning

**Lead Partner:** City of St. Catharines

**Key Partners:** Brock University – Centre for the Arts, Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts

**Collaborators:** Community User Advisory Group (A Subcommittee of the Niagara Centre for the Arts Task Force), St. Catharines and Area Arts Council

**Participants:**

*Photo by Sandy Middleton*

*In The Soil: Niagara’s Homegrown Arts Festival*

*Photo by Sandy Middleton*
Committee Members

Niagara Centre for the Arts Task Force (NCAT)

Committee of St. Catharines City Council

Mayor Dave Augustyn, Town of Pelham (Regional Council Representative)
Councillor Jeff Burch
Councillor Mark Elliott
Rebecca Cann, Recreation and Community Services, City of St. Catharines
Tracy Cotton (Chair)
Patti Broughton
Elizabeth Fritshaw
Jane Gardner
Hugh Gayler
Art Lefstein
Joan Medina
Sara Palmieri
Ron & Polly Ritchell
Jennifer Wallace
Derek Knight, Director, Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University
Sue Morrison, Consultant, Ministries of Citizenship, Culture, Sports and Recreation
Kim Payne, Economic Development and Tourism Services, City of St. Catharines

NCAT Subcommittee - Arts Community Development Committee (ACDC)

Patti Broughton St. Catharines & Area Arts Council
Rebecca Cann City of St. Catharines
Pablo Felices- Luna (Chair) Carousel Players
Stephanie Jones Essential Collective Theatre
(Culture Committee Rep)
Hugh Gayler Chorus Niagara
Sara Palmieri Centre for the Arts, Brock University
Kim Payne City of St. Catharines

(Earlier participants included Kim Shipp and Tammy Kruck)
NCAT Subcommittee - Community User Advisory Group (CUAG)

Represented Organizations include:

- Carousel Players
- Chorus Niagara
- Essential Collective Theatre
- Gallery Players of Niagara
- Garden City Productions
- Lyndesfarne Theatre Projects
- Niagara Artists Centre
- Niagara Dance Company
- Niagara Symphony
- Niagara Youth Orchestra
- Primavera Concerts
- Stray Theatre Independents
- St Catharines & Area Arts Council
- Suitcase in Point
- Theatre Beyond Words

Culture Committee

Committee of St. Catharines City Council

- Councillor Mark Elliott
- Councillor Heather Foss
- Rebecca Cann (City)
- Tanya Faulkner
- Angela Harris
- Stephanie Jones
- Wynne Nicholson
- Rick Rochon
- John Storm
- Peter Vietgen
- David Vivian
- Lilita Stripnieks
- Kevin Blozowski (City)
- Kim Payne (City)
For more information contact: cultureservices@stcatharines.ca