Cultural Mapping Findings

Cultural mapping is a systematic approach to defining and recording a community's cultural assets. In Ontario, municipalities having made commitments to building cultural mapping systems include Oakville, Hamilton, Vaughan and Durham Region. The City of Toronto has partnered with the Martin Prosperity Institute to establish *Placing Creativity* a group that brings together individuals from academic, government and community organizations to advance thinking and practice in cultural mapping. In August 2009, the Province of Ontario launched the *Creative Community Prosperity Fund*, a $9 million funding commitment with cultural mapping and municipal cultural planning forming key funding priorities.

Cultural mapping as it is understood and practiced in Ontario has two dimensions – one tangible (or quantitative) the other intangible (or qualitative).

1. *Resource Mapping* – identifying and recording tangible cultural resources usually making use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools and platforms; and,
2. *Community Identity Mapping* – exploring a community's 'intangible cultural resources' – the unique stories and traditions that define a community's identity and sense of place.

1. Cultural Resource Mapping

Vaughan has established itself as a leading municipality nationally in entrenching a formal commitment to cultural mapping in the Official Plan.

> "Cultural mapping is a systematic approach to identifying and recording cultural resources. It can identify and record tangible cultural resources using GIS tools, but can also use community identity mapping to explore intangible cultural resources, such as unique histories, values, traditions and stories that combine to define a community's identity and sense of place.
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> Through multimedia enriched web-based maps, cultural mapping enhances access to information on local cultural resources for residents and visitors and provides a platform for marketing and promoting these resources. Cultural mapping also establishes a base of information to support planning decisions, and can identify resource distribution to assist in identifying new and emerging cultural industries and employment sectors."

Vaughan Official Plan: Economy Chapter

The cultural asset mapping undertaken as part of the *Creative Together* process was guided by three goals:

i. To establish *baseline information on cultural resources* in Vaughan and to complete initial analysis of these findings;
ii. To establish the *ongoing mapping system* that will be used to expand mapping over time; and,
iii. To *recommend next steps* and opportunities for further mapping work.

The key to cultural mapping is consolidating cultural information from diverse sources in a consistent and coherent set of categories called a Cultural Resource Framework (CRF) consisting of six categories:

- Creative cultural industries
- Community cultural organizations
- Festivals and events
- Spaces and facilities
- Cultural heritage
- Natural heritage.

Each category is then subdivided into a series of sub-categories.

The foundation of the CRF is Statistics Canada's *Canadian Framework of Cultural Statistics.*[5] This Framework outlines how the Federal government has defined the creative cultural sector in Canada and reflects North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The CRF does not stop with Statistics Canada data. Additional layers are added including information on natural and cultural heritage maintained by municipalities under provisions of a range of statutes including the Ontario Heritage Act, Ontario Planning Act, the Cemeteries Act, among others.

The cultural mapping system and methodology used in the *Creative Together* process consolidates data from a number of primary sources including Statistics Canada and local Yellow Pages. Important additional data was secured from the City of Vaughan Cultural Services.

Based on the CRF, an initial baseline mapping in Vaughan revealed 644 cultural assets as follows.

Creative Cultural Industries	276	Community Cultural Organizations	22
Festivals and Events	8	Spaces and Facilities	67
Cultural Heritage	279	Natural Heritage	2

According to the cultural mapping data, Vaughan's larger creative cultural industry categories include the following.

- Design — 61
- Advertising — 43
- Performing Arts — 38
- Photography — 35
- Visual Arts Instruction — 34
- Architecture — 28
- Film and Video — 16
- Publishing — 12

These numbers do not, of course, capture all Vaughan's diverse cultural assets but rather represent the beginning of developing a more systematic documenting of resources.

While the mapping findings reveal much for which Vaughan can be proud, on a comparative basis with other municipalities the results reveal gaps and shortages (Appendix A). For example, Vaughan has fewer museums (two) compared to other municipalities of comparable size. Vaughan has a relatively high number of commercial art galleries but only has one public art gallery and one theatre with the smallest number of seats of any other municipality examined.

Commitments to new facilities and programs are recommended in *Active Together,* including proposals for cultural spaces in community centres. These investments are critical to Vaughan offering the kinds of community facilities and amenities needed to attract and retain people and investment in a highly competitive economic environment.

2. Community Identity Mapping Process and Initial Findings

Stories have been called 'the DNA of culture.' If cultural mapping focused only on tangible assets it would miss the very essence of local culture. Two first steps in community identity mapping were undertaken for *Creative Together*. The first was preparation of a historical narrative telling the story of significant aspects of Vaughan's natural and cultural history. The second step was preparing a presentation illustrating the evolution of people and places in Vaughan over the period of the historical narrative drawing on contemporary and archival maps and images. This presentation will be available via a website and will support the communications strategy to introduce *Creative Together* across the community.

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[5] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-595-m/81-595-m2004021-eng.pdf

Vaughan's cultural history dates back thousands of years to when First Nations occupied many sites along the tributaries of the Humber and Don Rivers. In the 18th and 19th centuries, European immigrants began to farm Vaughan's lands and harvest natural resources. This led to the founding of the historic villages of Kleinburg, Maple, Thornhill, and Woodbridge, which served as centres for a largely rural area. These villages followed the patterns of First Nations settlement along streams and trails. The Village of Thornhill, for example, was conveniently founded on the Don River for mill power and on a former First Nations trail now known as Yonge Street. Twentieth century developments in the City have also added to the cultural heritage resources of the community.

Vaughan has its own unique story of a 'place' which emerges through the people who have inhabited the area for many centuries. Each historical period in has left a legacy, including physical sites and landforms, artifacts, images, place names, stories, and neighbourhoods as a collection of assets which serve as reminders, both tangible and intangible, of the city's history and culture. Vaughan's tangible and intangible assets help us better understand the history and context of many of the challenges that face us today and are indispensable to shaping the plans and strategies we need for today and tomorrow.

The identity mapping work completed during *Creative Together* sets the stage for a richer exploration of the stories that define Vaughan,as proposed in the "Actions" section below.

An Ongoing Mapping System for Vaughan

Next Steps in Cultural Mapping

The cultural mapping work undertaken for *Creative Together* marks the beginning not the end of Vaughan's efforts in cultural mapping. The work has put in place a mapping system to enable a wide range of stakeholders to update, maintain and continuously expand cultural mapping information. The system will create a 'cultural portal' for Vaughan – a single point of access to the wide range of cultural assets the City has to offer.

A range of opportunities exist to expand the City of Vaughan's cultural mapping system and capacities. A consistent definition of cultural resources contributes to building connection between cultural mapping other cultural and heritage information systems.

- The City's Register of Cultural Heritage Resources
- The City's Archaeological resources database
- Future development of inventories and management systems for public art.

It will also enable a layering of cultural information in the City's GIS system.

Success in maintaining and expanding Vaughan's cultural mapping system must be a collaborative effort involving a number of City departments (Recreation and Culture, Planning, Economic Development, and others) and key agencies such as the Vaughan Public Libraries with its strong knowledge management systems and expertise. A community-based Cultural mapping collaboration should be established and terms of reference developed to address issues such as:

- Developing policies and protocols to guide future data collection.
- Examining opportunities to tap resources to expand and deepen information on cultural resources for access by residents and visitors.
- Examine opportunities for linking the Vaughan mapping system to mapping systems and capacities for York Region.