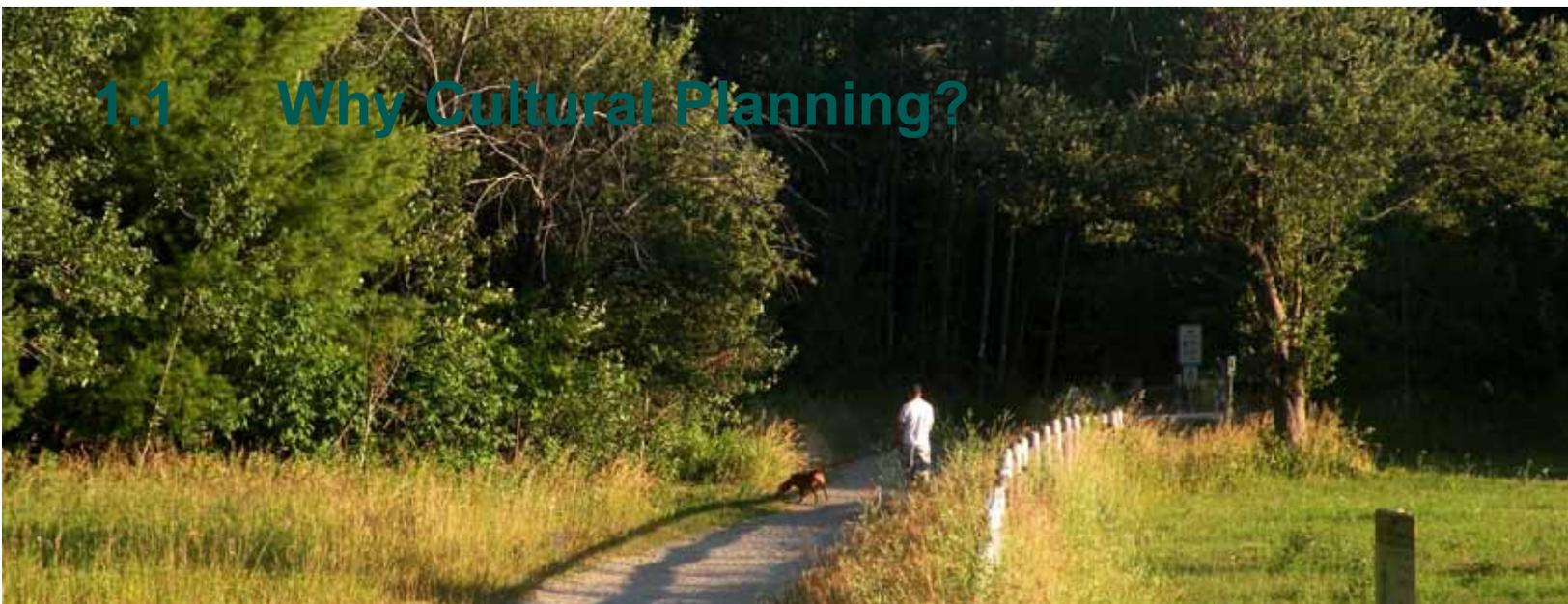


1.1 Why Cultural Planning?



Cultural planning, which is believed to have emerged first in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, is the strategic and integral use of cultural resources in holistic community development.¹ Economists and urban planners know that culture provides vitality to a community and has important economic and social spinoffs. A culturally vibrant community attracts artists, innovative thinkers, and educated citizens, and contributes to urban renewal, economic regeneration, and environmental improvements.

Cultural planning spread to Australia in the 1990s.² Government officials there understood that civic departments could no longer work in silos, but need to adopt a common vision to ensure sustainable growth and development.

More recently, cultural planning has spread to North American communities. With the decline of heavy industry and the rise of the “creative economy,” decision makers understand the value of a culturally vibrant community to attract the creative class, sustain the economy, and protect the environment.³ A new model for economic and social development has emerged, and culture is its central driving force. Decision makers realize that culture is at the heart of any community, not just a fringe activity.

The Canadian and Ontario governments have endorsed municipal cultural planning and provided resources to municipalities to support cultural planning processes, as outlined on the website of the Ontario Ministry of Culture in 2008⁴:

¹ Sirayi, Mzo, “Cultural Planning and Urban Renewal in South Africa,” *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, vol. 47, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 333-45.

² Baeker, Greg. “Municipal Cultural Planning: Combating ‘The Geography of Nowhere,’ ” *Municipal World*, 2005.

³ Wilenius, Markku, “Cultural Competence in the Business World: A Finnish Perspective,” *Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 27, no. 4 (July-August 2006): 43-50.

⁴ The original document was posted in 2008, but is no longer available on the website of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Municipal Cultural Planning creates a place where people want to live, work, and visit and where students can return to find work. Municipal Cultural Planning contributes to:

- a. Economic Development (Tourism, Downtown Revitalization, Creative Jobs)
- b. Cultural Vibrancy
- c. Community Safety
- d. Enriching and Engaging Children and Youth
- e. Citizen Engagement
- f. Population Growth/Retention
- g. Sustainable Placemaking
- h. Walkable Communities

Pickering has a wealth of cultural resources. It is time to map those resources, craft a clear identity for this community, and develop a plan that identifies strategies that will foster our community development.

“ Many people today are feeling disconnected and looking for their spiritual or cultural connections to help connect them to like-minded people, but [this] often further disconnects them from other groups. As we create silos, we only see our perspective and lose sight of our commonalities. Culture defines people, communities, and neighbourhoods through creative expression, traditions, and specific viewpoints... Girls Rights Week is an opportunity to showcase activities that encourage the development and understanding of each of the rights. Having the right to resist gender stereotypes, take pride in success, appreciate my body, have confidence in myself and be safe in the world, have the right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence.



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