



Halton Hills

STATE OF CULTURE 2019-2021



CULTURAL SERVICES
[HALTONHILLS.CA/CULTURE](https://haltonhills.ca/culture)
TOWN OF HALTON HILLS



A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

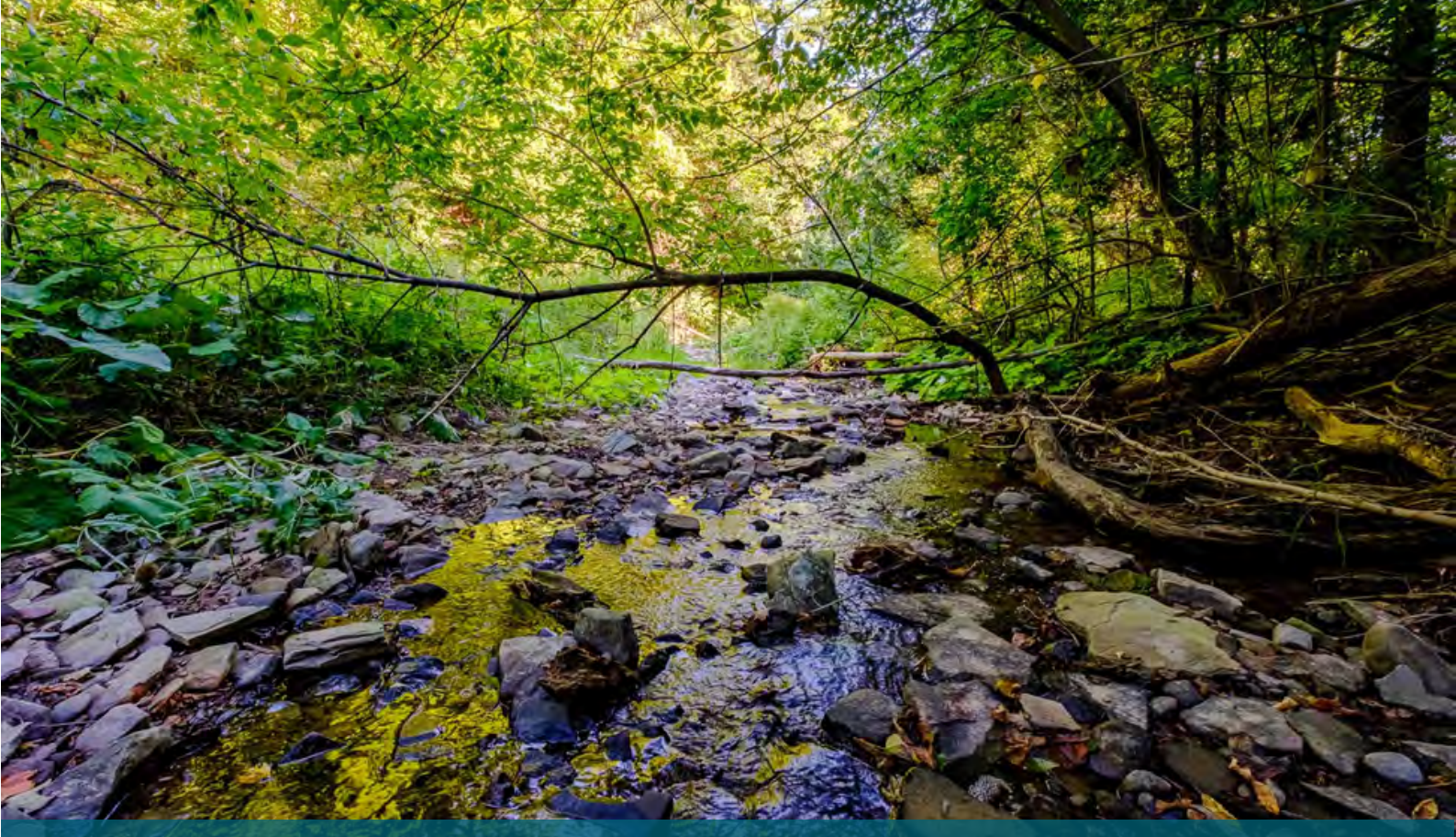


A vibrant arts and culture scene is an important driver of our local economy, attracting investment, cultural tourism and contributing to the high quality of life we all enjoy in Halton Hills. Cultural Services provides crucial supports to a thriving local arts and culture sector, by supporting and engaging local artists and cultural organizations, enabling them to raise their profiles and thrive.

COVID-19 presented many challenges for our community as a whole. This State of Culture report provides insight into the value of culture, how the arts and culture sector adapted to the challenges of the pandemic, and how artists and creators incorporated lessons learned into their ongoing work to continue to reach new audiences today. It also demonstrates the resilient nature of local artists, creators and organizations that make up Halton Hills' vibrant arts and culture sector, and the creative economy, that we all enjoy.

The Town remains committed to offering inclusive programs and initiatives year-round that spotlight diverse artists and creators. These projects demonstrate the Town's ongoing commitment to cultural vibrancy, through the delivery of unique and leading cultural initiatives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anna Sawlter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'A'.



The Town of Halton Hills is located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.



Photo: Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Flag flying at the Library & Cultural Centre, Georgetown 2021



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All photographs in this report are from programs presented or supported by Cultural Services and are used with the permission.



INTRODUCTION

The arts and culture sector in Halton Hills plays an important role in building communities, enhancing quality of life, and contributing to economic development in Halton Hills by attracting investment, cultural tourism, and supporting COVID-19 recovery. The Town's commitment to cultural vibrancy is demonstrated through the continuous delivery of programs and initiatives that support a thriving cultural sector that was especially hard hit by the pandemic.

This State of Culture report covers the period from 2019-2021. It articulates the value of culture, provides an overview of the Cultural Services division, and provides insight into the impacts of COVID-19 on the arts and culture sector and how it responded. By covering this three year period, the report provides a snapshot of the sector prior to COVID-19, how it was impacted by and adapted to the pandemic, and the new ways of working that artists and cultural organizations developed and incorporated into their ongoing practices working in the "new normal". These adaptations have allowed them to be responsive to changing contexts while continuing to engage audiences in their work, demonstrating the resiliency of the artists, creators and cultural businesses and organizations that make up Halton Hills' vibrant arts and culture sector.

Complementary economic development elements are showcased through the annual Invest Halton Hills report; sports, recreation and community groups through the annual Recreation & Parks Business Plan and Strategic Plan implementation updates; and heritage through Planning and Development reports. Together, arts, culture, heritage and volunteer community groups, are fundamental to Halton Hills' small-town atmosphere and community vibrancy.

VALUE OF CULTURE

Economic Value of Ontario's Cultural Sector

Ontario's culture sector directly contributes

\$ 27.5 Billion

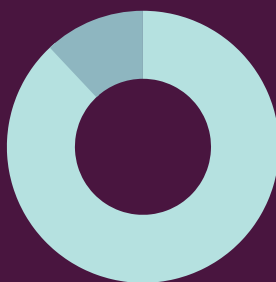
annually to the provincial economy, representing 3.4% of Ontario's GDP.¹

There are more than

254,985

culture jobs in Ontario
or 3.8% of total
Ontario employment.¹

88% of Ontarians agree that arts
and culture activities are
important to a community's
economic well-being.³



Investment Attraction and Retention

Quality of life is one of the

TOP 5

factors driving the decision
to invest in Halton Region.¹⁰

65%

65% of Ontario businesses leaders and skilled workers
agree that a thriving arts and culture scene is a driving
factor when considering relocation.^{4&5}

80%

80% of Ontarians agree that an active local arts scene
helps communities attract business.⁶

Cultural Tourism



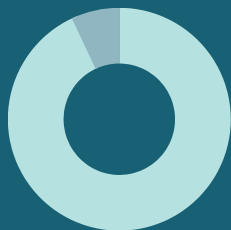
9.5 million

overnight tourists participate in
arts and culture activities while
visiting Ontario, generating \$3.7
billion in GDP province-wide.¹²

The average Ontario arts/culture
tourist spends twice as much per trip
as a typical tourist and stays at least
one night longer.¹²

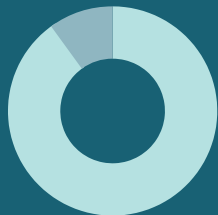
VALUE OF CULTURE

Culture and Quality of Life



93% of Ontarians believe that arts activities help enrich the quality of our lives.⁷

90% of Ontarians agree that an active local arts scene helps make a community a better place to live.⁷



Culture and Community Identity and Belonging



88%

88% of Ontarians agree that participating in arts activities builds a shared sense of community identity.⁷

90%

90% of Ontarians agree that arts experiences help bring people from diverse backgrounds together as a community.⁷

86%

86% of Ontarians agree that the arts help us express and define what it means to be Canadian.⁷

Cultural Participation



86%

of Ontarians attend live arts events or performances (such as music concerts, plays or visual arts exhibits) at least once a year.³



54%

of Ontarians make or perform art.⁸

Cultural Participation and Well-being in Canada



92% of Ontarians agree that exposure to arts and culture is important to individual well-being.³



72% of Canadians believe that arts and culture are important to mental well-being.¹¹

ARTS & CULTURE IN HALTON HILLS

15

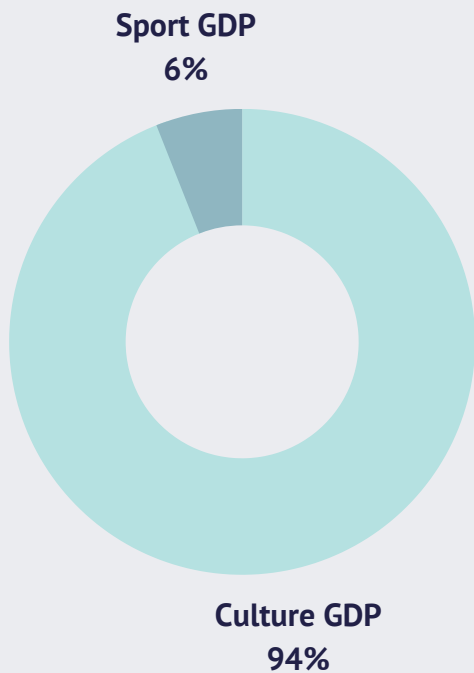
Direct Economic Impact of Culture & Sports in Halton Hills - 2020

\$44.7M + \$3.0M = \$47.7M

Culture GDP

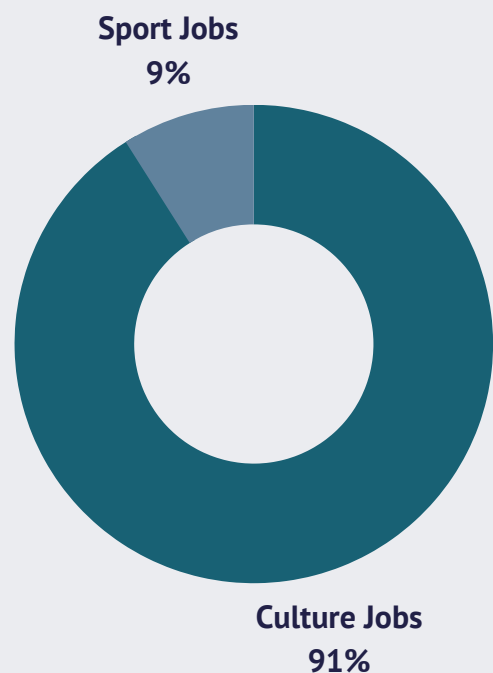
Sports GDP

Culture & Sport GDP Total



496 + 49 = 545

Culture Jobs Sports Jobs Culture & Sport Jobs Total



8

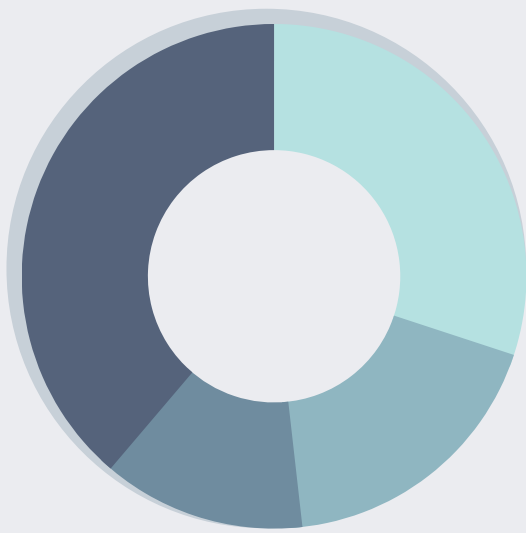
ARTS AND CULTURE IN HALTON HILLS



DIRECT ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURE¹⁵

GDP CONTRIBUTION

Culture contributes \$45 Million to Halton Hills' GDP



Visual and Applied Arts

\$13.4 million



Audio-Visual and Interactive Media

\$8.1 million



Written and Published works

\$5.8 million



Other

\$17.3 million

CULTURE JOBS CONTRIBUTION

Halton Hills contributes **496** culture jobs.

Most common Culture jobs in Halton Hills:

161

Visual & Applied Arts

68

Written & Published Works

65

Audio-Visual and
Interactive Media

ARTS & CULTURE IN HALTON HILLS

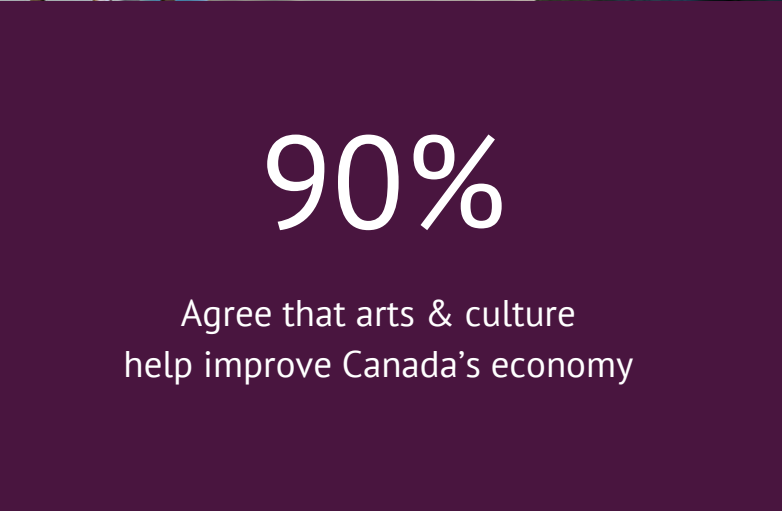
96%

Agree that arts & culture improves quality of life



96%

Agree that arts & culture helps to build strong communities and fosters meaningful community engagement



90%

Agree that arts & culture help improve Canada's economy



71%

Agree that arts & culture are very important to them, compared to 59% nationally



CULTURAL SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Cultural Services division implements programs that position Halton Hills as a diverse, welcoming, connected and vibrant community with a high quality of life. It makes the community more livable, contributing to economic development by making Halton Hills a preferred location to live, work, create and invest. The Division supports a thriving arts and culture sector, presents varied cultural programming, and leads the Town's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Truth and Reconciliation portfolios.

Core Services

- Deliver diverse cultural programming
- Implement Public Art Program
- Operate Helson Gallery
- Care and maintenance of Town and Library art collections
- Support the local arts and culture sector
- Provide funding, commissioning, presenting and art sales opportunities
- Manage committees and boards related to the local arts & culture sector
- Engage and collaborate with cultural leaders and stakeholders
- Participate in regional, provincial, and national networks
- Provide community engagement and volunteer opportunities
- Collect, analyze, and report on key cultural data and indicators
- Lead Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Truth and Reconciliation initiatives

Policies and Plans

- Cultural Master Plan
- Public Art Policy
- Public Art Master Plan
- Community Sustainability Strategy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy - Phase 1 (forthcoming)
- Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan - (forthcoming)

Connections to Additional Town Strategies and Initiatives

- Community Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Cultural Heritage Master Plan (forthcoming)
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

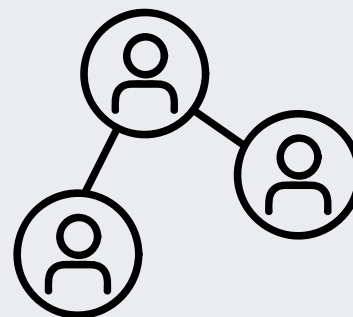


Development of Cultural Services

5 Year Timeline

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Cultural Services Section established	Helson Gallery operations transferred to Cultural Services	Launch of Discover the Hills self-guided tour program	- Truth and Reconciliation included in portfolio - COVID-19 Support & Recovery	- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion included in portfolio - COVID-19 Support & Recovery - Discover the Hills transferred to Tourism
- Culture Days (support) - Canada 150 (support) - Cultural Festival	Culture Days	- Culture Days - Discover the Hills	- After Nature Banners - Artrepreneur - Artist Next Door - Culture Days (Month) - Discover the Hills	- After Nature remount - Artrepreneur - Artist Next Door - Black History Month - Culture Days (Month) #hopeandhealingcanada - Indigenous History Month - Under Wraps
- Cultural Services Coordination Committee - Regional Cultural Working Group	- Public Art Advisory Board - Creative Cities Network	- Public Art Network - Municipal Cultural Statistics Strategy	Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable - Coordinating Committee	Halton EDI – Community of Practice
Draft Public Art Master Plan	Public Art Master Plan approved	Development of Cultural Asset Inventory	Helson Gallery receives Category B designation for Helson Collection	- Helson Collection certified as Cultural Property - Interim Truth and Reconciliation Budget Approved

MEET THE TEAM



The Cultural Services workplan is implemented by only two full time permanent staff, in collaboration with contract, part time, and occasional staff.

Management

Manager of Culture and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (FT)

Manages all aspects of the Cultural Services division including the portfolios of Culture; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Truth and Reconciliation. Responsible for setting strategic direction, budgets, ensuring operational oversight, and advising the Commissioner on culture, equity and reconciliation matters.

Programming & Policy

Cultural Services Assistant (FT)

Supports all aspects of the delivery of the Cultural Services workplan, including communications, marketing, research, and information management.

Cultural Program Producer (Contract)

Responsible for developing and delivering Cultural Services programming, and Professional Development and Community Funding Programs for the arts and culture sector.

Public Art Coordinator (Contract)

Coordinates all aspects of the Town's Public Art Program, in accordance with the Public Art Master Plan including temporary and permanent works, supporting private sector and community-led initiatives and developing programming and policy.

Cultural Services Associate (Contract)

Assists in the delivery and development of cultural programs and events, including Culture Days

Program & Events Assistants (Occasional)

Supports the delivery of Cultural Services programs and events, as needed.

Helson Gallery

Art Gallery Curator (PT)

Manages the Helson Gallery including its exhibitions, public programs, volunteer docent program and the art collections of the Town and Library.

Art Gallery Assistant Curator (PT)

Supports the Helson Gallery including its exhibitions, public programs and art collections.

Gallery Educators (Occasional)

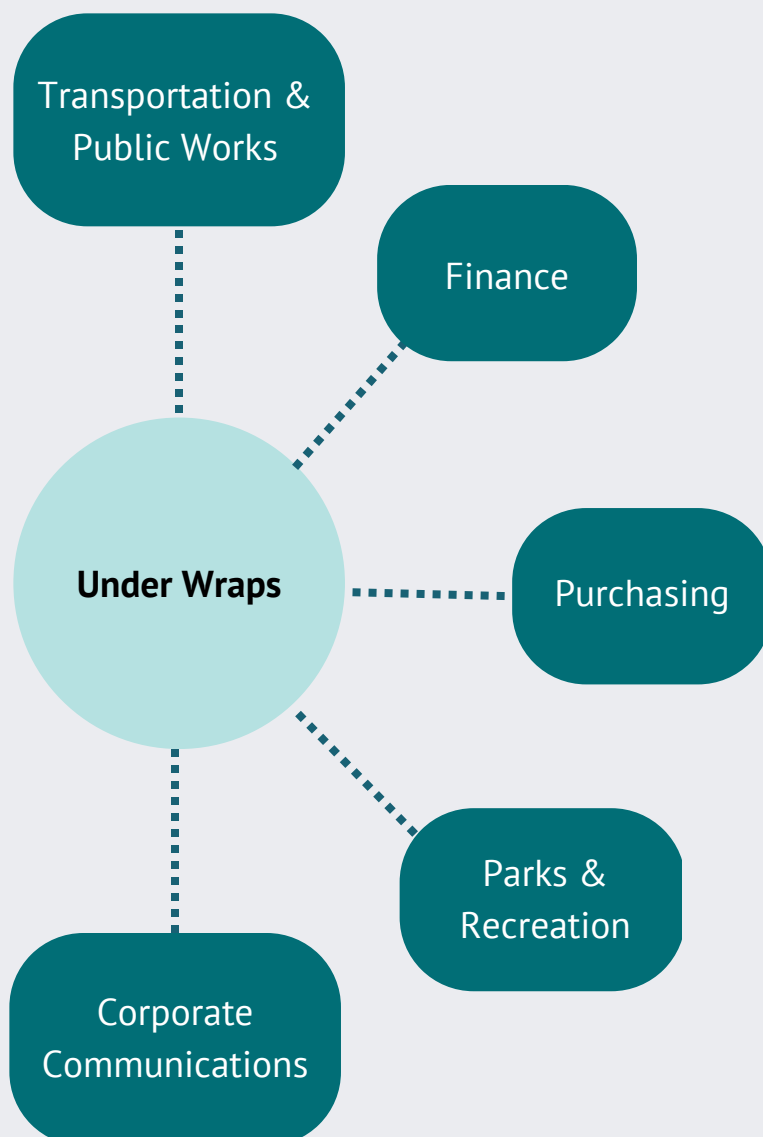
Supports the Helson Gallery's school and public programs, as needed.

CROSS DEPARTMENTAL LINKAGES

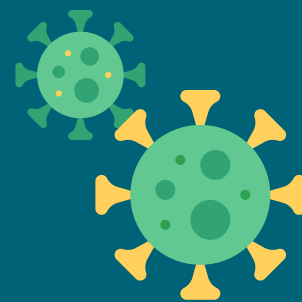


Cultural Services works with and supports the work of other departments across the corporation. The Cultural Services Coordination Committee is an internal staff committee with representation from each department. This committee supports the integration and coordination of cultural services projects and allows staff to leverage opportunities and expertise across the corporation.

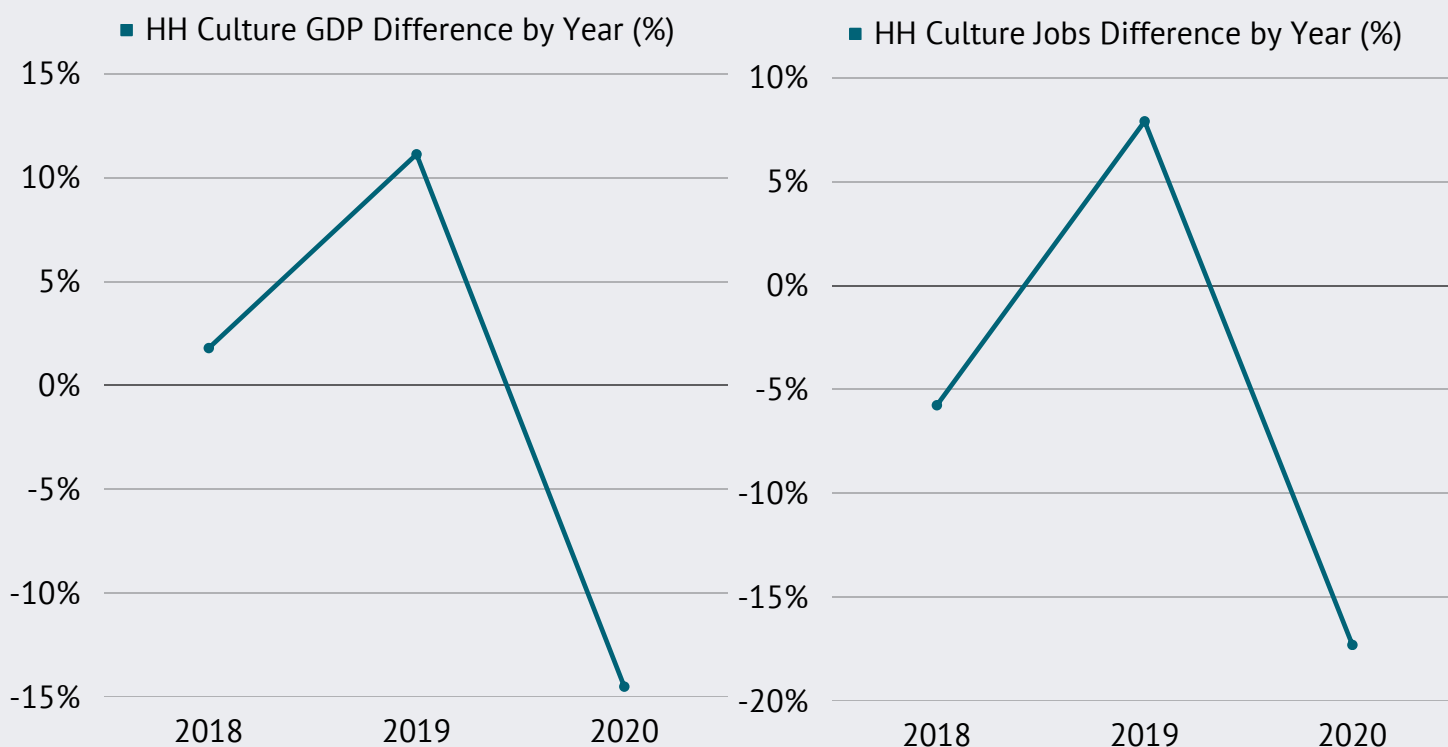
Project Example



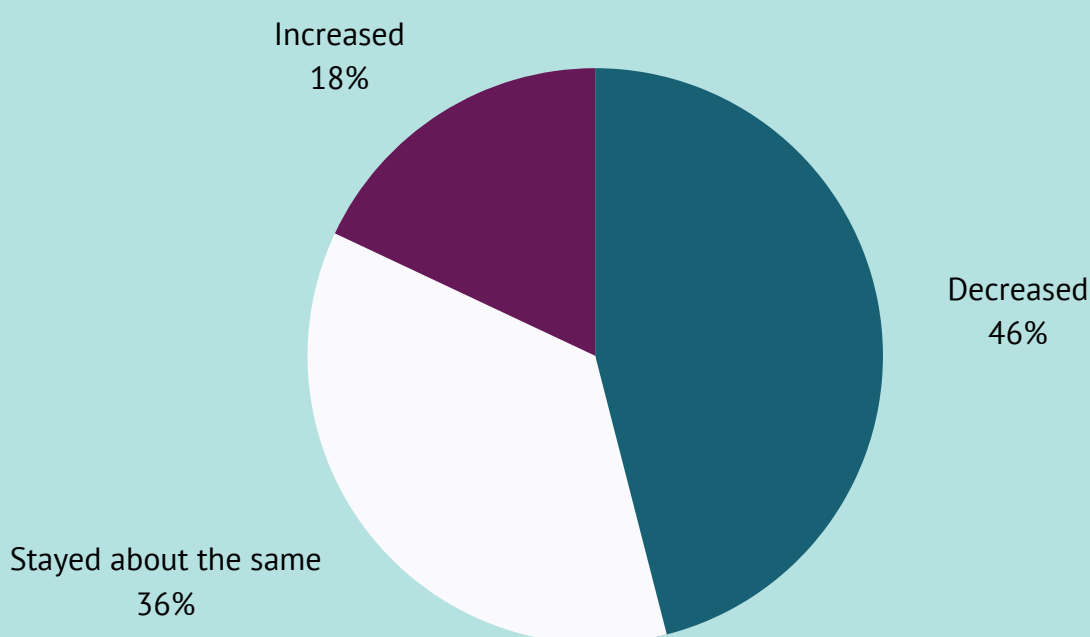
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR



Halton Hills Culture GDP & Culture Jobs ¹⁵

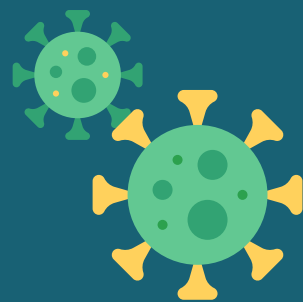


Change in participation in arts and culture during COVID-19 Pandemic ¹⁴



- The Helson Gallery was closed for a total of 42 weeks throughout 2020 & 2021
- The John Elliot Theatre was closed for 68 weeks throughout 2020 & 2021

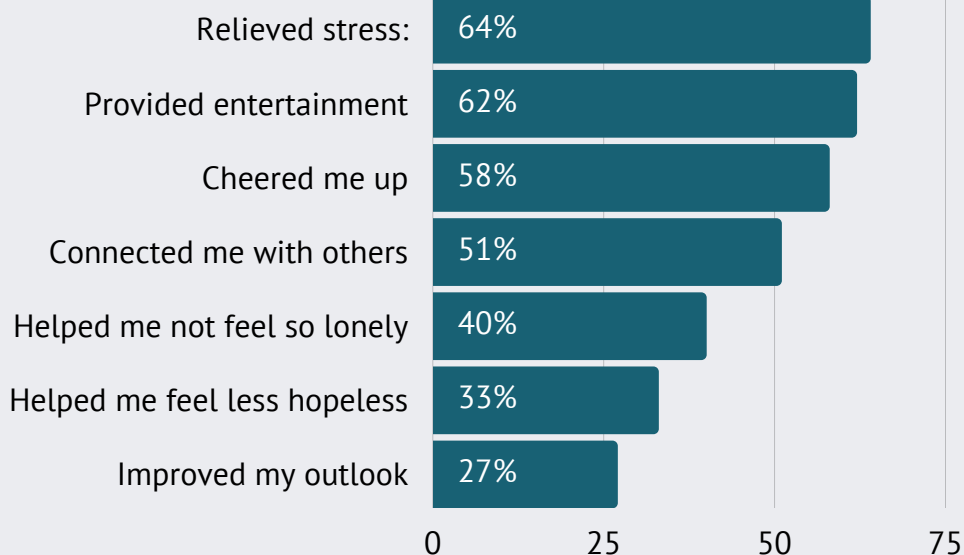
COMMUNITY IMPACTS OF ARTS & CULTURE DURING COVID-19



97%

agree that arts & culture is important to recovering from a pandemic

During the pandemic arts and culture has: ¹⁴



“People’s overall morale is down...art increases morale and improves mental health, which is strongly tied to employee satisfaction and a productive workforce that is ready to work and help the country economically recover.”

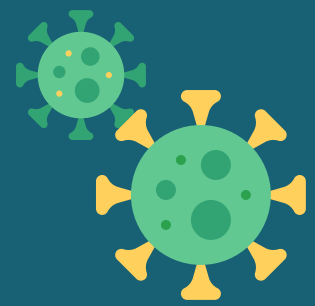
“Arts and culture will be even more important as we pull ourselves out of this pandemic, to help normalize life again. Also, people will be so ready to celebrate and attend events, it will be even more important to offer cultural events.”

“Arts and culture help explain difficult things and the pandemic was difficult on so many different levels.”

“Art and Culture has been proven to be a mental and emotional support for those suffering depression and loneliness. We need it during the pandemic when depression and loneliness is at its highest rate.”



COVID-19 SUPPORT & RESPONSE



In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, Cultural Services developed a range of programs and initiatives to support the local arts and culture sector including:

- Two Halton Hills COVID-19 Arts & Culture Forums to share their experiences, identify needs and provide details on available recovery and support initiatives
- Created 'The Artist Next Door', a commissioning program for artists and cultural groups to create new community-engaged work in any artistic discipline
- Launched 'Artrepreneur', a professional development program for artists, creative entrepreneurs, and cultural not-for-profit staff and board members, to help equip them with vital business skills needed to grow creative businesses
- Culture Days was restructured as a four-week event with most activities being offered as digital, DIY or self-led allowing the arts and culture sector to remain safely connected and engaged with the community
- 'Under Wraps', a new public art project was launched and made eligible only to artists living and/or working within Halton Hills for 2020/2021.
- Development of original virtual content and opportunities including:
 - Exhibition Tours
 - Artist Talks & Interviews
 - Recorded performances from the John Elliott Theatre
 - Streamed content including Life Drawing & Dance classes
 - Downloadable bilingual lessons & streamed lessons for Gallery School Programs
 - #VirtualVault – Social media posts of artwork in the Town art collections
- Offering outdoor events following safety standards:
 - Music in the Plaza
 - Plein Air Painting – the only Plein Air event in Ontario in 2020



"Keeping grounded when there is so much upheaval and turmoil in the world is difficult. The economic stressors and uncertainties take such a toll on individuals, groups, families and communities. Whether engaging in creating something or enjoying what another has created, or the learning involved in exploring other cultures... all of this is an antidote to what people have endured globally for the past 20 months."

THE ARTIST NEXT DOOR



The Town launched 'The Artist Next Door' in 2020 as one of Cultural Services' COVID-19 Support & Recovery Programs. The program funds new community-engaged artwork by local artists in any artistic discipline. This program enabled artists and arts organizations to connect with audiences in new and innovative ways. Project proposals are evaluated by a jury of local artists and art professionals.

Disciplines Supported:

Theatre

Dance

Music

Poetry

Play-writing

Story-telling

➔ **\$13,080** Total Funding Awarded

➔ **14** Projects funded in 2020 & 2021

Up to
➔ **\$1000** Funding Available per Project

➔ **60** Participating Artists

"With the financial uncertainty for all not-for-profits during this COVID-19 crisis, the funding provided by this program allowed us to confidently pursue a creative project of a genre completely new to our organization. It provided a much-needed public outlet for the creative talents of our members while at the same time giving the community an opportunity to enjoy music again. During the process we learned new technical skills that will be valuable in the months ahead as we continue with online content until the crisis lifts. "

"There was a lot of positive feedback ... a great way to get different content on stage, updated to reflect the times."

"Having the ability to connect with individuals through this without needing to physically contact them I think has been the light behind this project during this pandemic."



CULTURE DAYS

#hhCultureDays | #hhlsCulture

All activities are free or pay-what-you-can

Culture Days is an annual Canada-wide celebration of arts and culture. The aim of Culture Days is to increase public awareness of and participation in arts and culture activities. Culture Days is a catalyst for cultural activity in the community. It raises the profile of the cultural sector, increases year-round participation in the arts and attracts tourists who spend in the local community.

Activity Organizers are supported by:

- Free activity space at Town Venues
- Culture Days microgrants
- Funding through Artist Next Door, which coincides with Culture Days
- Networking & Partnership Opportunities
- Marketing & Communications
- Culture Days Committee
- Cultural Services Staff & Volunteers

"All the Town's social media was a great help! Thank you!!! As an add-on, I am finding continued exposure from this event. People who came to the event have returned to the studio. Definitely a positive."



Positive Impacts for participating artists and organizations:

- Gain new audiences, clients, volunteers and/or board members
- Pilot new programs and services
- New program offerings as a result of a popular Culture Days activity
- New partnerships and business relationships formed leading to financial savings and increased profile
- Program delivery and event skills developed, supported by Town staff

CULTURE DAYS

AT A GLANCE 2019-2021

98

Activity Organizers

232

Activities

10,550

Attendance (In-person + Digital)

2021 National Rankings

3rd

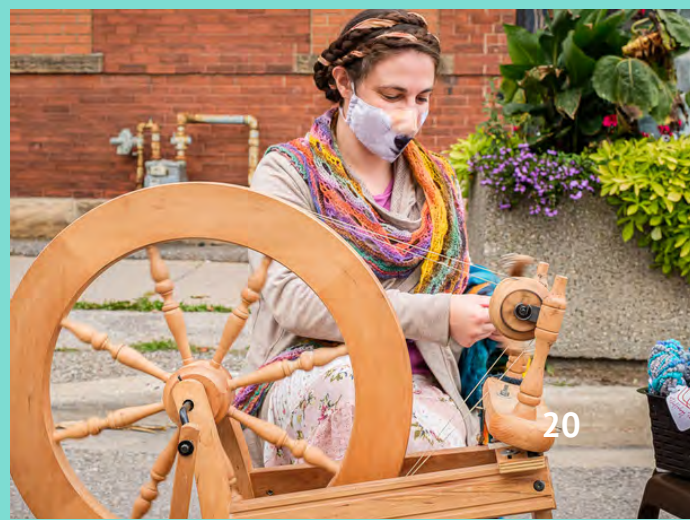
for mid-sized
communities

6th

Overall

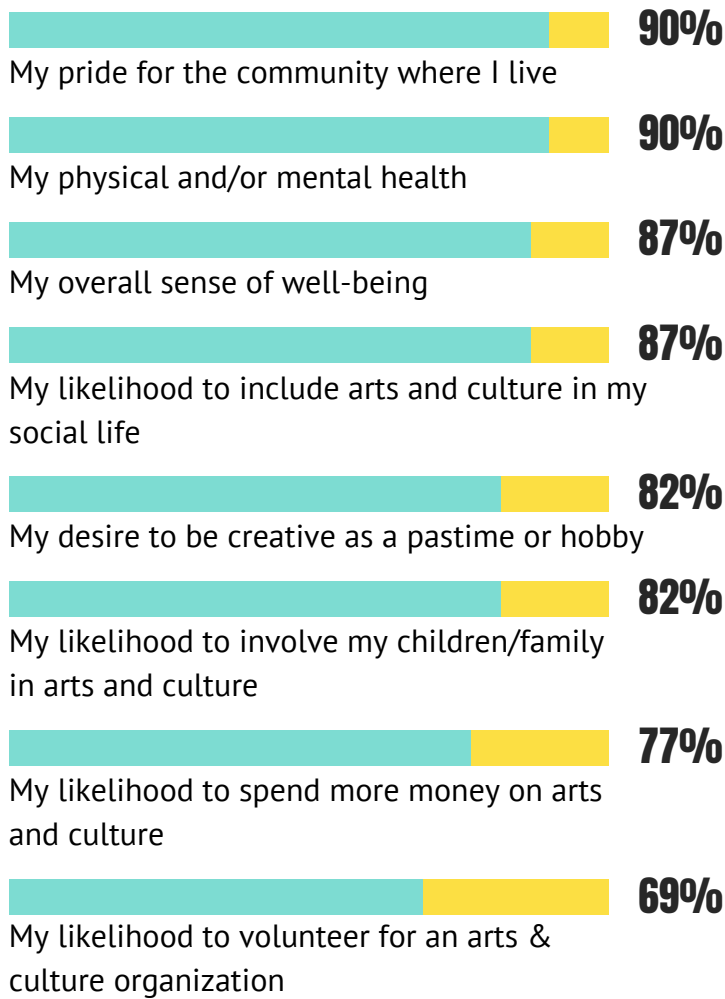
Halton Hills has consistently
ranked in the National Top 10
Culture Days Communities

"Great program for connecting the
broader community with the arts
and culture community."



CULTURE DAYS IMPACTS

Attending Culture Days had a positive impact on:

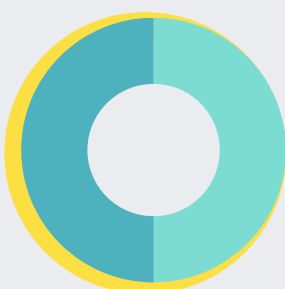


"I am an artist, so I am very grateful to live in a community that is strongly cultural"

"I say bravo to you all for organizing such a great amount and variety of activities. I think it was just wonderful!"

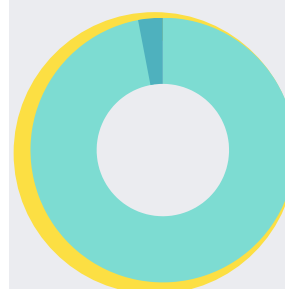
"Love it, continue doing these events, it makes living in this area so much better."

"Love to meet the talented artists in our community and share their love of life through their art."



50%

of respondents attended Culture Days for the first time in 2021



97%

Said they are likely to participate again in 2022

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON CULTURE DAYS

Culture Days data clearly demonstrates the impacts of COVID-19 on cultural participation and the changing levels of participation and options for in-person and/or digital programming options.

Historically, Culture Days was a three-day in-person event. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, in 2020 it was expanded to a 4-week mostly digital event and in 2021 it shifted to a 3 week hybrid in-person & digital event.

	Length of Event	Participating Artists	Attendance
2019	3 Days	141	2,700 In-person
2020	4 Weeks	160	5,350+ In-person: 350 Programming views: 5000+
2021	3 Weeks	165	2500+ In-person: 1300 Programming views: 1200+

100% of participants of in-person events in 2021 agreed that organizers did a good job ensuring safety and physical distancing in response to COVID-19.¹⁴

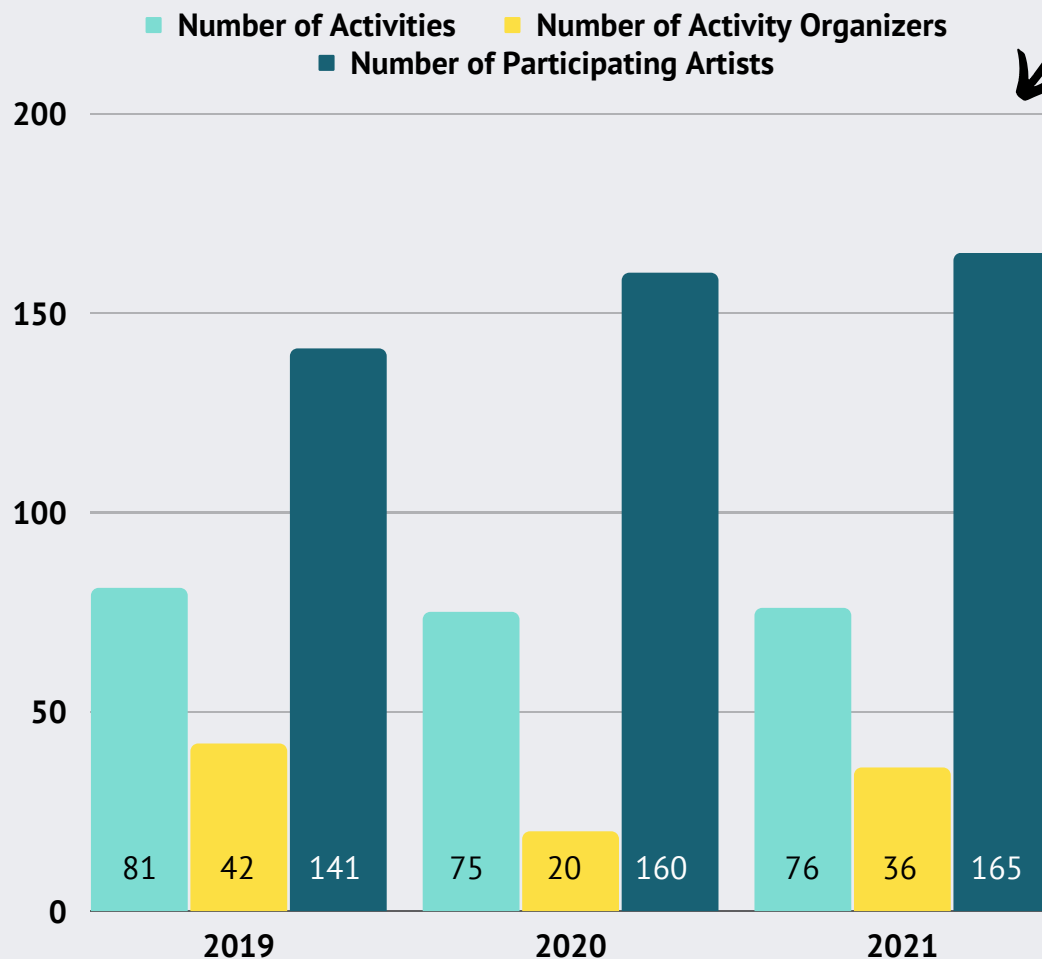
Attendance numbers almost double during the lockdown period and returned to just below pre-pandemic numbers once more in-person events with increased capacity limits were possible.

“This past year has been a challenging one for many across the region; however, despite the difficulties posed by COVID I believe the Town has made significant progress in expanding the awareness of Culture Days within the community. My involvement with Heritage Acton and Culture Days has led to the realization of how important Arts Culture and Heritage are to communities.”

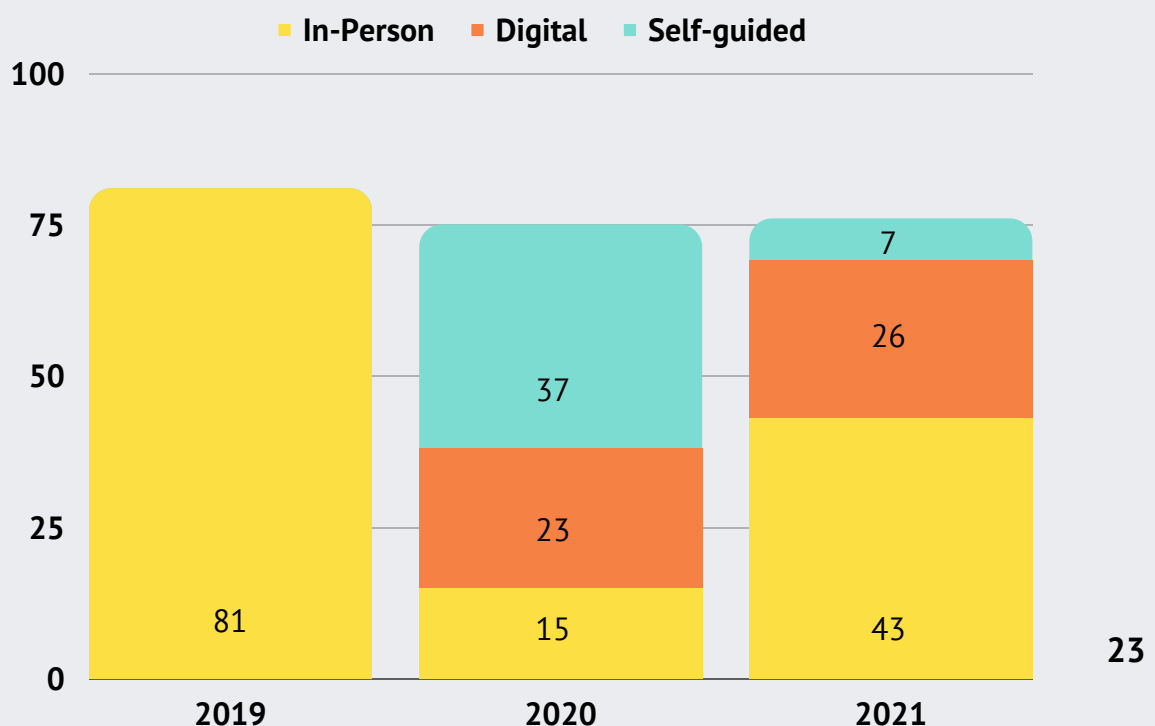
COVID-19 IMPACTS ON CULTURE DAYS

The number of activities and participating artists/organizations in Culture Days during the pandemic illustrates the commitment and engagement of the cultural sector in Halton Hills.

Number of Activities, Activity Organizers & Participating Artists



Activities by Type

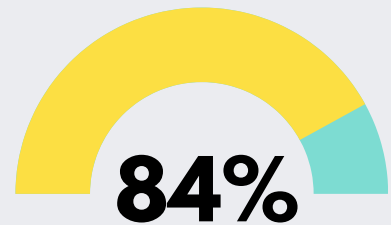


COVID-19 IMPACTS ON CULTURE DAYS^{13, 14}

Digital Programming

Enthusiasm for digital programming grew from 2020 to 2021 as presenters and participants became more comfortable and competent with technological tools.

84% of respondents said they would participate in virtual Culture Days events in the future, even if there were no in-person restrictions.



- Artists found innovative ways to continue to show their work and engage audiences during the pandemic
- Digital events increased accessibility and allowed activity organizers to reach new audiences
- While the number of in-person activities increased in 2021 and the amount of digital activities decreased, the percentage of participants accessing digital program remained consistent at 48% demonstrating an ongoing desire for digital programming (includes those who participated both digitally and in-person)
- Digital events were received as positively as in-person events with satisfaction for both ranging between 95% - 98% in 2020 & 2021
- Digital events attracted participation locally, nationally, and internationally



"Thank you for putting this virtual tour together for the exhibition. It is beautifully done. I will be sharing it with as many people as I can."



83%

83% of respondents in 2020 stated that the availability of online activities was an important factor in their participation.



HELSON GALLERY

The Helson Gallery features rotating exhibitions of local art, private collections and travelling exhibitions. Curated shows are also exhibited in the Sisnett Lobby of the Cultural Centre, the Georgetown and Acton Library branches and Town Hall. Gallery staff care for and maintain the Helson, Town and Library Art Collections, offer a variety of community programs and events throughout the year, and provide opportunities for artists to sell their work. The Town's art collections continue to grow with the support of generous donors.



Helson Collection certified as Cultural Property by the Canadian Department of Heritage in 2021 recognizing its outstanding significance. Ownership of the collection was officially transferred to the Town.

HELSON COLLECTION

103 Artworks
\$922,859

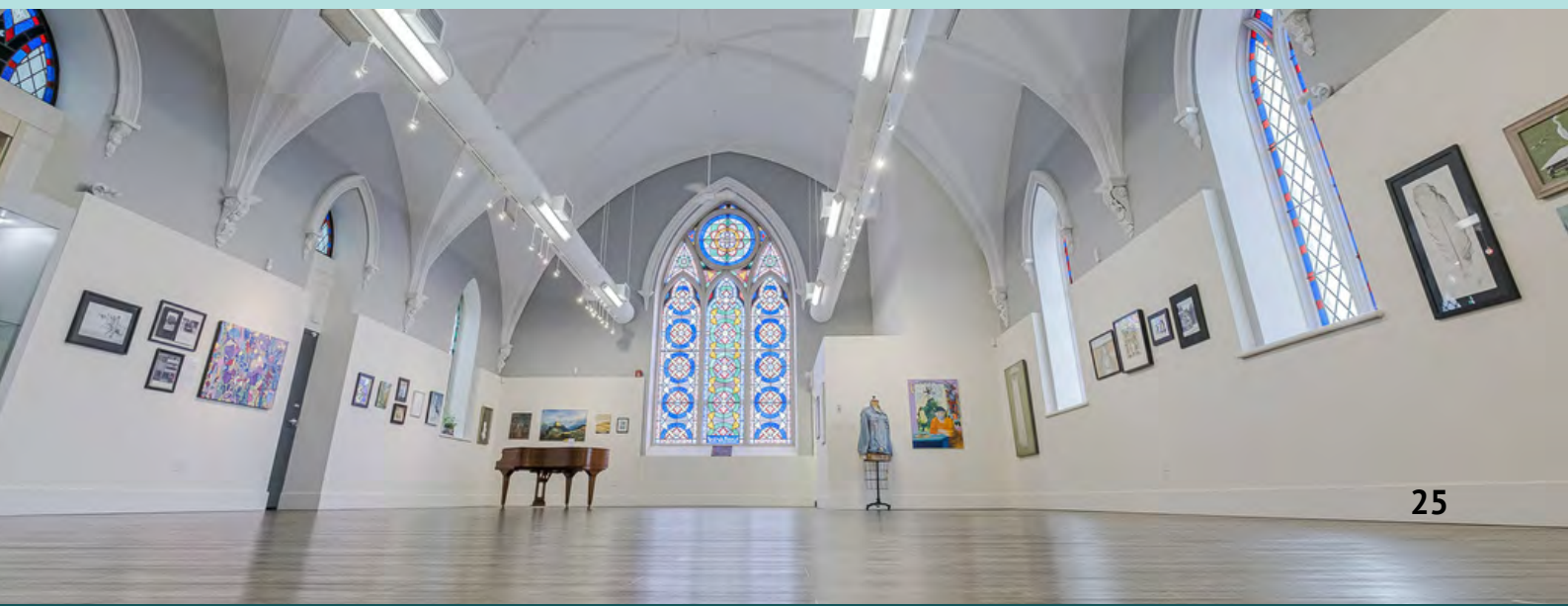
TOWN ART COLLECTION

737 Artworks
\$399,438

HHPL ART COLLECTION

880 Artworks
\$106,172

Total: 1720 Artworks, valued at over \$1.4 Million



HELSON GALLERY

At a glance 2019-2021



5,430 Visitors



4,546 Program Participants



\$15,862 in art sales



1,722 volunteers hours



38 Exhibitions



174 Donations

Visitor Comments

"A great collection and well presented"

"A great local resource"

"Very enjoyable - worth the trip to Georgetown."

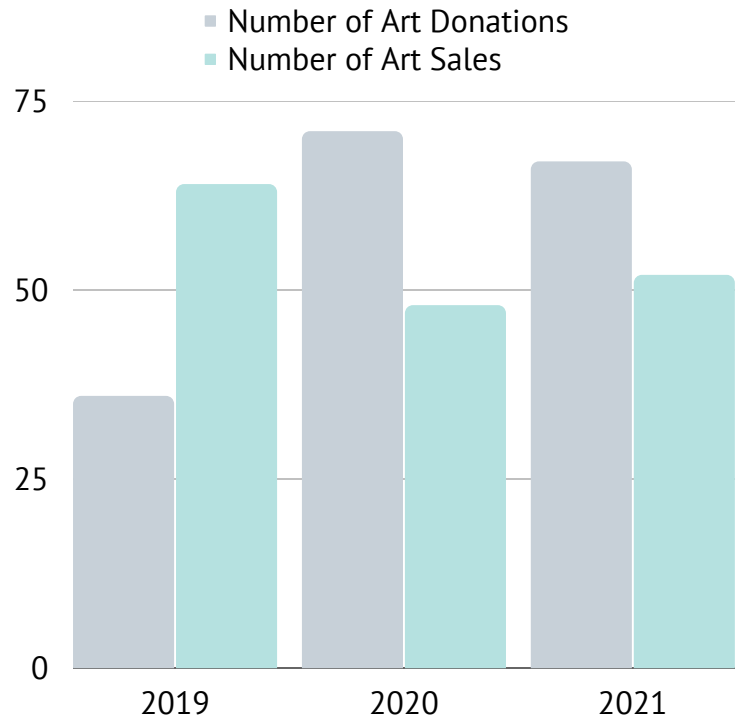
"Gem of a gallery"



HELSON GALLERY: COVID-19 SUCCESSES

Annual art donations nearly doubled

Despite facility closures, art sales remained strong



Art education opportunities expanded to include virtual and French language offerings

Increase in youth engagement with the gallery through the volunteer docent program

Developed 30 art activities for the Town's virtual March Break summer camp programs

 **19**

19 shows curated and exhibited in 2020 & 2021, despite facility closures including two shows directly addressing artist responses to COVID-19:

✓ Creative Outlets: Art in the Time of Isolation and
✓ Re-emergence - New work by artists of Halton Hills

Halton Hills held the only in-person Plein Air painting event in Ontario in 2020. As a result, there was a 53% growth in participating artists between 2019 and 2021. The increased profile for this annual event continues to attract new artists.



"Thanks for what you do - you are making a difference in people's lives."

"Thanks so much for supporting the work of our local artists."

"Thanks for organizing this Plein Air this year. We all had a great time, and much needed, in person, communication."

HELSON GALLERY: CURRICULUM-BASED SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Offered since 2014. Expanded offerings created in response to teacher requests

- ✓ Kindergarten to Grade 8
- ✓ Bespoke programs for high school students including mentorship and volunteer opportunities



1,121

1,121 Students participated in 2019, which was the highest level of annual participation in the program to date.



“I was impressed that the tour and studio activity were connected to the curriculum.”

“The kids LOVED the studio experience, and the leadership was fantastic.”

“It was beneficial for the students to see real works of art – well done!”

HELSON GALLERY: CURRICULUM-BASED SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Create to Learn 2020

Curriculum-based Educational Resources

To support teachers, parents and students during lock down, downloadable art lessons were created providing step-by-step instructions to create inspiring works of art from materials readily available at home.



10
Lessons

- ✓ Curriculum-based
- ✓ Grade-differentiated
- ✓ English & French versions



135
Downloads

“Thank you for providing these art lessons & access to past and present exhibitions on your website.”

Examples of Student Artwork



LIVE VIRTUAL SCHOOL PROGRAMS 2021



915

Students



120

French language
students



16

Schools participated

“My students really enjoyed today’s workshop.
Thank you so much.”

“Thank you so much for visiting with our class,
helping us to change up our routine a little bit
and provide the students with a hands-on
experience. They were so proud of their artwork
when they finished and loved making the
connection to the colours and their emotions.”

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cultural Services develops and presents an annual series of professional development programs to the arts and culture sector.

Program Offerings included:

- How to Photograph your Work
- Arts and Culture Meet-ups to provide peer learning and networking opportunities
- Preparing Submissions and Proposals
- Public Art 101: 3-sessions on the theory and process for the creation and delivery of public art
- Digital Skills for Artists: 3 sessions presented in partnership with Halton Hills Public Library to support artists to transition to virtual programming



ARTREPRENEUR

Artrepreneur is a professional development program for artists, creative entrepreneurs, and cultural not-for-profit, staff and board members to equip them with vital business skills needed to grow creative businesses. This program, licensed from York Region Arts Council, was adapted and delivered by Cultural Services as a 9/10-week virtual course in 2020 and 2021.



Content:

- Goal Setting & Critical Paths
- Business Planning
- Marketing (including research, strategy and tools)
- Grant-writing
- Networking & Partnerships
- Finances
- Pitching



2 Cohorts
17 Graduating Creatives (Fellows)

Fellow successes:

- Launched new websites
- Created new branding and marketing materials
- Developed new products and services
- Secured grants, and commissions
- Adopted digital models for service delivery

“I not only learned a great deal, I found it motivating at a time when motivation is very hard to come by.”

“I had completely written off writing grants. So I was pleased with how the materials were presented and am encouraged to dip my toe into the grant writing world-if and when appropriate”

“My favourite part was the step-by-step approach to big concepts. I actually want to create a business model and plan now. It took the intimidation away from the task.”

PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Public art contributes to the creation of a healthy, vibrant, and connected community. The Town recognizes the role of public art in positive street activity, enhanced quality of life, the creation of cultural legacies, promoting the talents of local artists, enhancing public spaces and in stimulating creativity and imagination.

Characteristics of Public Art

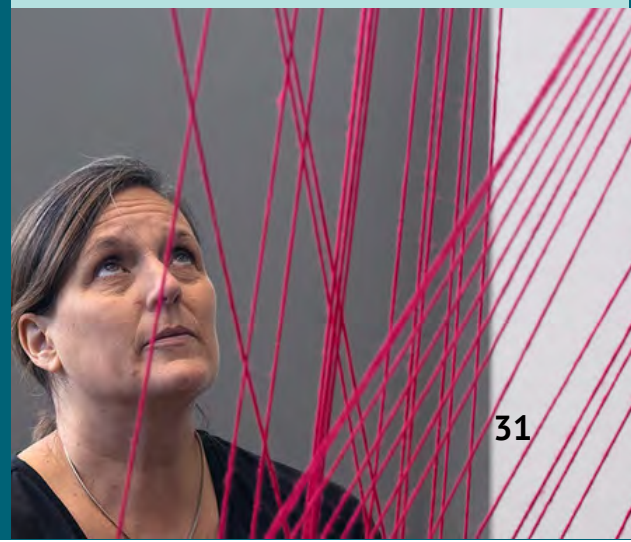
- A work of art, permanent or temporary, that is accessible to the public
- Aesthetic, whether it is functional, commemorative, free-standing or integrated into a site
- Commissioned, acquired, or donated in an open and transparent process
- Primarily created or overseen by a professional artist(s)

Public Art Program Vision

The Town of Halton Hills Public Art collection honours the creative spirit, instills a sense of wonder, encourages contemplation, and establishes Halton Hills as a creative community and a leader in public art. Our innovative public art program invites residents and visitors to explore and engage with all that Halton Hills has to offer in its natural, cultural, and urban spaces.

Public Art Program Guiding Principles

1. Be inclusive and engage a diverse community
2. Provide for a range of installations, temporary and permanent, in a variety of locations across Halton Hills
3. Help to create a distinct sense of place and new destinations
4. Apply fair, open, and transparent processes
5. Follow best practices and commit to artistic excellence and quality
6. Support and develop local artists, as well as attract artists from around the world
7. Contribute to economic development through a creative public art program
8. Ensure long term care and maintenance of public art
9. Engage all Town departments to include public art opportunities in significant public capital projects



AFTER NATURE, Ingrid Mayrhofer

OVER 150 BANNERS WERE EXHIBITED AROUND GEORGETOWN AND ACTON AS PART OF THIS TEMPORARY OUTDOOR BANNER INSTALLATION, IN MARCH 2020 & SPRING 2021

The first public art project completed under the Public Art Master Plan, After Nature consisted of a series of seven banner designs based on collagraph prints by Ingrid Mayrhofer. Addressing climate change and at-risk species, the compositions incorporated historical buildings of Halton Hills with images of flora and fauna native to Ontario.

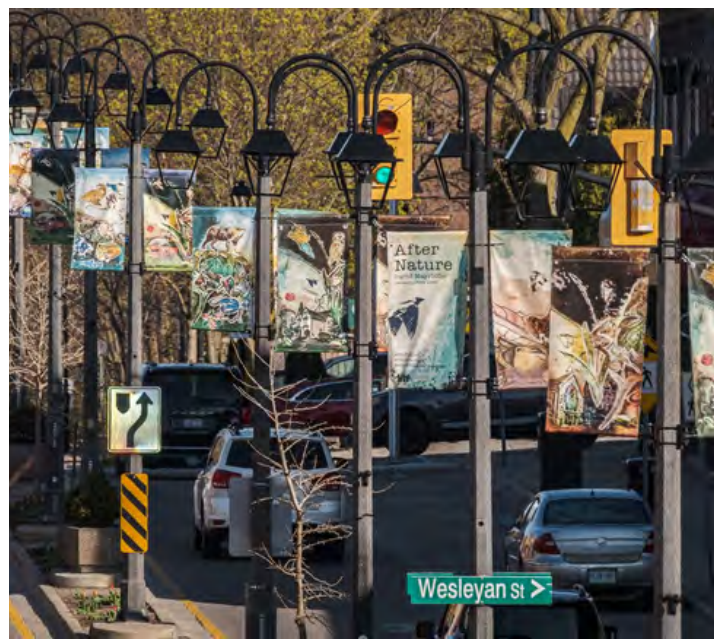
With vibrant textures and colour, Mayrhofer's designs celebrate the past of Halton Hills built history while simultaneously drawing attention to the fragility of the future of the natural environment. After Nature helped raise the profile of the Public Art Program; created dialogue; and highlighted Halton Hills' community identity and long-standing commitment to sustainability.

In response to requests from the community, the art banner series was re-installed in select locations in spring 2021. Residents were encouraged to view the outdoor banners during COVID-19 restrictions. The banner project provided safe access to art in the community and lifted spirits in an uncertain time.

Public Engagement:

- Virtual Artist Talk with Ingrid Mayrhofer
- Print-making workshop with Ingrid Mayrhofer

"I was drawn to the idea of visualizing a sustainable future... my series of endangered species can be read from either side... it's up to the viewer to pick the image of the future they want to look at." - Ingrid Mayrhofer, Artist



UNDER WRAPS, Nine Local Artists

THE FIRST OFFERING OF THIS ONGOING PROJECT FEATURED THE ARTWORK OF LOCAL PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS ON VINYL WRAPS OF TOWN-OWNED UTILITY BOXES, UNVEILED FALL 2021



Under Wraps re-imagines utility boxes as canvases to enliven the streetscape in Halton Hills. The selected artworks demonstrate the diversity of the local arts sector and include a range of disciplines, styles and subject matter such as abstract, impressionism, landscape, and realism paintings, photography, and digital artworks. This artist call was restricted to local artists (those living or having their creative practice in Halton Hills), as part of Cultural Services' COVID-19 support and recovery program initiatives. Under Wraps raised the profile of local artists, the local arts sector, and the Public Art Program while providing a financial support to artists.

Public Engagement

- 'Under Wraps' selected as the Culture Days theme
- Self-guided tour routes created and promoted
- Unveiling Video created
- Virtual artist talk

Under Wraps received positive feedback from participating artists and public alike. Positive feedback was shared widely throughout the community, including on Town social media feeds.

Participating Artists:

"It looks amazing!! It's better than I imagined...this was a tremendous privilege for me to participate"

"I've learned how much work goes into the administration of producing a piece or group of public art works, I really appreciate all the work being done to create this collective project. It represents a lot of work"

Select Social Media Comments:

"It really brightens up our town!"

"So talented! This is a fabulous idea!" -

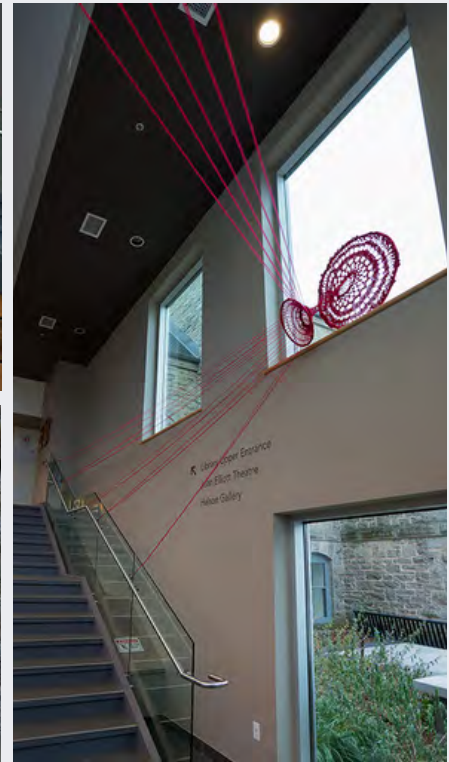
"Saw this one this morning on my way into work. Looks great!"

"Wow that's incredible! Looks a million times better. Wish they could all be painted like that!"

"It makes me smile, every damn DAY!"

#hopeandhealingcanada, Tracey-Mae Chambers

TEMPORARY ART INSTALLATION IN THE LIBRARY AND CULTURAL CENTRE PLAZA AND ATRIUM IN RESPONSE TO LOCATING OF GRAVES OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AT FORMER RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, INSTALLED NOVEMBER 2021



The Library and Cultural Centre atrium and plaza hosted temporary public art installation works by Métis artist, Tracey-Mae Chambers. The #hopeandhealingcanada project was installed during Canadian History week in November 2021 and remained on display until March 2022.

The works created with red string, symbolize the connectivity between each other and our environment, and promote discussions about truth and reconciliation and decolonizing public spaces in Canada.

Public Engagement

- Time-lapse installation video
- Virtual Artist Talk with Tracey-Mae Chambers

"#hopeandhealingcanada, site specific installations across Canada, created with red wool, illustrating the lack of connection between Indigenous communities and settler Canadians."
Métis artist, Tracey-Mae Chambers

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS



DIGITAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM (DMS) 2020/2021

The Digital Main Street program helps small businesses identify and adopt the right digital tools and technologies to help reach customers and boost sales. Digital Main Street was offered by the Town of Halton Hills in 2020 and 2021 through Economic Development to help small businesses use digital technologies to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. With many businesses closed during the pandemic, Arts & Culture businesses were a main focus of outreach, making up over 1/3 of all businesses contacted.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION GRANT

- \$2,500 grant to support small businesses to promote and provide services digitally
- \$22,500 distributed to Arts & Culture businesses



SHOPHERE Powered by Google:

- Provided small business owners and artists with a quick, easy and low-cost way to start selling online
- 20 Artists & Culture businesses participated

"If this course or a similar course is offered again, I recommend it highly, because I learned a lot that will help me in the future to stay relevant in a world of constant change."

Barbara Ariss – Artist

"I really appreciated Sarah's attention to detail and suggestions. She was great to work with and I am very happy with my connection to Shopify!"

Meagan Speakman – The Dance Impact

"It has been so great having Sarah to lean on through this process. The process of filling out for the grant is intimidating and it was so helpful to have someone to speak to either on the phone or through email when things got overwhelming. She has been tremendously valuable, helpful, supportive and motivating."

Darlene Hartung – An Artist for Hire



DISCOVER THE HILLS



Discover the Hills, is a self-guided interpretive tour program developed by Cultural Services in coordination with Recreation & Parks, local heritage and environmental organizations and the Credit Valley Trail showcasing the Town of Halton Hills' rich and diverse arts, culture, heritage, and natural assets. The program fulfills a key recommendation of the Cultural Master Plan and Cultural Master Plan Action Plan.



Three of the four pilot tours featured Glen Williams Heritage and Hiking and were created as part of "First Steps Along the Path", a soft launch event for the Credit Valley Trail as part of Culture Days 2019. The event featured in-person guided tours. A Downtown Acton Heritage tour was developed in partnership with local Doors Open organizers for Culture Days in 2020.



All four tours were promoted as safe, outdoor physical activity residents could participate in during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Access the tours: [VisitHaltonHills.ca/tours](https://www.visithaltonhills.ca/tours)



The Discover the Hills tour program was transferred to the Town's Tourism section in 2021.

JOHN ELLIOTT THEATRE (JET)

COVID-19 restrictions forced the John Elliott Theatre to close to the public for extended periods of time in 2020 & 2021. Cultural Services sought to leverage the JET, raise its profile and bring diverse programming to the public, despite ongoing and changing restrictions.

Centre Stage at the JET

The Town partnered with local community organizers to offer a series of digitally recorded performances from the theatre for Culture Days. Featured Artists:

- The Dance Impact
- Tragedy Ann
- Jean Assamoa
- Tina Newlove

In-Person Programming

Limited capacity in-person programming returned to the theatre in 2021. With COVID-19 safety precautions in place, the Haus of Parks drag show, sold out the allocated seats within the capacity limit, was one of few live performances at the JET that year, and returned for a second performance as a new rental client.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION & TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Halton Hills is committed to being a diverse, welcoming, inclusive and equitable community. The Cultural Services division leads the Town's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and Truth & Reconciliation portfolios, which includes ongoing efforts in the areas of:

- Relationship Building
- Recognition & Representation
- Education and Capacity Development
- Meaningful Consultation
- Policy Development
- Public Programming

This State of Culture Report only covers actions related to cultural programming. Initiatives and advancement in all other areas is covered in a separate Update Report on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Truth and Reconciliation.

The annual Halton Hills Culture Days survey consistently demonstrates the public's desire for more diverse representation in programming with Afrocentric, Asian, Latin American, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQ+ arts and culture being requested most often.

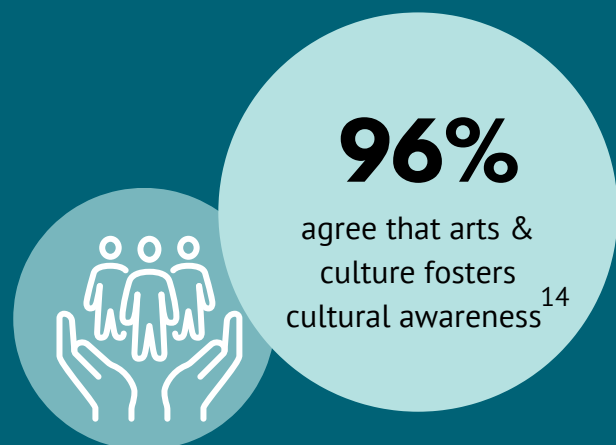
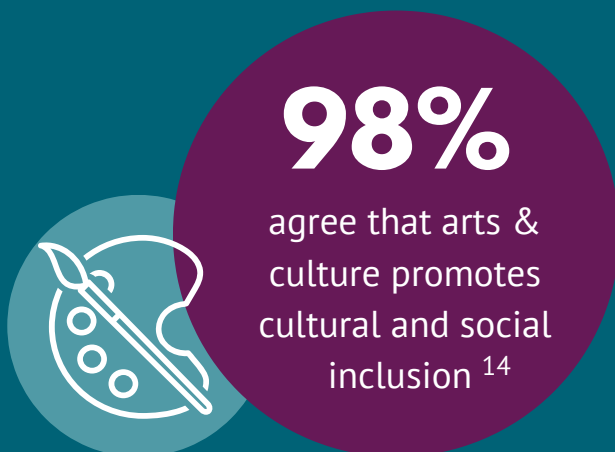


Photo: Alan McCord

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Cultural Services partners with key organizations in the region to offer diverse programs year-round that feature a wide range of experiences, practices and voices.

2019 – 2021 Highlights

- Annual Black History Month programming presented by Cultural Services and the Halton Hills Public Library in collaboration with regional partners. Offerings have included video interviews, historical lectures, musical performances, and featured artwork by local artists;
- Annual Emancipation Day Art Exhibition & Programming in partnership with the Halton Black History Awareness Society;
- A Voyage of Exploration into Blending Cultures: Peking Opera meets Contemporary Dance, Halton Hills Chinese Association;
- Highlife Music: A Nigerian Music Project – Council for Nigerian Professionals and African Caribbean Council of Halton;
- CCAH Reading Corner: Kaaro Tomi, Good Morning Tomi – Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton; and
- Try Dance Week: Bollywood – Bollywood Dance Studio



TRUTH & RECONCILIATION



Everyone has a role to play in reconciliation

Cultural Services in partnership with community organizations supports and presents indigenous programming year-round in addition to recognizing key dates: Indigenous History Month (June), Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21), National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30), and Treaties Recognition Week (First week in November).

Program offerings encourage residents to learn about the history and contemporary and traditional arts and culture of Indigenous peoples in Canada, while staying thoughtfully engaged in conversations and programs.

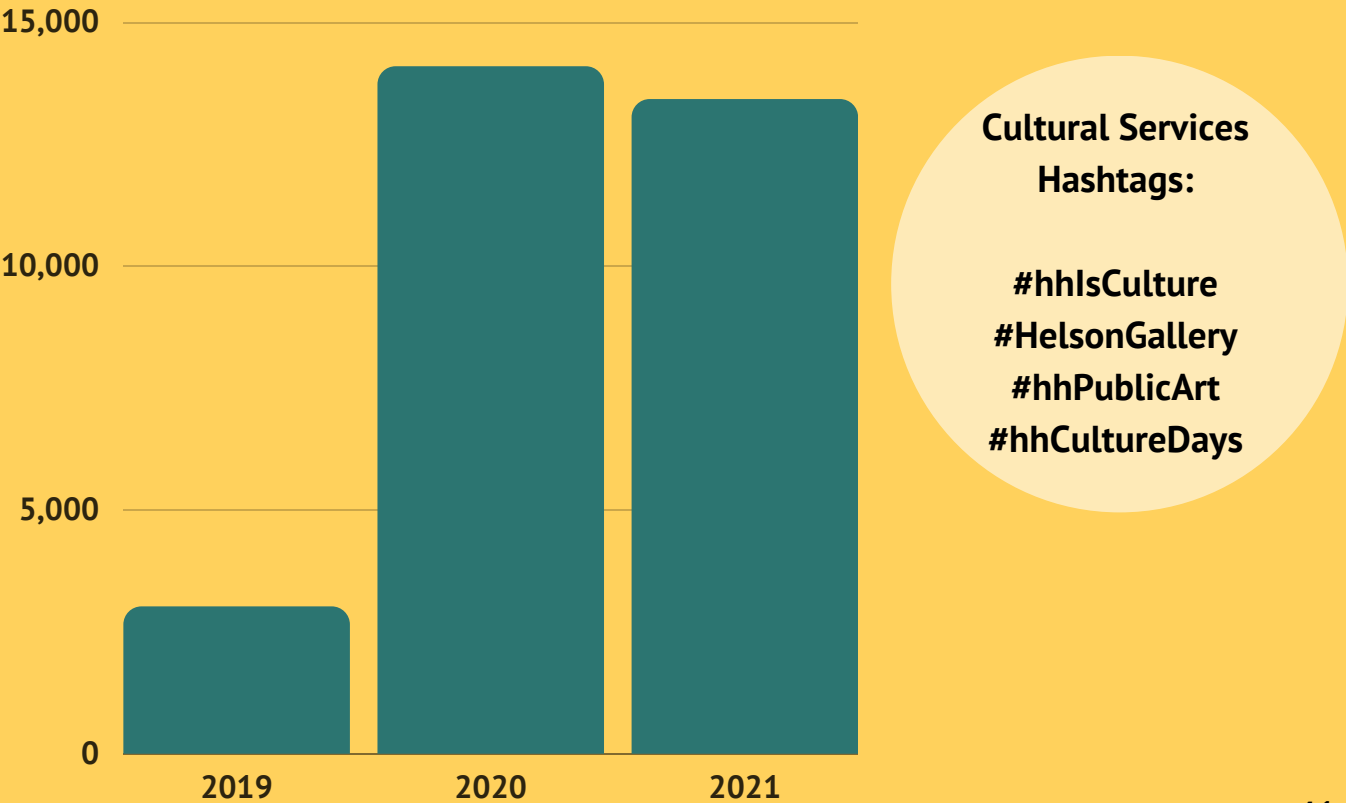
Highlights 2019 -2021

- Celebrating Indigenous Artists Exhibition, Sisnett Lobby
- First Steps Along the Path Celebration, featuring an Indigenous Water Ceremony, Guided Anishinaabe Relationships to the Natural World Trail Walk and Indigenous cuisine
- Evolving Traditions: Indigenous Artists from the Town of Halton Hills Collection, Sisnett Lobby Exhibition
- Displays of Historic Indigenous Beadwork from the collection of Naomi Smith
- No Word for Art, Exploring the Indigenous Roots of Creativity: Virtual Talk with Naomi Smith, Indigenous artist and educator
- Opportunities to experience the Moccasin Identifier Project

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

1.2 MILLION	Impressions and engagements on Cultural Services' social media posts
902,480	Marketing impressions for the annual Cultural Days campaign
3,000 +	Visits to Cultural Services pages on the Town and Visit Halton Hills websites
2,841+	Views on 23 Cultural Services videos on the Town YouTube Channel
1300 +	Social media posts on Cultural Services programs, initiatives and opportunities
100 +	Virtual Vault social media posts showcasing artworks in the Helson and Town Art Collections

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS



Analytics gathered between 2019-2021



CONCLUSION

The arts and culture sector plays an important role in economic development, investment attraction and retention, tourism, community identity and belonging, and health and wellbeing that is recognized and valued by residents, visitors, and businesses in Halton Hills.

Artists, creators and cultural businesses and organizations adapted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and were able to serve as an important outlet, support and resource to the public during lockdowns. The cultural sector incorporated lessons learned into their products and services allowing them to continue to reach new audiences.

Create Halton Hills contributes to building a diverse, welcoming, connected and vibrant community, providing valuable programs and services to the cultural sector and public. Cultural Services staff continues to work collaboratively with community partners to strengthen and raise the profile of the sector, contribute to a high quality of life, and make Halton Hills a preferred location to live, work, create and invest.

SOURCES

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13. Halton Hills Culture Days Survey 2020
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15. Municipal Cultural Indicators Strategy, Annual Halton Hills Report



Unless otherwise noted, all quotes in this report were provided by participants in programs presented or supported by Cultural Services.



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