



CULTURE PLAN **SURVEY**

Town of Whitby Culture Plan

Phase 1

Engagement Summary

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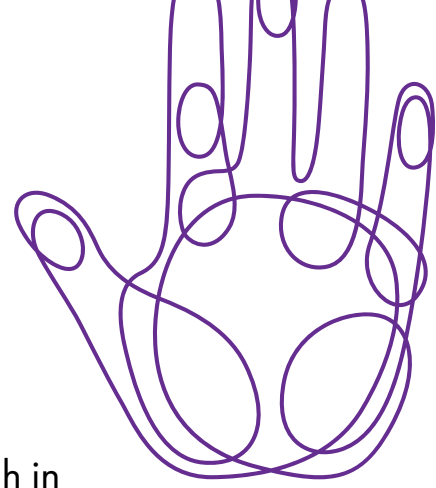
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What is the Whitby Culture Plan?



The Town of Whitby is developing its first Culture Plan that will launch in 2020. The plan will set a long-term vision for culture, identifying priorities and actions to enhance and facilitate arts, culture and heritage within Whitby. It will also consider how culture can assist to achieve broader municipal strategic objectives. A key factor of success is collaboration between various partners, including municipal and regional staff, cultural organizations, stakeholders and the general public.

Whitby is a fast growing, vibrant municipality, known for offering a small-town atmosphere with the sophistication and amenities of a large urban centre. Whitby currently has numerous cultural assets including institutions like the Station Gallery, Whitby Public Library, Lynde House Museum and Whitby Courthouse Theatre. There are also many community events such as Open Streets, tree lighting events, Culture in the Square and Movies in the Park. The town is also known for its built and natural heritage, including the waterfront, parks and greenspaces, two (2) historic downtowns and productive agricultural areas.

As one of the fastest growing municipalities in Ontario, the Town is looking at sound planning tools to manage growth pressures and maintain the high quality of life that makes Whitby so attractive to residents and businesses. A thriving cultural sector is critical to maintaining and enhancing this high quality of life.

The purpose of the Whitby Culture Plan is to enhance Whitby's existing cultural assets, make room for new cultural activities and development, demonstrate a commitment to local art and culture, and contribute to other Town goals including building an age-friendly community, revitalizing the two (2) downtowns, and attracting and retaining capital investment and talent, leading to a strong economy. The plan will be a high-level document that provides strategic directions and actions to guide cultural activity for the next ten (10) years.

What is the Culture Plan Process?

The Culture Plan is rooted in a collaborative, community-driven and creative approach.

The cultural planning process includes extensive community consultation. Various and diverse perspectives are needed to help the Town strategically identify cultural resources in the municipality and to plan for how cultural resources can achieve broader civic goals. As this is the first culture plan for the Town and there is no baseline cultural inventory, an extensive stakeholder and public engagement program has been developed to crowd-source a cultural inventory and to identify strengths, challenges and priorities for culture in the Town.

There are three (3) phases to the Culture Plan:

1. Getting to know Culture in Whitby (What's happening today?) - Spring/Summer 2019;
2. Goal Setting and Community Aspirations (What should the future look like?) - Summer/Fall 2019; and
3. Let's Launch the Culture Plan (What are the steps to get us there?) - Fall 2019/Winter 2020.

Figure 1 Culture Plan Engagement + Communications Work Plan

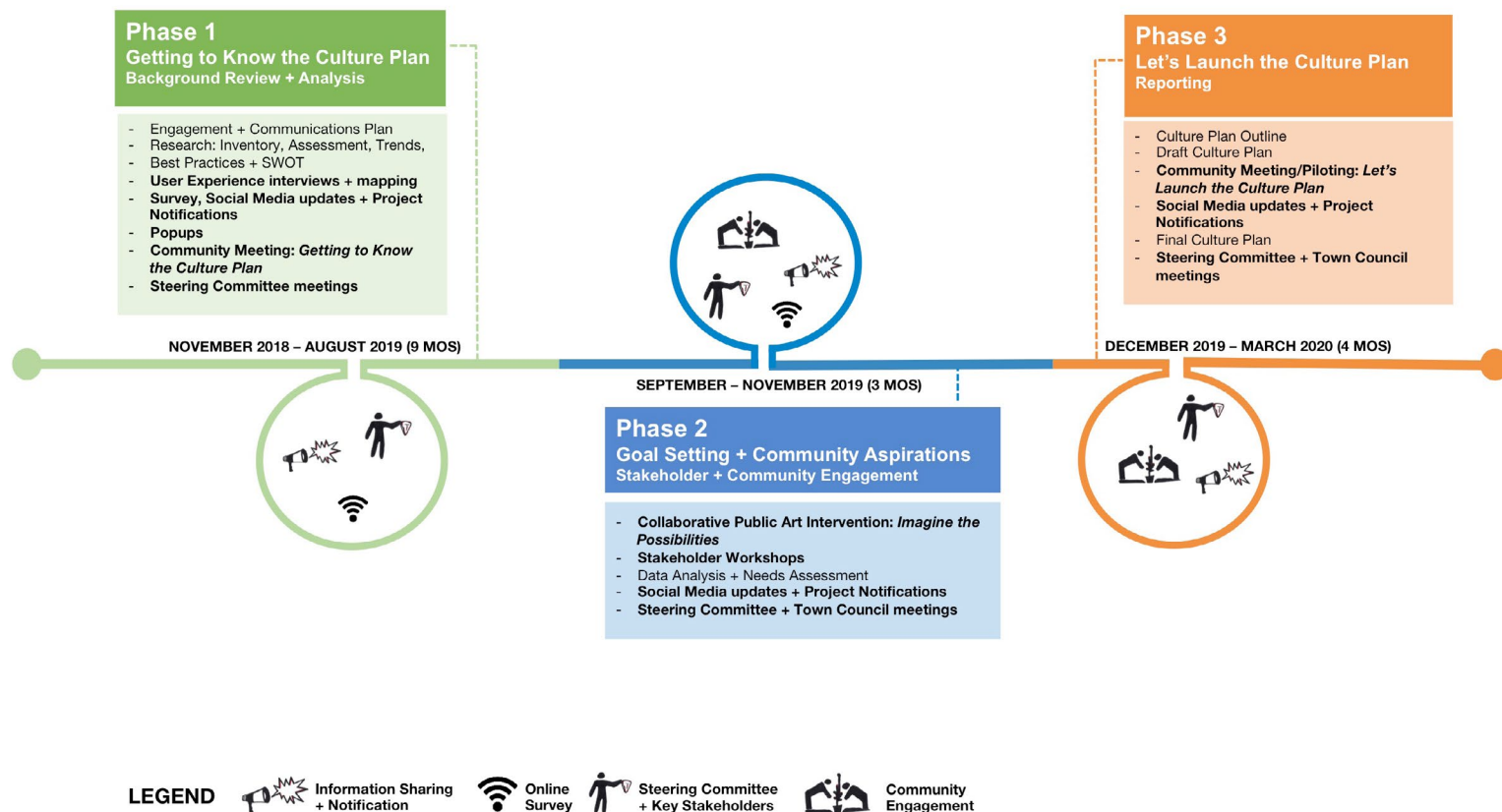
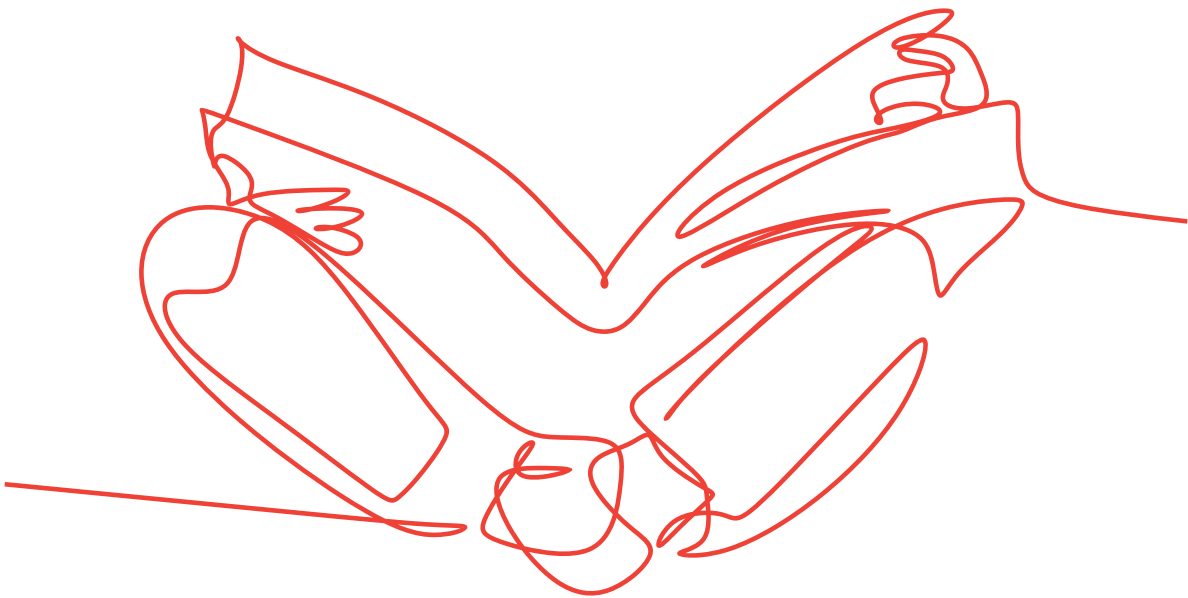




Image of feedback written during public consultation at Whitby Town Hall



Phase 1 Engagement



About This Report

This report summarizes the key messages that emerged during the stakeholder and public consultations held between January and July 2019 as part of Phase 1 of the Culture Plan process. The feedback gained in Phase 1 helps to establish the foundation of the Culture Plan, which includes an inventory of cultural assets and an understanding of the experiences and priorities for culture in Whitby.

Engagement Goals

The goals of the Phase 1 engagement were to:

1. Introduce the overall project to Whitby residents and create awareness about the goals, process and opportunities to participate;
2. Collectively explore the Town's current cultural assets, including the strengths and weaknesses, and priorities for the future to inform Phase 2 and 3; and
3. Build capacity and interest for long term engagement throughout the cultural planning process and beyond.

695

Public Survey Respondents

400

Pop Up Participants

60

Public Meeting
Participants

27

Social Pointpoint
Participants

25

Key Stakeholder
Survey Respondents

7

Project Steering
Committee Members

9

Key Stakeholder
Interviews

How We Engaged

The approach to engagement for Phase 1 ensured many opportunities to meet with a diversity of stakeholders in Whitby, including those deeply involved in the cultural sector and members of the general public. The following is an overview of who we've engaged to date:

Project Steering Committee

A Steering Committee, which includes Town staff and key cultural stakeholders (see **Appendix A** for Project Steering Committee members) met twice to review the project objectives, discuss strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and provide guidance on the cultural planning process. This included advice on which stakeholders to engage in detailed interviews and through a targeted online survey.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Interviews: In March 2019, PROCESS facilitated nine (9) interviews with key stakeholders from various cultural sectors (see **Appendix B** for Stakeholder list). The purpose of stakeholder interviews is to capture in-depth feedback from those involved in the culture sector in Whitby today, to build relationships and support for the project, inform them of the project's process and collect feedback on their experiences and priorities for culture in Whitby (see **Appendix C** for Stakeholder Interview Questions).

Stakeholder Survey: In addition to the in-depth interviews, a detailed survey, with similar questions, was sent to 30 other stakeholders (see **Appendix B** for Stakeholder list). Participants were asked to map out relevant cultural places, through the online tool [Social Pinpoint](#). 25 participants responded to the survey.



Image from Open House at Whitby Town Hall



Image from Pop-Up at Whitby Town Hall

Public Engagement

Open House: On June 4th, 2019, Town staff and PROCESS facilitated one (1) afternoon pop-up and one (1) community meeting open house at Town Hall. Over 60 participants were engaged through this process. The afternoon session was held in the Town Hall foyer, which acted as a 'drop-in.' The pop-up included boards with information on the cultural planning process and three stations to collect feedback. The three stations included questions about how participants define and experience culture in Whitby, a cultural asset mapping exercise and a prioritization activity. The evening community meeting open house followed a similar format and included a presentation from PROCESS, the consultant team. Most meeting participants were either passing through Town Hall, interested in or working in the cultural sector, engaged citizens or Town staff.

Online Survey: For those unable to attend the open house, a survey was distributed online. It was promoted through social media channels and through pop-ups. Participants were asked about their experiences in Whitby and recommendations for the future. They were asked to add to the social pinpoint online map of cultural resources through [Social Pinpoint](#). 695 people responded to the survey. Respondents came from diverse socio-economic, cultural and geographic backgrounds.

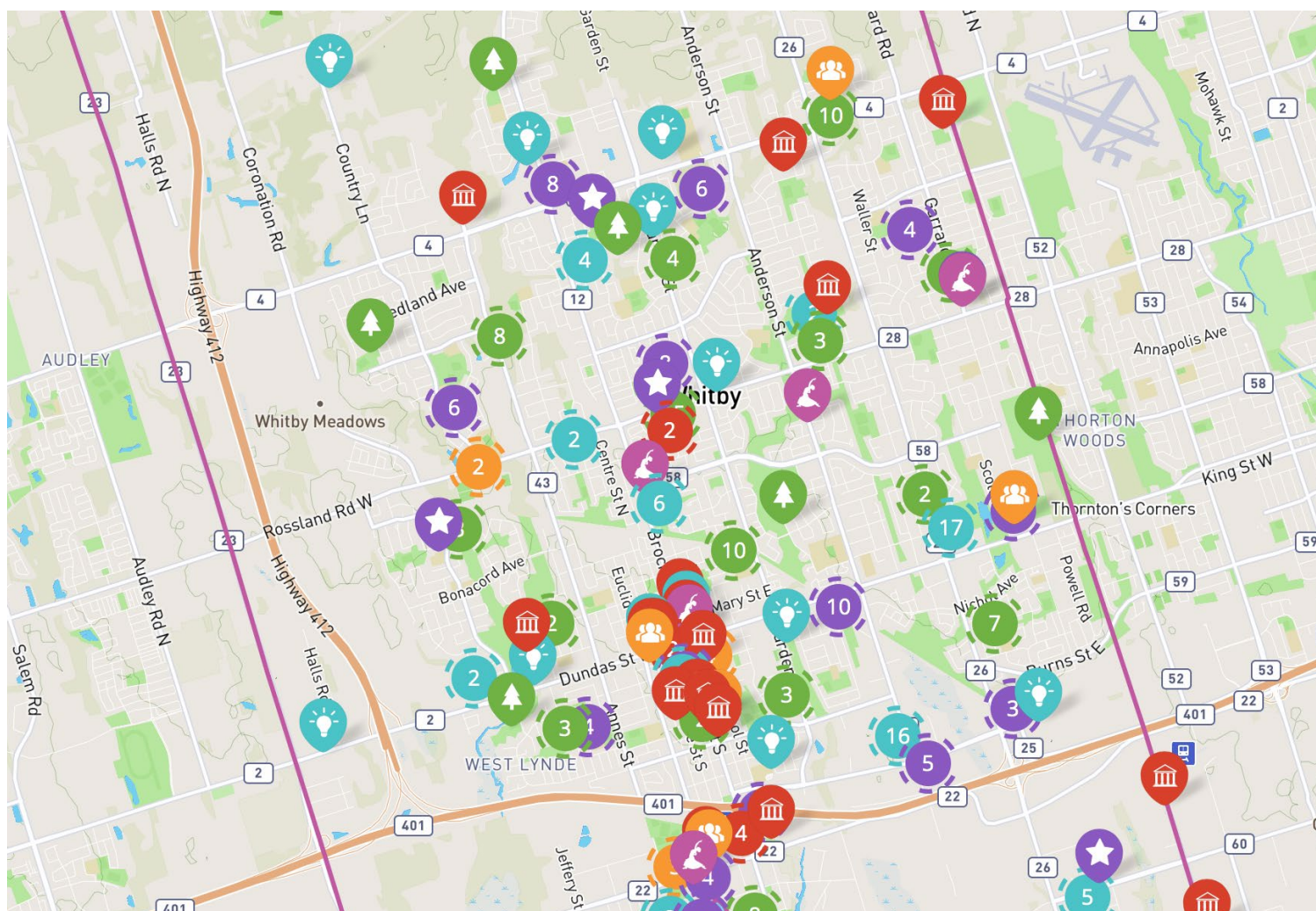
Pop-Ups: Town staff attended eight (8) community events and festivals across Town throughout the early summer. The main purpose of the pop-ups was to meet people where they are, share information about the Culture Plan and collect feedback. While meetings and workshops support detailed and in-depth discussions and information sharing with participants who have the availability, accessibility, and interest to attend, pop-ups aim to attract those who do not attend.

At the pop-ups, Town staff introduced the project, provided information about the online survey and collected feedback on how participants experience and define culture in Whitby (through a collage-making activity). Altogether, approximately 400 people had conversations with Town staff at the pop-up events.

Social Pinpoint

Social Pinpoint is a community engagement software with interactive mapping. This tool was used to visualize the cultural inventory that was created as a part of the Culture Plan Phase 1 Background Report as well as crowd-source inventory from the people of Whitby. Participants were invited to map different cultural assets in Whitby under Statistics Canada's Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics Categories: community and cultural organizations, natural heritage, cultural heritage, cultural enterprises, cultural facilities and spaces and cultural events. 27 people contributed. The map resulting interactive map in an inventory of cultural resources within Whitby (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2 Inventory of Cultural Assets within Whitby



Indigenous Engagement

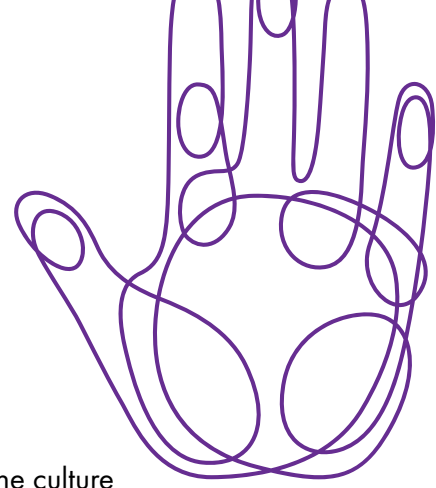
Our team recognizes that Indigenous voices are critical to ensuring the Culture Plan is inclusive and reflects the past, present and future of the land and culture of the area. This includes Indigenous oral traditions, language, social practices, rituals and knowledge.

Not only is it important to recognize Indigenous culture and history, the Culture Plan presents opportunities to respond to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action. Phase 2 will include Indigenous cultural training as well as consultation with Indigenous community members to unearth stories connected to this land and build relationships between the Town and Indigenous communities moving forward.



Image from Open House at Whitby Town Hall

Key Consultation Messages



Culture means many different things to different people. The majority of participants define culture as visual and performing arts, the heritage and history of the area, as well as food and culinary experiences. Some participants also indicate that there are intangible aspects that contribute to culture in Whitby, such as the sense of a collective community and the diverse stories and narratives of the Town. Many people also describe culture as being inclusive and accessible to people of diverse backgrounds, and of all ages and abilities.

While sport is seen as a key cultural component in the Town, the majority of participants indicate that sport should not be a priority of the Culture Plan.

While existing cultural places, facilities and events are appreciated and used, there is a desire for more. Participants indicate that they currently engage in a variety of cultural activities in Whitby including performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, natural heritage, and food culture. Specifically, participants mention enjoying many of the cultural events put on in the town, including the Christmas Market, Doors Open, Culture in the Square, Harvest Festival, performances at Courthouse Theatre and events at Station Gallery.

However, participants also mentioned the need for a larger variety of organizations, programs, and events that highlight local culture. There is also a sense that Whitby lacks a “large draw” which brings people to Whitby from around the region. People reference other municipalities and the experiences they offer, such as the City of Oshawa’s Robert McLaughlin gallery, which are able to draw larger audiences through cultural offerings.

There is an untapped creative community in Whitby. There are many people working in the cultural and creative sector as artists, designers, writers, etc. However, it is suggested that many work out of their homes or commute to larger municipalities for work. For example, cultural workers who moved to Whitby from Toronto mention that they, and many friends, work out of their homes or coffee shops and often travel to Oshawa or Toronto for cultural activities and events. As larger municipalities in the region become less affordable, there is speculation that the population of cultural workers in Whitby will grow. However, there is also some concern of a “talent brain drain”, wherein people working in the creative and cultural sectors relocate from Whitby to more seemingly culturally-rich communities. Therefore, some participants indicate a need for cultural hubs and coworking spaces within Whitby. They also identify a need to be able to access more culture locally. Suggestions include animating both downtowns and the waterfront.

“Two downtowns is a bonus for us and can be utilized for everyone’s advantage. They can work together and share; they can also work separately to provide more!” - Public Survey respondent

Consider the evolving nature of Whitby while acknowledging its history. We heard that Whitby should embrace and showcase diversity as the Town grows and changes, while also reflecting the many historical narratives of the Town, including Indigenous history and stories of influential figures in the town's more recent history. This may be in the form of plaques, school programs or larger scale events.

"Too many residents don't know of our interesting history, and many don't even know we have a history museum." - Stakeholder Survey participant

"The future of Whitby is a community that is conscious of its past, and looking ahead to the future" - Stakeholder Survey participant

"Heritage gives a sense of place and creates collective memory. Heritage Buildings should be preserved for the future. Whitby Archives and all aspects of heritage support the culture of Whitby"" - Open House attendant

Create publicly accessible spaces for culture. It was identified that there is a lack of gathering spaces in Whitby. Recommendations to incorporate culture, such as public art, in publicly accessible spaces like parks and the waterfront have been made. There is also a desire for spaces which facilitate community-led cultural initiatives.

"Venues are not readily available for all activities - and should remain open to the public even when not in use. i.e. Courthouse Theatre is locked up. Booking of spaces is difficult and unclear for groups wishing to host cultural events." - Public Survey respondent

"Hosting events in Brooklin would be great (Bandshell/Stage)" - Pop-up participant

"Free activities and art reflect the community and give the voiceless a voice" - Open House attendant

Leverage Whitby's growing food culture. Many participants want to see increased support for restaurants, farms, and breweries in the town. Participants enjoy Harvest Fest, food markets, and restaurant and brewery tours. Many express a desire for more opportunities to engage with food and drink culture. We also heard participants mentioned that it is important for the diversity of Whitby to be reflected in its food culture scene.

"Whitby's culinary scene is unlike any of the surrounding municipalities...By supporting and further developing local farms, restaurants, breweries, Durham College Centre for Food, and our farmers market, Whitby could have a culinary scene other municipalities envy." - Open House attendant

"Downtown Whitby has a great culinary tradition, it is "on the map". However, the foodprint could be extended and the range of offerings needs to be expanded/extended. I would like to see more ethnic food such as bao, jollof rice, injera" - Open House attendant

Promote Whitby's urban-rural cultural identity. Many participants recognize that Whitby has a unique location geographically as it has both rural and urban amenities. This also includes the many natural heritage features located directly within the Town. For instance, the waterfront is identified as underutilized and therefore presents an opportunity to be activated with cultural programming, events, and public art. In addition, participants mention walking tours of heritage districts and public art as opportunities for people to engage and learn about the cultural identity of Whitby.

"I think our hiking trails, waterfront trail, parks and green spaces are a huge asset and should be protected and preserved. These assets get people into the community, interacting with nature and each other" - Open House attendant

"Make the waterfront a destination (ex. the Jubilee in Oshawa) with cultural offerings and not just a dog park." Open House attendant

Develop partnerships with Whitby's existing organizations and businesses. Many participants indicate that while there are many cultural organizations and businesses within the town, there is minimal collaboration between them. The Town should therefore foster partnerships between organizations and businesses that align with the Culture Plan's goals. Specifically, look at areas slated for growth, identify community assets in need of support and strive to build bridges between disparate groups with shared interests (i.e., cultural spaces lacking in resources but flexible space with cultural organizations looking for flexible space).

"I would like to see innovative collaborations between existing members of the cultural sector" - Stakeholder Survey respondent

Establish processes for the Town of Whitby to better support culture. Some participants would like the Town to take a more active role in facilitating cultural activities. This could be through financial support, providing in-kind space to artists or cultural producers in need, finding opportunities to work with artists in communities, act as a connector between different organizations and businesses, and offer promotional or marketing support. Many stakeholders indicate opportunities to break down siloed planning models within the Town and Region through this Culture Plan.

"We need more funding for the arts" - Public Survey respondent

"Whitby does not provide ongoing significant public support for the operation of public heritage structures like Lynde House and Rowe Houses" - Survey respondent

Support complete community objectives, which includes diverse modes of transportation.

Participants indicate that there is limited active transportation to participate in cultural events and activities. Many would like to see cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure that connects to areas and events where cultural activities occur.

"There is a lack of transit, pedestrian and cycling-friendly routes to and from activities" - Public Survey respondent

"I would like to see more accessibility, way-finding, and a variety of activities" - Public Survey respondent

"Increasing the walkability of the area" - Public Survey respondent

Priorities

Throughout all engagements, there were some overarching priorities identified:

- Invest in bricks and mortar cultural facilities (both those existing and new cultural hubs);
- Prioritize gathering places to bring people together;
- Celebrate Whitby's diversity and history;
- Incorporate cultural planning into strategies for public realm and streetscape improvements;
- Increase support for existing cultural organizations;
- Enhance performing, visual and literary arts (both spaces and activities); and
- Support and celebrate local food culture (restaurants, breweries, and farmers).

* For a detailed summary of feedback from Culture Plan Stakeholders and the public see the following section.

Detailed Summary of Feedback

Stakeholder Engagement

This section presents a SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges) analysis, based on meetings with Town staff, stakeholder interviews and the stakeholder survey.

Strengths

Natural and Cultural Heritage Assets: Whitby's built form includes a mix of old (heritage) and new (modern new builds). The Brooklin Heritage Conservation District, the Werden's Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District and sizable heritage designated buildings and structures in Whitby's downtown demonstrate a strong preservation ethos supporting cultural heritage resources. Natural Heritage assets such as parks, the waterfront, and trails serve as important features of Whitby's landscape that are cherished by residents for recreational activity and horticulture value.

Recreational Culture and Sport: Whitby is proud to consider sport part of its culture, which is perhaps a unique marker of the Town's identity in comparison to similar municipalities. At the same time, however, this also presents a challenge to the perception of culture beyond sport as some feel the Town may be pigeonholed as a 'sport destination'.

Established Cultural Places, Facilities and Events: Stakeholders particularly referenced The Station Gallery, Whitby Public Library, Whitby Courthouse Theatre, the Abilities Centre, Centennial Building, Food Truck Frenzy, Brooklin Heritage, Doors Open and the Whitby Comic Arts Festival (WhitCAF). The majority of stakeholders felt that events and festivals were fun and engaging.

Creative Culture: Stakeholders interviewed also describe Whitby as having a 'creative culture', identifying support for innovation and creativity in its people, businesses, and places.

Urban-Rural Cultural Identity: Many described Whitby as unique within Durham Region, referred to locally as an "urban town." Stakeholders suggested Whitby is a place with a small-town feel that is friendly and welcoming while at the same time incorporates aspects common within urban environments, including two (2) traditional main street downtowns with historic streetscapes and modern entertainment.

Historical Significance: Stakeholders identified Whitby as having a rich and important history, connecting the lands with the Indigenous peoples, as well as important and famous figures, such as Peter Perry.

An Evolving Town with Increasing Diversity: Whitby was described by many as being in a 'transformation stage' as it continues to grow, evolve and become more diverse. Stakeholders felt that Whitby is inclusive of all people within the town and describe the development of a culture plan as well-timed to respond to and forge a path for this transformation.

Sense of community and identity: Stakeholders identified Whitby as having a distinct identity in the Durham region. There is also a sense of belonging and community within the town.

- "Whitby has great natural spaces like the waterfront trail, parks, hiking trails" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "The Waterfront community is an asset" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Recognition of diversity and diverse contributions" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Vibrant community organizations and businesses that are creating great local events" - Stakeholder Survey respondent

Weaknesses

Lack of awareness of and engagement with cultural activities: Some stakeholders described a lack of awareness of current cultural activities within the Town and that there is a dearth of "live atmosphere." Stakeholders suggested that there is also not a 'large draw' to bring people to Whitby from around the Region and that there is a lack of recognition or celebration of Whitby's culture. Stakeholders indicate that residents often go to nearby municipalities to experience the culture, rather than engaging locally. Specifically, they suggested that the downtown and waterfront are underutilized.

Lack of Accessibility: Some stakeholders indicated that some of the buildings and events are not accessible for all people, which should be rectified through this process.

Lack of connection between cultural organizations: Stakeholders indicated that while many of the cultural organizations and businesses within Whitby have similar goals or programs, there is a lack of connection, partnerships, and awareness between them. They are also dispersed throughout the town and therefore lack spatial connections.

"Poor communication strategy to publicize and get people involved and participate" - Stakeholder Survey respondent

Opportunities

Enhance cultural places and facilities: While the cultural places and facilities were identified as a strength, it was also suggested that certain spaces, resources, and programming could be enhanced and better utilized for culture, particularly the Centennial Building in Downtown Whitby. The building has an existing reputation as a cultural hall and meeting space, but more can be leveraged from this facility. In addition, stakeholders discussed the need for more investment into the “bricks and mortar” of facilities. There were also suggestions to create a large attraction/event space, to accommodate different users, events and activities (for local Whitby residents and for people from around the region and province). There was also an emphasis on having more publicly accessible places, such as public art or an outdoor stage in a park.

Promote the growing food culture: A burgeoning culinary scene offering breweries (e.g., Brock street brewery) restaurants and farm-to-table experience across the Town is indicative of a growing food culture. More opportunities were identified to expand the profile of breweries, events and performances that tap into local musical and artistic talent. As well, developing community-based strategies to leverage foodie culture through rotating pop-up events featuring culinary experiences was considered an important opportunity.

Leverage existing natural resources, such as the waterfront and conservation/natural heritage areas, as key cultural focal points within the town.

Invest in the downtowns by prioritizing ‘complete community’ objectives. This includes walkable amenities, housing and workplaces that are well connected to transit. Many stakeholders emphasized that the downtown can serve as a “Cultural Hub”. They feel that investing in culture can serve as an economic driver.

Engage diverse voices: Whitby has a diversifying population. Stakeholders emphasized that many people in the Town are excluded from culture. Having more diverse opportunities for a wide range of people can get more diverse voices engaged in Whitby’s culture.

Foster collaboration and partnerships: The Town should assist to better connect the diverse organizations and businesses to find opportunities for alignment.

Other opportunities identified by stakeholders include;

- Embed culture into Town strategic town-building decisions;
- Ensure that the Town’s population is aware and active in culture;
- Embed public art within the fabric of the Town;
- Approach culture from a regional perspective;
- Create an identity for Whitby with a specific theme of culture (i.e. Stratford with Theatre);
- Emphasize culture, attract jobs, improve the economy, and create an attractive place to live/work;
- Building on the architecture and atmosphere of our two (2) downtowns;
- Acknowledge, celebrate, nurture diversity;
- Waterfront and natural harbour area is full of potential and under-utilized; and
- More Indigenous learning and celebration of Indigenous and black culture and heritage.

Potential partnerships include:

- Durham College is home to a media art and design group as well as the Centre for Food – both untapped opportunities for connecting up cultural planning efforts through partnership possibilities;
- The Library offers specialized programming and space for events. The library is also interested in creating a maker space and
- The Abilities Centre specializes in transforming communities across the province, country, and elsewhere into inclusive communities and would like to be involved and be a partner in creating this plan.

Other initiatives to be considered for partnerships:

- 1855 Whitby Accelerator;
- W. Galen Weston Centre for Food, Durham College;
- Whitby Courthouse Theatre is interested in partnering on performance or culture centre;
- Whitby Chamber of Commerce connects businesses and organizations;
- Station Gallery 50th anniversary;
- BIA public art budget; and
- Ontario Shores events and partnerships.

- "... cultural events make people of different cultures feel welcome" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Innovative collaborations between existing members of the cultural sector" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Adding a bandshell for outdoor summer performances, this could be used for both music and theatre" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Improve accessibility to cultural events (traffic, parking, public transit...etc.)" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Promote self-guided walking tours of our HCD designated areas [Werden; Perry; Four Corners; Library; Station Gallery; Iroquois Sports facility; etc.]. Develop Celebration Square for cultural activities; Think of creating mini-Whitby Squares and green spaces where people can practice and exhibit/perform their various art forms" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Information to be available to help newcomers learn about their community" - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Whitby should have a defined entertainment district downtown " - Stakeholder Survey respondent
- "Improving the arrangement and location of cultural resources was suggested to aid in connecting businesses and people to them (such as having a "cultural district").- Stakeholder Survey respondent

Challenges

Resistance to Change and Growth: Some Whitby residents are concerned new growth will undo the aspects of Whitby they cherish. As a growing municipality, many are still discovering issues of diversity and change and thinking through how they feel about the future of their Town. Stakeholders indicated that engaging people in new approaches to culture may be challenging.

Geographic barriers: Whitby is dispersed geographically, creating both physical and psychological barriers between businesses and residents of North Whitby (Brooklin) and South Whitby. Each area brings its own (often competing) interests and priorities to the attention of the Town, making it challenging for the Town to focus priorities.

Funding constraints: Many organizations indicated they are at capacity (both in terms of space and resources). Obtaining funding to support their programming is essential to ensure that they are sustainable. They feel that there is currently inadequate funding being offered for arts and cultural organizations.

Siloed planning: Stakeholders identified that municipalities in the Durham region often plan in silos and do not collaborate.

Need for diverse perspectives within decision-making processes. Some stakeholders identified that the town should consider the diversity of people within Whitby when planning for its residents, in order to make it more inclusive.

"The town is not diverse. The council is not diverse. The town creates things like the current Active Transportation Plan without considering people with disabilities, parents with strollers or different cultures... it only addresses bicycles... this is not inclusive." - Stakeholder Survey respondent

What should the future of Whitby look like over the next ten (10) years

Stakeholders were asked what the future of Whitby should look like in ten (10) years. Responses are summarized below:

Complete Communities: Whitby will be a 'complete community' that is walkable and transit-oriented and has an emphasis on culture. Residential development will be in close proximity to cultural resources. There will be environments where people can connect and share ideas.

Investment in culture: Sustainable financial investment will be a part of Whitby's future. There will be support for businesses to grow and prosper over a long period of time. The cultural resources available will also reflect the diverse culture of Whitby. Large attractions will not only benefit the local community but will also draw visitors from around the Region.

"As the population continues to grow, I think it's essential to create sustainable funding for the cultural organizations that contribute to community and quality of life in Whitby. I think the focus should be on preserving and supporting the cultural resources that we have and less on the big-scale attractions that are meant to be magnets for people outside of Whitby. Supporting culture and community is preserving the things that make Whitby a liveable city are very important to me." - Stakeholder Survey respondent

"I'd like to see a focus on preserving & promoting our heritage, rather than tearing it down." - Stakeholder Survey respondent

Conversations with the Public

In order to gain a better understanding of how people experience culture in Whitby, we asked participants to share their experiences with and perspectives on culture. Specifically, we asked them to a) share their perspectives on the strengths and areas of improvement for culture in the Town; b) prioritize opportunities for culture in Whitby; and 3) to identify specific locations where they want to preserve and improve cultural activity within the Town. Below is a summary of what was heard from the open house, pop-ups and online survey.

Defining Culture in Whitby

Participants at the Open House and at the pop-ups were asked how they define culture in Whitby. There was a mix of responses, including reference to performing and visual arts activities, town-owned facilities, cultural heritage, natural spaces and culinary experiences. Many participants also identified fewer tangible definitions, such as inclusion, diversity and accessibility. Some responses from the open house are included below:

- How we see ourselves as individuals and as a group. Culture is a mirror.
- Agricultural Hall of Fame in Brooklin
- The Whitby Historical Society and the Lynde House Museum
- Local artists and musicians, culinary scene, art classes, small businesses
- Accessible - all ages, educational and fun
- Music
- Inclusive, welcoming, active, family, innovative
- Whitby Central Library
- Great, creative street art
- Shopping, dining, sports, history
- History, outdoor, family, fun, restaurants, events, festivals, libraries, galleries
- Diversity in experiences (culinary, sports, performing arts, museums)
- Open streets
- Inclusion
- Canada

Experiencing Culture in Whitby

Participants were asked how they currently experience culture in Whitby and how they want to experience culture in Whitby. The following were mentioned:

Culture in Whitby Today: Participants responded that they experience culture in Whitby when they:

- Visit Whitby's cultural facilities (such as the Courthouse Theatre, the Lynde House Museum, the Station Gallery, the Brooklin Museum, Centennial and the public library);
- Attend events and festivals within the town (such as the Beer Fest put on in Downtown Whitby, Music in the Park, Doors Open, events at Celebration Square and other community events);
- Participate in recreational activities (at the Seniors Centre, the Whitby Civic Recreation Complex, etc.);
- Enjoy outdoor recreational activities, along the waterfront trail, in the Herbers Down Conservation District and in parks;
- Experience culinary offerings, by dining out; and
- Connect with friends and community.

Future of Culture in Whitby: When asked how they want to experience culture in Whitby, the following were mentioned:

- Celebrating different cultures in Whitby;
- Experiencing more cultural events and public art along the Waterfront and in green spaces;
- Attending a concert hall/performance venue (more music options);
- Interacting with public art;
- Through educational participatory events and community-led events (such as walking tours, music and events "where citizens can set up for free");
- Visiting more food festivals, food markets and other culinary events;
- Increasing recreational activities and opportunities; and
- Improving and enhancing gathering spaces.

Participants were asked specifically about their priorities for Whitby. They were given seven (7) themes to choose from:

- Performing Arts;
- Visual and Literary Arts;
- Passive Outdoor Activities;
- Active Outdoor Activities;
- Cultural heritage;
- Culinary arts; and
- Intangible

The following comments were provided:

Performing, visual and literary art culture in Whitby

Experiences in Whitby Today: The majority of participants expressed an appreciation for the diverse range of performing, visual, and literary arts in Whitby, recognizing that the arts aid in creating and engaging communities. Specifically, they suggest that the arts can connect people from all cultures, socioeconomic statuses, ages, and abilities. However, participants felt that arts and culture is currently an afterthought in the Town and not recognized as an economic driver.

Priorities and Opportunities for the Future: Residents indicated that they would like to see more financial support, investment and resources put into performing, visual and literary arts. This could include opportunities to use Town-owned spaces for cultural purposes, or assistance with marketing and promotions of events and organizations. They expressed a need for a diversity of art and culture options available for people to engage with. They would also like to see cultural opportunities that showcase Whitby's local artists and diverse cultures, such as installing public art or educational events and community-led initiatives.

"A strength of Whitby's is its appreciation for live arts (music and theatre)" - Public Survey respondent

"Visual and literary arts contribute so much to the quality of life and community building in Whitby. The Station Gallery and the public library engage the community with creative, informative and entertaining events. I would love to see sustainable investment and financial support for the great work they do. Public art throughout Whitby would help to bring creativity to life in the streets."

- Pop-up participant

"Increase entertainment and music options. Provide a mix for everyone! (e.g. country)" - Pop-up participant

"Culture is not seen as contributing to economic development."

- Survey respondent

"We need more funding for the arts" - Survey respondent

Cultural Heritage

Experiences in Whitby Today: Residents expressed that built heritage (house, downtowns, and sites like Lynde House Museum) contribute to the town's identity and should be preserved. Many felt like there is a lack of support in the town to preserve heritage. There is also a lack of recognition of the diversifying demographics of the Town.

Priorities and Opportunities for the Future: Residents want to acknowledge both recent and Indigenous peoples histories of the land while recognizing how the town has changed over time, representing the diverse cultures in Whitby today. Recommendations included recognizing and sharing cultural heritage through educational opportunities, formal commemorations (plaques), and events that celebrate diversity.

"Whitby does not provide ongoing significant public support for the operation of public heritage structures like Lynde House and Rowe Houses" - Survey respondent

"Preserve historic downtown streetscape - it is nice being able to walk to restaurants, coffee shops, and run errands quickly"
- Open House attendant

"Explore Whitby's Indigenous connections to the land "
- Open House attendant

"More awareness about the museum and the relationship it has from the Town...provide Speaker Series, music nights, education"
- Open House attendant

"Strive to keep heritage-related artifacts i.e. houses, objects, sites"
Open House attendant

"Whitby's heritage is important in creating the town identity."
- Public Survey respondent

"Heritage gives a sense of place and creates a collective memory. Heritage Buildings should be preserved for the future. Whitby Archives and all aspects of heritage support the culture of Whitby"
- Open house attendant

"Very focused on historical events, not enough on newcomers and their cultures" - Public Survey respondent

Food Culture

Experiences in Whitby Today: Residents of Whitby indicated the importance of gastronomy, referencing the town's restaurants, breweries, and local producers. Participants identified that experiencing food is a way for Whitby residents to socialize and connect with one another. Residents suggested that Whitby's culinary culture is unique in the Durham Region and draws people to visit Whitby.

Priorities and Opportunities for the Future: Residents recommended more opportunities to support and celebrate local agriculture and restaurants, through events like Harvest Fest. Other suggestions include walking tours of locally-owned restaurants and breweries. Participants expressed the desire for the culinary scene to expand to reflect the diverse cultures in Whitby.

"Whitby's culinary scene is unlike any of the surrounding municipalities...By supporting and further developing local farms, restaurants, breweries, Durham College Centre for Food, and our farmers market, Whitby could have a culinary scene other municipalities envy." - Open House attendant

"Food is a universal language with diverse dialects. We have amazing venues for food + beverage in Whitby and we can use more!" - Open House attendant

"Downtown Whitby has a great culinary tradition, it is "on the map". However, the foodprint could be extended and the range of offerings needs to be expanded. I would like to see more ethnic food such as bao, jollof rice, injera" - Open House attendant

"Having more events like the Harvest Festival." - Pop-up participant

"More ethnic foods!!! - Public Survey respondent

Passive Outdoor Activities and Natural Heritage

Experiences in Whitby Today: Participants appreciate the number of natural heritage areas and greenspace within Whitby. People enjoy hiking and using the natural trails in Whitby. The waterfront is considered an asset, but participants find it difficult to access.

Priorities and Opportunities for the Future: Residents would like to preserve and enhance green space throughout the town. Recommendations included adding street trees or more green space as well as adding public art and cultural events within green spaces and natural areas. Participants also expressed the desire to use the waterfront as an area for cultural activity.

“Preserve and enhance nature within Whitby” - Open House attendant

“I think our hiking trails, waterfront trail, parks and green spaces are a huge asset and should be protected and preserved. These assets get people into the community, interacting with nature and each other”
- Open House attendant

“The Waterfront is an absolute jewel and I think the priority is continued open access, rather than the commercial development.”
- Open House attendant

“Make the waterfront a destination (ex. the Jubilee in Oshawa) with cultural offerings and not just a dog park.” - Open House attendant

“I think our hiking trails, waterfront trail, parks and green spaces are a huge asset and should be protected and preserved. These assets get people into the community, interacting with nature and each other”
- Pop-up participant

Active Outdoor Activities

Experiences In Whitby Today: A large number of participants identify that sports culture dominates Whitby.

Priorities and Opportunities for the Future: Residents feel that culture in Whitby should “go beyond sports.” They suggest that there are many strategies that prioritize sport and recreation and recommend that the Culture Plan could acknowledge its importance in Whitby but consider strategies to enhance other cultural priorities in the Town.

“Whitby is a sports destination.” – Public Survey respondent

“There is a vast variety of sporting activities especially for youth”
– Public Survey respondent

“Whitby is known for its excellent organized sports” – Public Survey respondent

“There needs to be more focus on the arts. There is already a huge focus on sports” - Open House attendant

Intangible

Experiences in Whitby Today: There was an indication that there is a lack of representation from Indigenous communities, who pass down stories from generations. Participants experience culture in Whitby by sharing and connecting with a variety of different people.

Priorities and Opportunities for the Future: Few participants identify stories and traditions as a priority for the culture plan. Some suggest the desire to foster the sharing of cultural stories and experiences and facilitating spaces for community connections.

“It is important that seniors share stories with youth” – Pop-up participant

“A priority is the spoken word and oral traditions in Whitby” – Pop-up participant

Other priorities and opportunities we heard

Through engaging members of the public, other recommendations emerged, summarized below:

Incorporate diversity into the Culture Plan

Whitby residents recognize and appreciate that Whitby is diversifying. Many participants indicated a desire to celebrate and learn about the diverse cultures in Whitby. This could be through music, events, culinary experiences and educational opportunities. They also want to involve people of all ages and abilities in cultural activities.

“Through educational participatory events, there could be lectures on different faiths, cultural dances and lessons. Whitby is a mosaic of cultures that should be celebrated” - Pop-up participant

“Create other events that celebrate other Holidays/Cultural Traditions” - Pop-up participant

“Strength of Whitby is diverse people with diverse age groups. However, all of the activities are focused on engaging children. We need to figure out how to engage different age groups. This would make Whitby culture better.”

“Whitby is a community for newcomers” - Survey respondent

“Increased awareness of Whitby’s cultural diversity” - Survey respondent

“I think there should be an attempt to build connections with other cultures - particularly with Indigenous Peoples. We say we are inclusive and open-minded, yet I don’t think we are as a community until we know about or understand their culture”. - Survey respondent

“More awareness and inclusion for people with disabilities” - Survey respondent

Improved cultural spaces and facilities

Similar to what was heard from stakeholders, the public feels that Whitby is lacking in cultural facilities and spaces. Participants suggested creating a multi-purpose space that can host a variety of large-scale events in town. Participants also emphasized opportunities to support culture by creating publicly accessible outdoor spaces and using them to host events (such as outdoor music and performances in parks or having more public art in the downtowns).

“There is no performing arts/event centre like The Regent (Oshawa) or St. Francis Centre (Ajax)” - Survey respondent

“There is a lack of a good performing arts theatre space, something to encourage more shows and performances” - Survey respondent

“Limited outdoor accessible visual cultural symbols (e.g. street art)” - Survey respondent

“There is a lack of public open space to host events” - Survey respondent

Accessibility and Active Transportation

Residents emphasized that accessing cultural areas and events can be a challenge. Participants expressed a need to improve accessibility and wayfinding to cultural areas and events, especially in the downtowns and waterfront. This includes improved transit and cycling routes as well as pedestrian-friendly trails and walkable communities.

“There is poor access to, and lack of integration with the waterfront.”
- Survey respondent

“Public transit needs to be improved.”

Cultural Mapping

Attendants at the Open House on June 4th were asked to map out elements in Whitby that they would like to be preserved or improved. Below is a summary of the main findings from this activity.

Elements participants want to preserve:

- Current performing and visual art resources and organizations;
- Historic buildings and sites;
- Places of worship;
- Natural areas.

Elements participants want to Improve:

- Publicly accessible outdoor spaces that can be used to foster for culture (specifically in the form of performing and visual arts);
- Accessible venues and facilities for cultural performances;
- Gastro and brewery events, festivals, walks, and experiences that will engage different cultures and promote the agricultural sectors and tourism;
- Promoting local restaurants, breweries, farmer markets and produce;
- Acknowledgement of the Town's diverse histories, including Indigenous peoples' knowledge and presence on the land;
- Accessible nature trails and areas.

Key locations that participants want to preserve or improve:

Places to preserve

- Brooklin's downtown heritage elements
- Whitby Central Library
- Lynde House Museum
- Whitby Courthouse Theatre
- Baldwin Street (Downtown Brooklin)
- Station Gallery
- Lynde House Museum

Places to improve

- Whitby's downtown
- The waterfront open space
- Waterfront trail
- Celebration Square
- Grass Park
- Rotary Centennial Park
- Port Whitby Marina
- Lynde Creek
- Centennial Building

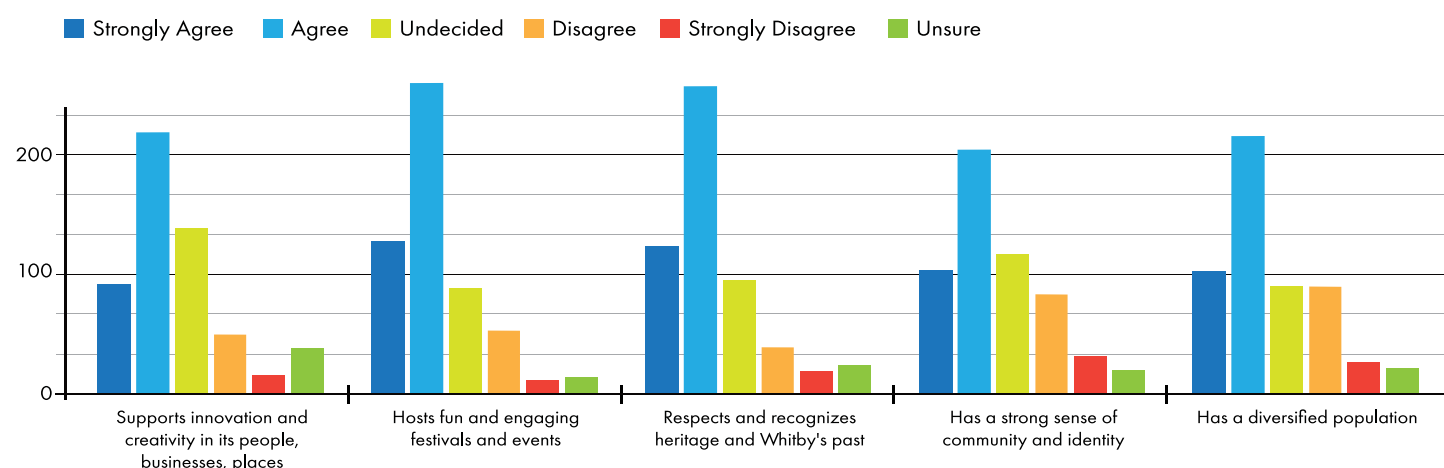
Survey Respondents

Online survey participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the initial strengths and challenges identified through stakeholder interviews. Here is a snapshot of what we heard:

Strengths

The majority of survey respondents agree that Whitby does a good job respecting and recognizing Whitby's past, supports innovation and creativity in its people, businesses, places; and hosts fun and engaging events and festivals. They also believe that Whitby has a strong sense of community and has a diversified population.

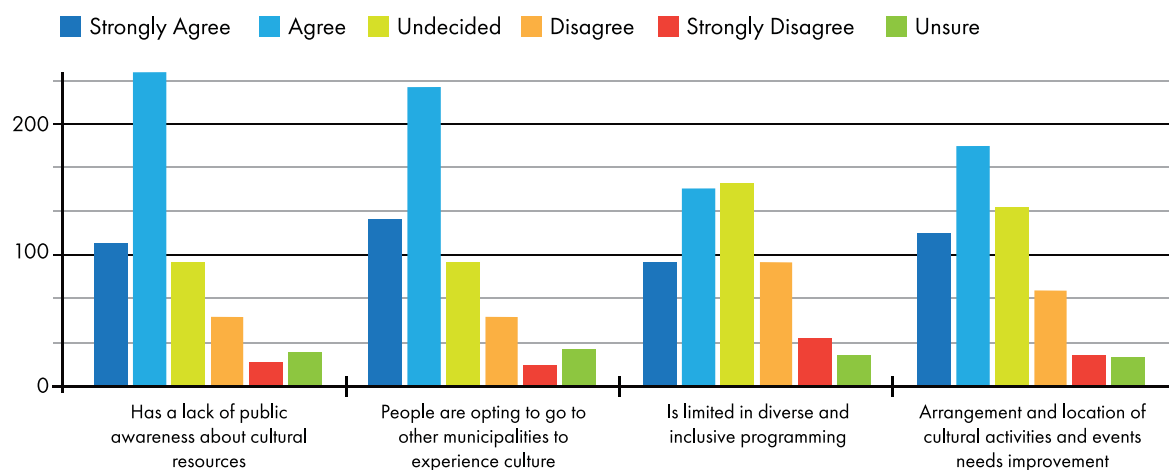
Figure 3 Question: During initial conversations for the Culture Plan, some of Whitby's strengths were emphasized. Please rate the following statements in relation to Whitby.



Challenges

Most participants agreed that Whitby faces challenges with lack of public awareness about cultural resources and people opting to go to other municipalities to experience culture. Others either agreed or were unsure that Whitby is limited in diverse and inclusive programming and that the arrangement and location of cultural activities and events need improvement.

Figure 4 Question: Initial conversations noted some challenges that may be experienced in Whitby. Please rate the following statements in relation to Whitby.



Appendix A - Project Steering Committee Members

Project Steering Committee Members include:

- Maria McDonnell, Strategic Initiatives, Town of Whitby
- Aimee Pugao, Community Services, Town of Whitby
- Matt Powers, Community Services, Town of Whitby
- Kerri King, Whitby Station Gallery
- Daniel Van Kampen, Economic Development, Town of Whitby
- Brandon Pickard, Tourism Region of Durham
- Rhonda Jessup, Whitby Public Library
- Edward Niles, Whitby Courthouse Theatre
- Erin Mikaluk, Communications, Town of Whitby
- Joy Soulliere, GIS, Town of Whitby

Consultants:

- Nadia Galati, PROCESS
- Sara Udow, PROCESS

Appendix B - Stakeholder List

Legend	
	Interviewed
	Telephoned prompt to fill out form with questions
	Emailed questions

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

VISUAL ARTS

Kniterary

Blue Phoenix Productions

Station Gallery

Curator, Station Gallery

Lynde House Museum

Ashburn Arts Circle

LITERATURE

Whitby Public Library

Author

Comic book writer

Whitby Public Library

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

PERFORMING ARTS (MUSIC, THEATRE, DANCE, ETC.)

Whitby Courthouse Theatre

Durham Community Choir

Ontario Philharmonic

Whitby Brass Band

Durham Philharmonic Choir

Driftwood Theatre Group

NOT-FOR-PROFIT GROUPS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS (i.e., Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee; Community Connection; Sport organizations; etc.)

Oshawa and Durham Metis Council

Whitby Chamber of Commerce

Durham Irish Association of Canada

Indo-Canadian Cultural Association of Durham

Kiwanis Club of Sydenham

Pro Amor

Rotary Club of Whitby-Sunrise

Rotary Club of Whitby

Art with a Heart

Ethno-Cultural representation

Durham Chinese Cultural Association

Whitby Youth Council

Durham Celtic Supporters Club

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Durham Tamil Association

Optimist Club of Brooklin

Evergreen

EDAC - Ethno-Cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee

PHYSICAL ASSETS (i.e. creative economic spaces)

360insights.com

Whitby Public Library

Community Innovation Lab

Spark Centre

Lynn Phillip Hodgson

CULINARY

Bistro 67

KB Food

Tap and Tankard and Town Brewery

Bella Notte

Brock Street Brewing Co.

Durham Centre For Food, Durham College

Bistro 67 Durham College Centre For Food

City Lab Durham College

HUMAN ASSETS

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Historian

Writer – Spoken Word Artist

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Whitby BIA

Nurse Chevrolet

Brooklin Spring Fair

Geekspeak Inc.

Santa Claus Parade – JCI Durham

Group 74

Town of Whitby Events

SCHOOL BOARDS/EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS/AGENCIES/PARTNERS

Durham Tourism

Central Counties Tourism

Brooklin Horticultural Society

Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee

Durham Region Environmental Advisory Committee

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

Lakeridge Health Foundation

Brooklin Heritage Society

Olde Whitby Neighbourhood Association

Whitby Historical Society at Lynde House

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

James Rowe House

Director of Education – Durham Catholic School Board

Director of Education Durham District School Board

Durham College - Music Business Management

University of Ontario Institute of Technology

All Saints Catholic High School

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences

Abilities Centre

Sports Groups

Whitby Figure Skating Club

Whitby Girls Hockey Association

Whitby Minor Hockey Association

Whitby Ringette Association

Whitby Minor Lacrosse Association

Whitby Dolphin Swim Club

BWGRFA

WGSA

WMBA

WISC

Whitby Tennis Club

Lady Blue Knights

Whitby Lawn Bowling Club

Whitby Seniors (Pickleball)

Whitby Social Activity Club

Appendix C - Stakeholder Interview Questions

Below is a list of interview questions that helped to guide the Culture Plan conversation/ interviews.

Town of Whitby Stakeholder Interview Questions:

Experiencing Culture in Whitby

1. Please describe who you are and how your work/role is connected to culture in Whitby.
2. What cultural activities in Whitby do you participate/engage with? Where do these cultural activities take place? Please locate on the Social Pinpoint map.
3. How do you define culture?
4. What are some of the strengths of culture in Whitby? What makes Whitby's culture distinct?
5. Do you see any opportunities or challenges for culture in Whitby?

The Future of Culture in Whitby

6. Why is having a culture plan important for the Town of Whitby?
7. From your perspective, what should culture in Whitby look like over the next ten (10) years?
8. What projects/programs is your organization/are you planning over the next ten (10) years? Anything that should be captured in a culture plan? Is there any potential for partnerships?
9. What places and approaches to culture are you interested in seeing prioritized through the Culture Plan?
10. Are there any examples of culture in Whitby (or elsewhere) that you think are successful or not successful that you would like to share with us? Why?
11. Do you have any other recommendations as we develop the Culture Plan for the Town of Whitby?

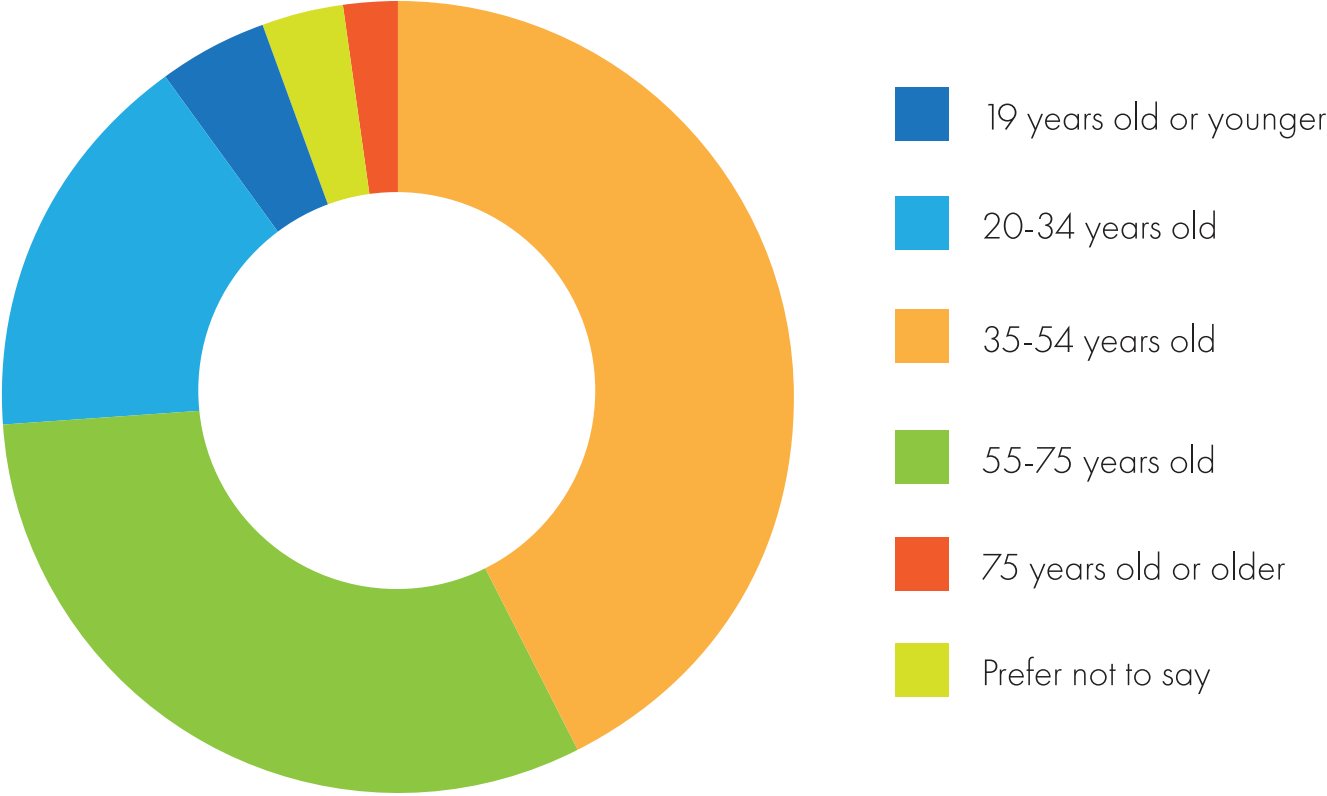
Appendix D: Public Survey

Demographics

We wanted to understand who engages in Whitby’s culture and how. Graphics below look at understanding the main demographics of people who responded to the online survey. Of the total 695 respondents, approximately 540 responded to the demographic questions.

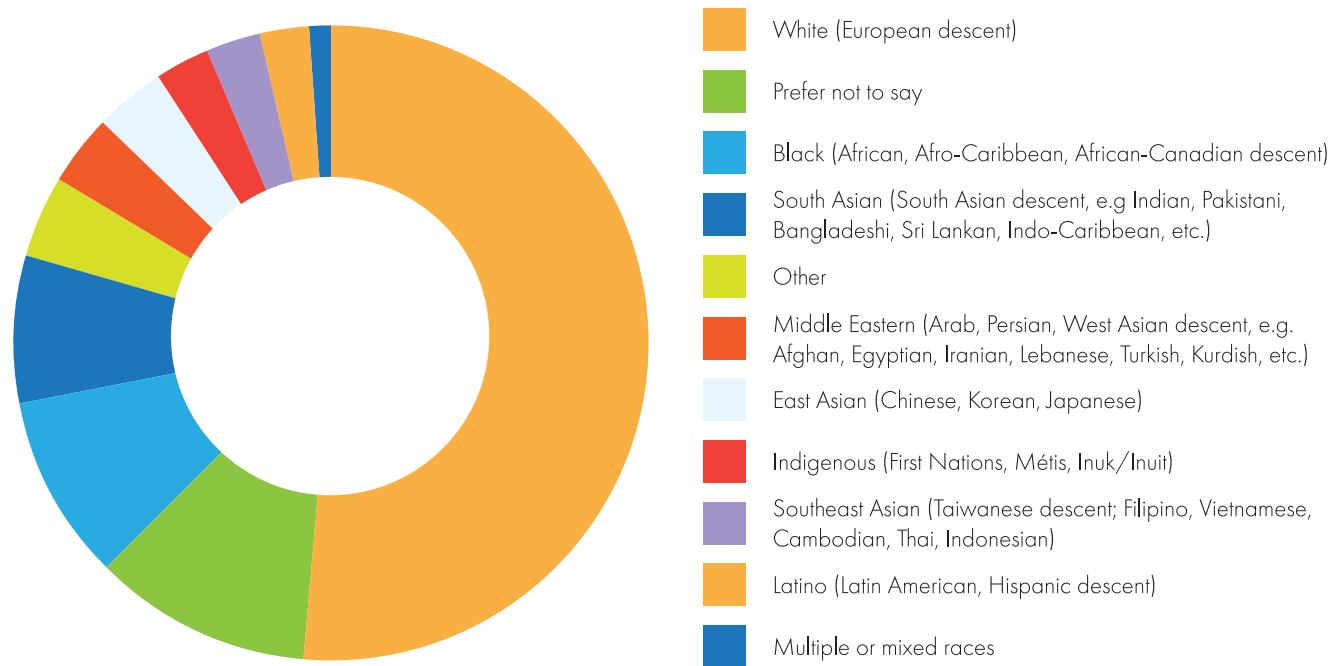
Age of respondents

Figure 5



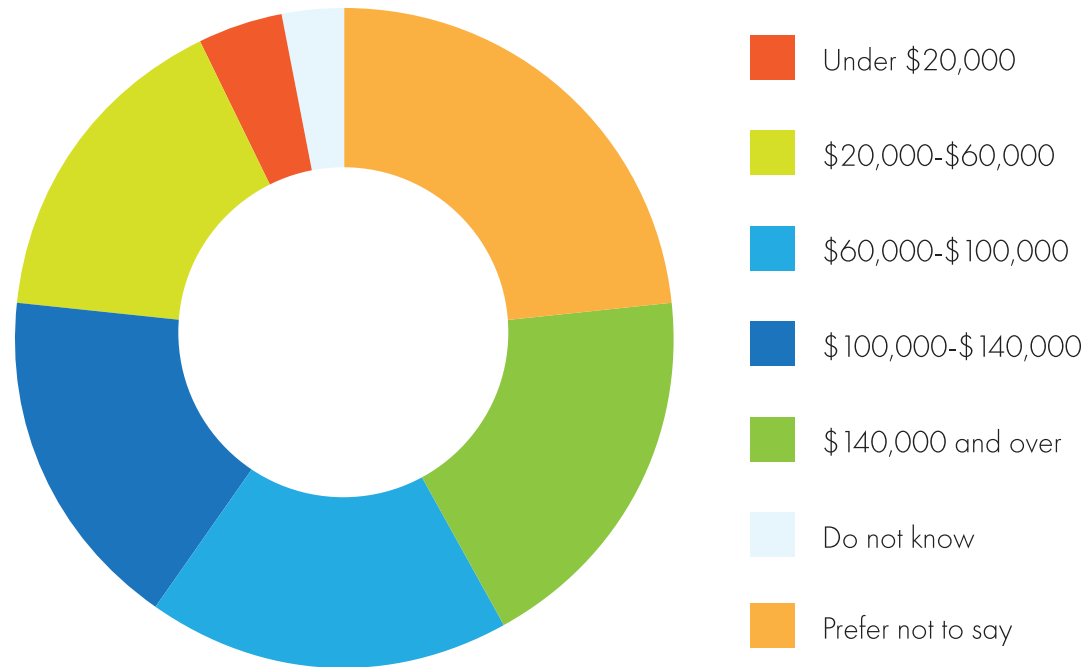
Racial/ethnic backgrounds of respondents

Figure 6



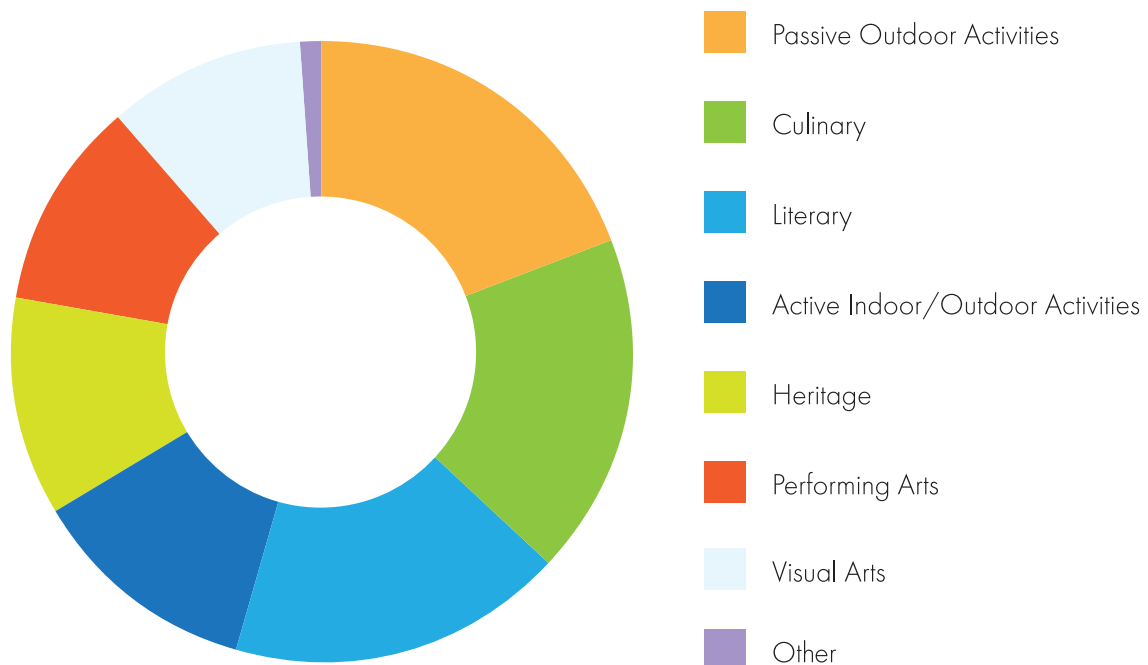
Annual household income before taxes of respondents

Figure 7



What culture activities residents participate in

Figure 8





CULTURE PLAN **SURVEY**

STAY CONNECTED WITH THE PROJECT

To stay up to date with the Town's new Culture Plan and to participate in future opportunities to inform the development of the plan – go online today to whitby.ca/cultureplan

Or contact the Culture Plan Project Team to join the Interested Parties List

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