Executive summary

The City of Cambridge has recognized the increasing importance of arts and culture to the future growth of the community, and acknowledged the changing needs of its residents for arts and cultural services. It has also recognized that, in order to better serve the residents of Cambridge, the cultural community has its own specific needs. To assist the City in its planning and to develop a better understanding of the needs of its residents and the needs of the cultural community, Cambridge engaged TCI Management Consultants (in collaboration with the St. Clements Group Inc. and Steven Thorne Consulting) to develop an arts and culture strategic plan, after a public tender process.

During the period from June 2008 to February 2009, the project team engaged residents, city staff, the staff and volunteers of the City’s arts and culture organizations, and other interested parties in deliberations about the future of arts and culture in Cambridge. Participants contributed through public meetings, face-to-face interviews, and web and printed surveys. A review was also completed of arts and culture strategies adopted by other Ontario communities similar to Cambridge in order to identify lessons that could be applied here. In addition, an inventory of cultural assets and organizations was completed to identify the resources available within the community. In total, approximately 150 individuals and organizations participated in the process.

An arts and culture master plan is collection of initiatives in four areas: (1) policy direction, (2) direct provision of services, (3) funding initiatives, and (4) sector support. The starting point is a commonly held vision and mission. Based on the consultations with the community, we use the following vision and mission as the foundation for the arts and culture strategy:

**Vision** — **Celebrating the uniqueness of its communities, and united by its cultural heritage, the Grand River and the common future of its communities, Cambridge will be a leading cultural centre in southern Ontario, known for offering a variety of cultural opportunities and events of interest to a wide range of visitors and residents.**
And to facilitate attaining that vision is the mission:

**Mission** — *Cambridge will offer its residents and visitors a range of affordable and accessible opportunities in arts and culture, while at the same time building up a base of unique cultural attributes and activities within the municipality.*

Through our consultations and analysis, we have identified several initiatives to realize the vision and support the mission that underlies the master plan. These recommendations have been assigned to one of the four categories mentioned above: (1) policy, (2) direct provision of services, (3) funding initiatives and (4) sector support.

**Policy and Organization**
1. **Arts and culture strategy** — Adopt an integrated arts and culture strategy for Cambridge.
2. **Manager of Cultural Development** — Create a new Manager of Cultural Development position to report to the Director of Community Recreation Services, with appropriate staff resources, including an assistant in the third year after hiring. A key responsibility of the Manager will be to implement the arts and culture strategy and its associated recommendations.
3. **Arts and culture advisory committee** — The arts and culture advisory committee provides feedback to municipal staff and Council. For optimal effectiveness, its representation should be expanded to include one or more representatives from the business community.
4. **Youth advisory council** — Ensure that the new Youth Advisory Council (which was recently approved by Council) includes arts and cultural development as a key area of its activity.

**Direct Provision of Services**
5. **Cambridge Centre for the Arts (CCA) review** — The CCA should continue to play a major role in the arts and cultural life of Cambridge. With the establishment of a Manager of Cultural Development and the subsequent realignment of some work that the CCA currently undertakes, it would be timely to review its work flow and resources in light of current constraints, future growth in demand, and the requirements of this strategy.
6. **Drayton Theatre** — The Drayton Theatre initiative should continue to be pursued. The City needs to ensure that it has an on-going voice in the location and facilities to be part of the theatre operation (as part of the cultural precinct would be desirable). As well, it should ensure that some reasonable degree of community use is enabled by the existence of the facility. Finally, the economic
development department of the City should examine ways and means of building upon the existence of the theatre, Drayton Entertainment’s administrative operations, and the various support activities that may surround it (as well as the Venice Biennale initiative), to further develop and promote this economic sector/cluster.

7. **Downtown revitalization** — As downtown areas are the ‘stages’ in which many arts and cultural activities occur, continue downtown revitalization and beautification activities in all three of the major downtown, or community core areas of Cambridge (i.e., Galt, Hespeler, and Preston). Over time, these activities could lead to the development of cultural facilities in each of the major downtown areas, and the designation of a cultural precinct in downtown Galt. In support of these efforts, ensure that the overall brand identity for Cambridge reflects the city’s cultural renaissance.

8. **Public art policy and fund** — Develop a specific public art policy and fund using the 1% guideline (i.e. 1% of the City’s capital budget is dedicated to a public art fund).

9. **Vernacular public art** — Continue to encourage community-based and vernacular public art (e.g. murals, sculptures, possibly graffiti walls, performance art such as busking, etc.) on the part of the private sector and in appropriate public spaces.

10. **Venice Biennale** — The findings and recommendations resulting from the planning and feasibility study relating to the Venice Biennale (currently underway) should be considered by staff and Council within the context of the overall strategy developed here.

11. **Special events review** — Support the recommendations of the review of special events currently being conducted by City staff and Council ensuring that the City’s cultural objectives relating to capacity building and economic development are being achieved.

**Funding Initiatives**

12. **Capacity building** — Provide capacity-building support for arts and culture organizations, including a grants fund, the development of a networking capacity within the cultural community, and an annual arts/culture forum. The capacity building support will help organizations with initiatives such as general management, grant writing, fundraising, audience development and training.

13. **Arts and culture organization funding and sustainability policy** — Provide stable funding for arts and culture organizations. This could take the form of organizations that meet specified City criteria receiving multi-year funding and eventually becoming line items in the City budget. A model to investigate in this regard would be the Community Investment Strategy (CIS) recently adopted by
the City of Kitchener. At minimum, dedicated funding for cultural organizations is needed, with a significant increase in funding above 2007 levels. The amounts provided to community arts and culture organizations should increase over time to reflect basic population growth as well as the increasing diversity and complexity of the community.


**Sector Support**

15. Arts and culture marketing plan — A dedicated marketing plan for arts and culture in Cambridge needs to be developed. This will focus on promoting the various arts and culture opportunities available to residents of the City and Region, and to visitors.

16. Arts and culture information products — The City should ensure that an up-to-date database and calendar of cultural activity is available – both in print form as well as web-based. The City is participating in the Region’s cultural mapping initiative that will ensure current information is provided to arts and cultural organizations. In addition, a calendar of events and downloadable consumer product (lists, maps, iPod descriptions and narratives) should ultimately be developed through this resource. The City should also ensure that current information relating to arts and culture organizations and activities is easily accessible through the Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corporation (WRTMC) website. As well, it should ensure that wherever appropriate, arts and culture activities of the City are reflected in WRTMC’s print publications.

17. Tracking and accountability framework — Develop and utilize a specific tracking and accountability framework for implementation of this Master Plan.

**Implementation**

**Resource requirements**

To implement the strategy that we are recommending will require additional financial resources. A large part of that allocation is for the new Manager of Cultural Development position. In total, the annual requirement in the short term is approximately $332,000. Subsequently, the expenditure will be approximately $350,000 in the medium term, rising to approximately $571,000 in the longer term.

**Accountability**

At the same time that the recommendations of the master plan are implemented, an ongoing monitoring and evaluation scheme should also be put into place. We recommend that this scheme should use a Triple Bottom Line framework (social,
economic, and environment sustainability) and have identified a number of indicators and tracking measures that would be appropriate and should be considered.

**Communications and awareness building**

In and of itself, this Master Plan is likely to be a minimal interest to the general public. Rather, the plan will be relevant primarily to those organizations, volunteers, artists, artisans, craftspeople and others with a direct stake in the arts and culture sector. With that in mind, we recommend a communications effort that uses low-cost, targeted media to connect with audiences in order to inform them of the provisions of the plan and to develop buy-in to it. In addition to those directly affected, communications will inform the media, school boards, and venue operators. Separate communications should also be undertaken with internal audiences, funders, and other governments to assist them in understanding the Master Plan.

The communications that we are recommending assumes that only minimal new resources will be available for promotion of the Master Plan. It also assumes that the plan itself is not controversial or time-sensitive and that it can be communicated over a number of months. In the communications effort, media used would include direct mail (including email), website postings, media releases, and face-to-face communications.