

**Museums and Community Cultural Planning:  
A Case Study in Participatory Action Research  
in Peterborough Ontario**

by

**Gregory G. Baeker**

**A thesis**

**presented to the University of Waterloo**

**in fulfillment of the thesis requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

in

**Planning**

**Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1999**

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## **Abstract**

There is a rapid and double-edged change occurring in cultural policy as responsibility and focus shift from the nation state to cities and regions, and as European cultural traditions and norms are challenged by unprecedented ethno-racial and cultural diversity. Canada has fallen behind other jurisdictions in moving to embrace a more integrated approach to local cultural development through a *cultural planning approach*. The literature review explores this ground demonstrating a convergence of interest among reform efforts in three fields: local cultural development, planning and community development, and museums. The literature review concludes with a framework for cultural planning in Canada.

The hypothesis is that local museums can play important roles in cultural planning. This is tested using a form of participatory action research involving a primary case study in Peterborough Ontario. In 1995 the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA) assumed broadened cultural responsibilities as the Culture and Heritage Division (CHD) of the City of Peterborough. The organization took on this extended mandate with no new resources. The research examines the organizational and professional change process through three phases of data collection and analysis. It includes a comparison of findings in two communities – Kitchener and Aurora.

The findings suggest that the technocratic traditions and functional orientation of Canadian municipalities pose many barriers to the wholesale reconceptualizing of local cultural development advocated by the cultural planning approach. Innes (1990) argues that planning is about conceptualization, problem framing or values clarification. In Peterborough a reconceptualizing of culture and community-based cultural planning worked at the macro and meso levels. Participants did evolve a broadened vision of local cultural planning, and of potential new roles for the museum in this new planning context. But these insights did not translate themselves at the micro level into relevant practices across the full spectrum of the CHD's mandate, particular to reformed museum practices. Nor did they assist in overcoming a variety of personal and interpersonal barriers to the change process.

The findings from this research lend weight to Lavine's (1992) warning that museums not underestimate the organizational and professional challenge of shifting from functionally oriented and collections-driven institutions, to more outward looking institutions focused on "exchanges with communities". But the Peterborough case also suggests a risk in accepting the dichotomy drawn by Lavine regarding traditional and reformed museum practice. If local museums are to overcome the systemic biases in collecting and interpretative practices necessary to serve increasingly diverse communities, a *more* proactive approach to collecting will be required.

Overall the research suggests the need for further case studies that probe beneath the veneer of organizational change to explore the complexities of the change process. These in-depth organizational studies must be understood in the larger context of new planning and governance systems needed in complex cultural systems at the local level.

## ***Acknowledgments***

Thanks first to the members of the core learning team in Peterborough for their openness and generosity.

To committee members Lynne Teather and Susan Wismer for their invaluable advice and support over a long period. Clare Mitchell, who generously agreed to join the committee toward the end of the process, provided valuable feedback. Particular thanks to Gordon Nelson who as co-advisor contributed extraordinarily thoughtful and detailed suggestions on several drafts of this dissertation. And most of all to advisor Beth Moore Milroy without whose encouragement, moral support and intellectual guidance this dissertation would not have been possible.

I am grateful to my colleagues Nina Marie Lister and Michael Brooks who acted as a “support group” on our doctoral journey together. To my family and friends for their support over the years it took to complete this doctorate.

And most of all to Ron, whose love and support made this journey both possible and worth doing.

# Museums and Community Cultural Planning: Strategies for Change

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Context and Overview**

The broad context for this research is the wholesale rethinking of cultural policy occurring internationally, a rethinking that offers both opportunities and challenges for planning and community development. This re-framing of cultural policy is reflected in the work of the World Commission on Culture and Development (UNESCO, 1995). The Commission, comparable in status to the World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission), was established to probe the complex relationship between “culture and development” - both defined in broad terms - in light of dramatic shifts in information and communications technology, mass global migration and a host of other macro socio-political and economic trends.

The Commission calls for cultural policies to be more *intersectoral* - better co-ordinated with education and other social policies, with land use planning, with the design industry and policies related to economic development, but notes the huge discrepancy between this framing of cultural policy issues and current practice in most jurisdictions. To bring about the necessary reform the Commission calls on nations to devolve more responsibilities and authority to the local level. Cities and regions are identified as principal “construction sites” of the new approaches that are required.

Cultural planning is a response to these trends. Canada lags behind other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986; Comedia, 1991), Western Europe (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Council of Europe, 1996), Australia (Bowen, 1997; Brednock, 1997), and the United States (Dreeszen, 1994; Partners for Livable Communities, 1995) where cultural planning has been embraced as an integrating framework for local cultural development. The roots of this problem can be traced to a series of factors, including the dominant role played by the Canadian federal government and *national* cultural policy since the Second World War.

A number of characteristics define cultural planning as it is being interpreted and practiced internationally. Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) trace the evolution of cultural policy at the local

level from the 1960s to the 1990s in Western Europe. This history demonstrates a steady broadening of perspective that culminates in what they term a cultural planning approach:

[Cultural planning's] central characteristics ... rest on a very broad, anthropological definition of 'culture' as 'a way of life' ... it integrates the arts into other aspects of local culture and into the texture and routines of daily life in the city. Its field of action ranges from the arts, media, crafts, fashion and design to sports, recreation, architecture and townscape, heritage, tourism, eating and entertainment, local history, and the characteristics of the city's public realm and social life, its identity and external image. Cultural planning can help urban governments identify the city's cultural resources and think strategically about their applications, to achieve key objectives in areas as diverse as physical planning, townscape design, tourism, industrial development, retailing, place marketing, community development, education and training (1993, 209).

A further defining feature of the emerging cultural planning approach is the reconciliation or reintegration of economic with social and political goals. The "depoliticizing" of cultural planning that occurred in the 1980s, with its focus on economic issues, is to be reversed and a broader set of social and political issues and inequities engaged (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993).

Dreeszen (1994) analyzes cultural plans undertaken in 250 American cities. He describes the field as largely practice-driven and little informed by planning theory. The most significant barrier to cultural planning in the United States is the hold that traditional definitions of culture, mostly European high arts, have on conceptualizations of cultural issues, and the hold that traditional views of planning, largely synoptic or rational planning, have on the conceptualization of planning (Dreeszen 1994). Friedmann's (1987) typology of four intellectual traditions in planning is used to distinguish cultural planning as *community development*, as *organizational development*, as *public policy planning*, and as *planning for equity*. Most plans remain locked in the rational tradition of organizational development - either strategic planning or marketing strategies - and are unable to acknowledge diverse values and multiple sources, and inequities, in power (Dreeszen, 1994).

The most powerful forces of change are equity demands from traditionally marginalized groups: "planning in the equity tradition is more accepting of difference, acknowledges multiple perspectives and multiple values, and is more tolerant of ambiguity than is rational comprehensive planning in the other traditions" (Dreeszen, 1994, 115). It also directs greater attention to dialogue.

to networks of interpersonal relations and to trust and alliances critical to effective collaboration. These are issues that rational planning models discount through their emphasis on a linear process of assessment, goal formulation, implementation and evaluation. Cultural planning must move from an organizational development to a community development model, and forge strong links to equity planning (1994). Dreeszen credits a great deal of the leading thought and practice in cultural planning to museums, the specific organizational context examined in this dissertation.

No comparable analysis of local cultural planning exists in Canada. While many individual municipalities have completed cultural plans, the field suffers from weak conceptual or definitional clarity and from the absence of consistent statistics and cultural indicators needed for comparative analysis<sup>1</sup>. This dissertation does not attempt this work. The literature review synthesizes the international literature and reviews select Canadian experience. It concludes with a framework for cultural planning in Canada that maps a preliminary set of assumptions at three levels: *a macro level* - addressing overarching theoretical foundations and political commitments; *a meso level* - addressing questions of governance and capacity building; and *a micro level* - examples of strategically important activities or initiatives.

If cultural planning is to be taken up in Canadian communities', specific institutional settings are needed in which it can be practiced and championed. A premise emerging from the literature review is that local museums are one such setting. A body of museum critique known as the "new museology" is directing museum purposes outward, away from traditional functional concerns with collections and toward greater engagement with the contemporary cultural needs of diverse communities.

The primary research takes the form of a case study in participatory action research in Peterborough Ontario. In 1994 the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA) assumed broadened cultural planning responsibilities as the Culture and Heritage Division (CHD) of the City of Peterborough. It took on this broadened mandate with no additional human or

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<sup>1</sup> A study completed in 1991 by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) illustrates the difficulty (FCM, 1991). The study confirmed the substantial involvement of municipalities in local cultural development. However, recommendations were weakened by narrow and inconsistent definitions - e.g. the exclusion of libraries, the restriction of "culture" to the performing and visual arts, associating "heritage" narrowly with built heritage. The report notes the difficulties posed by inconsistent definitions of what constitutes a municipal cultural expenditure.

financial resources. The research involves an in-depth examination of the ensuring process of organizational and professional change. It seeks to establish a “thick description” (Geertz, 1972) that does justice to the complexities of this change process.

## **1.2 Chapter Summary**

The research is presented in six parts.

### **Part I: Literature Review**

#### ***Chapter Two - Background Literature***

Establishes the broad research context by examining literature in local cultural development, planning and community development, and museums. The literature demonstrates a convergence of interest among the three fields.

#### ***Chapter Three - A Framework for Cultural Planning in Canada***

The background literature is synthesized in a framework for cultural planning in Canada. Issues are mapped at three levels: *a macro level* - addressing overarching theoretical foundations and political commitments; *a meso level* - addressing questions of governance and capacity building; and *a micro level* – examples of strategically important activities or initiatives.

### **Part II: Research Design**

#### ***Chapter Four - Research Method***

Begins with the primary research question to emerge from the literature review regarding organizational change strategies required in museums to advance cultural planning approaches. The overall research orientation, a form of participatory action research, is described followed by an overview of core data sources and research tools. The chapter concludes with a detailed description of research methods through three phases of data collection.

## **Part III: First Phase Data Collection**

### ***Chapter Five - Baseline Data***

Introduces the case study. The chapter begins with a history of the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA) and its evolution into the Culture and Heritage Division (CHD) of the City of Peterborough. It continues with an account of a focus group with core staff and volunteers which establishes a broader portrait of issues facing the Division. A core learning team is established and interviews conducted with team members. The chapter concludes with a summary of findings from the first phase of data collection.

## **Part IV: Second Phase Data Collection**

### ***Chapter Six - The Learning Forum***

Describes the Learning Forum, a weekend-long retreat at which the Peterborough team came together with teams from five other museums to explore organizational learning and change in Canadian museums. The chapter describes the event and the Peterborough team's experience at the Forum.

### ***Chapter Seven - Post-Forum Interaction With Core Learning Team***

Describes a series of interactions with the team in the months after the Learning Forum. These include a second set of interviews with team members, a daylong team retreat and planning session, and a presentation to the Culture and Heritage Board on the team's work on organizational change strategies for the Division. Chapter Seven ends with a summary of findings and analysis.

## **Part V: Third Phase Data Collection**

### ***Chapter Eight - Barriers to Change***

Findings to date reveal a series of barriers to organizational change that form the basis of secondary research questions. The third phase of data collection begins with a focused literature

review on these secondary research questions to sharpen the investigation in the final phase of data collection.

### ***Chapter Nine - Final Data Collection***

Makes use of an organizational learning tool called a *Learning History* that is used to capture research findings to as the basis of a final round of interviews with team members. Findings from the Peterborough case are then reviewed in two communities – Kitchener and Aurora. The results of the final round of interviews with team members are fed back to the learning team and form the basis of a final team meeting and final interview with the Museum Manager.

## **Part VI: Summary and Conclusions**

### ***Chapter Ten - Summary of All Research Findings***

This chapter summarizes findings in three parts: first, conclusions relevant to the research method; second, results relevant to emerging cultural planning approaches; and third, conclusions relevant to organizational change in local museums. The dissertation concludes with the identification of several areas for further research.



## **PART I: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Background Literature**

#### **2.1 Major Themes: A Convergence of Interests**

The literature review examines themes in three broad areas: local cultural development, planning and community development, and museums. All three fields face serious challenges to traditional sources of authority and legitimacy. A significant source of this challenge in all three fields is the cultural critique of postmodernism. Vickers (1998) identifies postmodernism as one of “the four posts” rocking the foundations of all facets of Canadian life and public policy - postmodernism, post-positivism, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism. Combined these critiques challenge traditional sources of authority and legitimacy in many facets of public policy.

The condition of postmodern societies is distinguished by the following:

- Broken geographical boundaries and the dissolution of nation states;
- An emphasis on transnational and transglobal movement of peoples and their cultures;
- Growing use of technology in communication;
- Shifting and fragmenting social values and the challenge to traditional values;
- The fragmentation of individual identities by different social markers - race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and many other influences - so that identity has become temporal and shifting and no longer fixed;
- The takeover of culture and forms of popular culture by imagery and representation;
- The proliferation of cultural products characterized not by high culture and its aesthetics but by the aesthetics of individual expression;
- The obliteration of the distinction between arts and everyday life; and
- The erasure of the boundary between high and mass or popular culture (Featherstone, 1988).

What holds postmodernism and the larger field of cultural studies together is search for a “new story” to challenge modernist views of society built on the theories of the eighteenth century Enlightenment (Orr, 1992). It is not “modernism out and postmodernism in”; postmodernism

resists dualisms in all their forms. It does not seek to replace so much as envelope modernism in larger frameworks of understanding. Postmodernism is *about* complications, it criticises the abstract universalism that has characterized modern Western thought. The postmodern ethos denies that the so-called “truths” and “knowledge” we have come to accept are as pristine in their objectivity and constancy as they traditionally were held to be. Sceptical of the unshakeable scientific facts and moral ethics of modernism, postmodernism explores the disparate, ironic and paradoxical: it asks questions and raises doubt regarding time worn suppositions upon which we have constructed our society and its institutions.

Postmodernism is a core concept in a loosely structured constellation of academic disciplines known collectively as cultural studies. Cultural studies emerged in response to the perceived limitations of studying culture from any single discipline - anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, among others. Traditional academic disciplines were also seen to be isolated from the public sphere in which popular culture and other forms of contemporary cultural production exist. Broadly, it can be said that cultural studies refers to the study of cultural practices, of systems of representation and communication, and of the relationship between culture and asymmetrical power relations in society (Tator, 1998). The past two decades has seen an explosion of literature in cultural studies but much of this literature has remained inaccessible to practitioners and policy makers in the cultural sector. Until recently there has been a reluctance on the part of scholars to “translate” a dense and theoretically difficult field (Teather, 1992). In the past several years there has been a call for cultural studies scholars and critics to apply cultural analysis in specific administrative and policy settings (Cunningham, 1993; Bennett, 1998).

Cultural studies acts to challenge traditional discourses and assumptions regarding the “neutrality” of artistic and cultural production. It helps probe:

- how cultural products are produced?
- by whom?
- for whom?
- for what means?
- at what historical moment?
- with what social, economic and political impact?

Cultural studies has forced government agencies, support systems and cultural institutions to re-examine fundamentals (Bennett, 1998). Conventional arguments regarding the public interests served by arts and cultural production have lost credibility and must be rethought outside conventional frameworks of national identity and cultural sovereignty (Murray, 1998). While reformulating fundamental assumptions confronts the cultural sector with a huge challenge it also offers a significant opportunity. The implications of the rethinking needed extend beyond the interests of the cultural sector to new formulations of citizenship, civil society and social cohesion in a world characterized by global migration and diasporic communities. Tator (1998) argues that it is in arts and cultural production that many of the deeper shifts underway in society can be seen and understood. "Working to transform cultural production to truly reflect the country's diversity can open up new understandings, new constructions of Canadian identity, and new forms of social relations. Cultural production that truly reflects our pluralist society can become a source, site and inspiration for social change" (1998, 17).

The postmodern critique of cultural policies and practices offers valuable insight into planning and community development. Planning faces its own "crisis of legitimacy," much of it deeply rooted in the loss of certainties introduced by postmodernism. The loss of consensus on the validity of "objective" knowledge is one of the three factors that Friedmann (1987) argues constitute the "crisis" in mainstream planning.<sup>2</sup> The modernist promise of cumulative behavioral science - founded in empirical analysis and a value-devoid world - has not significantly improved practice, particularly in the ability to predict behavior (Moore Milroy, 1991).

More pragmatically, the instrumental and technocratic traditions of local planning, with their focus on land use and the efficient delivery of public services, cannot address the complexities of modern urban life. Specifically planning has proven unable to address the needs of cities as *cultural entities*, places where people meet, generate meaning, negotiate and re-negotiate identities, and create wealth in the expanding economy of cultural products and services. Planning theory and practice have provided little insight into the "soft" domain of values, human spirit, altruism, caring and the role of human passions in decision-making. It has tended to undervalue - if not ignore - the poetic and affective underpinning of human experience, including the role of metaphor, symbolism and forms of creative expression - art, play, dance, music (Cooperrider & Pasmore, 1991). Artistic

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<sup>2</sup> The others are: an inability to respond to the accelerated pace of change, and uncertainty in the face of unprecedented events and challenges.

and cultural expression can provide ways of opening different ways of seeing, knowing and constructing the social reality of cities (Sandercock, 1998).

The postmodern cultural critique of multiple “voices” and identities challenges core assumptions regarding unitary public interests and consensus models of decision-making on which planning models traditionally depend. From one perspective this raises fears of fragmentation and the disintegration of social cohesion. From another it opens up opportunities for people to express their needs and aspirations. Planning has also been hindered by a narrow view of power, one that conceived of it as a commodity distributed differentially among groups in society; planning decisions required the balance and resolution of conflicting power interests. A more complex view of power understands it as dynamic, fluid and *culturally patterned*. The most effective forms of power derive not from overt conflict but rather from internalized expectations and understandings<sup>3</sup>. Finding ways to reveal these deeper forces that shape decision-making in cities can be a source of renewed legitimacy for public planning.

One premise of this dissertation is that planning can draw lessons from the cultural field. The cultural field, equally, has much to learn from planning, specifically its insights into civic engagement and community-based planning and decision-making. Cultural policy in Canada was forged by an expansionist *national* welfare state of the post-war period. It was founded on assumptions of dependable levels of public subsidy and regulatory intervention. These assumptions are now under siege in all jurisdictions. The cultural policy response has been to devolve greater responsibility to the local level, and to the commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Cultural planning approaches have emerged as a response to these challenges but must be better informed by the theory and practice of local planning and community development.

Local government in Canada has not enjoyed the broad taxing and regulatory powers available to more senior levels of government, with mixed results. This has limited the capacity of local government to act, but it has also made clear that governance is never the sole responsibility of the state - a lesson more senior levels of government have found difficult to learn. Local planning and decision-making has long assumed that the boundaries between public-, private- and voluntary (or Third) sectors are permeable and that collaboration is essential. Nelson (1993) distinguishes between governance based on a “management model” - approaches that are government-driven,

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<sup>3</sup> What Nietzsche referred to as “mother culture whispering in our ear.”

rational, efficient and effective, and a “civics model” - where the approach is pluralist, interactive, transactive and equitable. The latter is central to the emerging cultural planning approach.

Local cultural planning and development can benefit from an understanding of planning as social learning linking knowledge to action - Friedmann's (1987) definition of planning. Social learning or transactive planning emerged in the 1970s to challenge traditional positivist epistemological assumptions. It emphasized planning as a mutual learning process that links community experience and planners' skills and knowledge; social and political process replaced positivism and instrumental reason as the foundation of planning practice (Friedmann, 1973). Transactive planning methods used to broaden engagement and deepen understanding about the complex issues facing communities can make important contributions to local cultural development.

Cultural planning provides the meeting place or “container” within which this convergence of interest between local cultural development, and planning and community development, can be explored. For this synergy to be realized specific organizational settings are needed in which emerging cultural planning approaches can be practiced and championed. Local museums are one such institution. Museums, too, face challenges to their legitimacy: What do collections represent? What messages do they construct - and for whom? Traditional collecting and interpretive practices claimed “objectivity” and “neutrality” but reflected the cultural interests of one segment of Canadian society, generally those citizens of European descent with higher than average income and education (Wilhelm, 1998). Rising levels of ethno-racial and cultural diversity in Canada make change imperative in museums<sup>4</sup>.

Museums are responding to these challenges. A significant body of museum critique known as the new museology has turned museum missions outward away from traditional functional concerns with collections and toward larger public interests and purposes. This critique also acknowledges the inescapably political nature of museums and their collections (Harrison, 1994). The new museology sees museums as forums for civic learning in which pressing questions of diversity and pluralism in communities can be explored. The literature also demonstrates the challenge facing museums in evolving the organizational and professional practices needed to support these new roles (Lavine, 1992). As local museums work through fundamental questions of purpose they must

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<sup>4</sup> Jenson (1998) argues that the legitimacy of all public and voluntary institutions is at risk due to the failure to address the needs and aspirations of minorities.

simultaneously confront declining levels of government funding, changing patterns of leisure and consumer behavior, and a host of other pragmatic operational realities. Museums are searching for strategies to strengthen networks of local support and to connect in more meaningful ways to community need. Emerging cultural planning approaches can help.

*Chapter 2.2 - Local Cultural Development* begins by examining the emerging cultural planning approach as it is being analyzed and practiced internationally. The chapter then turns to Canadian experience to establish the specific historical context for cultural planning in this country. The chapter concludes by synthesizing lessons that can be drawn regarding factors that advance (“bridges”) or inhibit (“barriers”) cultural planning in communities.

*Chapter 2.3 - Planning and Community Development* examines community-based planning and decision-making, specifically planning’s long history with notions of “community participation” and “civic engagement”. Recent literature on public dialogue and civil learning is then reviewed. The chapter concludes with an examination of the actual tools and practices needed to support learning in organizations and larger communities.

*Chapter 2.4 - Museums: Changing Purposes, Changing Practices* begins with a broad review of themes in Canadian museums. It then examines the more specific context for the research, that of community museums in Ontario. A synthesis of themes in the new museology is reviewed. The chapter concludes with an examination of organizational change strategies and practices.

*Chapter 3.0 - A Framework for Cultural Planning in Canada* synthesizes insights from the preceding three chapters into a set of principles and assumptions for the emerging cultural planning approach in Canada. It does this on three levels: the *macro level*, addressing fundamental theoretical assumptions and political commitments; the *meso level*, addressing questions of governance and capacity building; and the *micro level*, suggesting specific strategically important activities or initiatives.

## 2.2 Local Cultural Development

### 2.2.1 From Nation State to Cities: From Cultural Policy to Cultural Planning

There is a rapid and double edged change occurring in cultural policy as responsibility and focus shift away from the nation state and toward cities, and as Eurocentric norms and values are challenged by mass global migration and unprecedented levels of ethno-racial and cultural diversity.

UNESCO (1995) has called for a fundamental rethinking of cultural policy and for nations to devolve greater responsibility and authority to the local level. Cultural planning is a response to these trends. Canada has fallen behind other jurisdictions in shifting both the language and the focus of local cultural development from cultural *policy* to the broader paradigm of cultural *planning*. UNESCO's call for cultural policy to embrace an enlarged and integrated view of cultural development might suggest that the two terms are becoming indistinguishable. I argue that shifting the language to "planning" from "policy" is important for two reasons. First, planning is the more familiar language of local government in Canada. Second, the legacy of national cultural *policy* remains a powerful force. If a new page must be turned in our thinking about cultural development at the local level, new language may help.

Nations are called on to devolve more responsibility for cultural policy through a decentralization of authority, resources and policy functions. While this is not a new theme in cultural policy, pressures to decentralize have grown in recent years. In part the trend is a reflection of the growing real and symbolic significance of cities in cultural terms, a result of the "larger vertical crisis that has struck the old image of the single nation state" (Cacciari, 1998):.

We are now in the last phase of the decline of ... the great nation states. The concept is now behind us, but international communities are still in the distant future. We are still in a period in which it is possible to speak about supranational markets, but not about supranational culture and political institutions with real supranational power. Those symbols which still have an important place in the western imagination, such as cities, have gained a new significance in this phase of transition from an certain past to a uncertain future. The city is the only symbol which we can really see and experience (Cacciari, 1998,

Decentralization is not simply geographic. UNESCO also calls for greater power to be placed in the hands of communities with shared identities based on gender, race, ethnicity, country of origin, religion and sexual orientation, among others. Modern communications and transportation technologies enable these communities to remain connected across boundaries of time and space - diasporic communities. Both geographic and identity based decentralization pose major challenges to traditional assumptions regarding national identity, cultural sovereignty, and citizenship in Western democracies (Butt et al., 1997).

Three aspects of decentralization can be delineated: *cultural*, where decentralization is a normative policy objective; *fiscal*, where decentralization is intended to address disparities in public expenditures at local, regional and national levels; and *political*, where decentralization means the diffusion of political and administrative power for decision-making and policy implementation (Watanabe, 1996).

Arguments made in favour of decentralization point to greater responsiveness and capacity to respond to changing needs. Centralized models of government generate neither the plurality of solutions nor the grassroots political will needed to solve complex community problems. The European Union affirmed the principle that decision-making should take place as close to the citizen as possible<sup>6</sup>. "Applied to cultural policy (this means) that only those decisions or initiatives which must be considered at a national level should be the responsibility of a ministry of culture, with the rest being devolved to regional and local administration" (Matarasso and Landry, 1999, 13).

Opposing arguments to decentralization are also raised: "Decentralized control can increase inequality between communities, can enhance the power of local elites, and can be more exploitative than central government; [and can result in] a loss of much-needed central finance" (UNESCO, 1995; 267). Centralized control can also deliver more consistent and more efficient results in areas where this is needed<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Cacciari is a professor of philosophy, and also the mayor of Venice.

<sup>6</sup> The Maastricht Treaty refers to this as the principle of subsidiarity (Matarasso and Landry, 1999).



Different jurisdictions have responded in different ways over time to decentralization pressures. However, general trends in cultural policy at the local level have been remarkably similar in the post-war period. Figure 1 charts these broad trends drawing on literature from the United Kingdom (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986; Comedia, 1991), Western Europe (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Council of Europe, 1996), Australia (Bowen, 1997; Brednock, 1997), and the United States (Dreeszen, 1994; Partners for Liveable Communities, 1995)

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<sup>7</sup> Matarasso and Landry cite the establishment of trans-European library codes as one example (1999).

<p><b>"Arts-for-Jobs.Sake"</b> Mid 1970s to mid 1980s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the mid 1970s and early 1980s, with countries struggling with the impact of economic restructuring, there was a marked turn to the right and greater attention was paid to large-scale cultural attractions and tourism development</li> <li>• The focus was on the economic impact of the arts, particularly as they relate to generating employment and attracting tourists through the marketing of a city's image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still fairly traditional - the performing and visual arts, music, publishing and broadcasting - but now including both commercial and non-commercial aspects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration</b> Mid 1970s to early 1980s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning in the United States, cultural policy began to be seen as an engine for downtown regeneration.</li> <li>• Cultural districts were established in which the arts were combined with a variety of revenue producing uses (i.e. retail, offices).</li> <li>• Some arts organizations, especially in the United States, benefited from shares of profit generated by commercial development which were used to form non-profit-making trusts for cultural development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadened to include architecture, design and industrial design, the graphic arts, including advertising.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultural Industries Approaches</b> Early 1980s to mid 1990s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus remains principally on the economic significance of cultural resources but a shift occurred from a relatively simplistic and quantitative concern for numbers (i.e. jobs created) to a more dynamic sectoral approach.</li> <li>• Policy makers began to broaden their focus somewhat from a focus on subsidizing production to the broader <i>production chain</i>, - the entire process from idea generation and manufacturing, through marketing, distribution and sale or consumption.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now expands to include contemporary and popular cultural forms such as electronic music, television, photography and fashion.</li> </ul>

**Figure 1: From Cultural Policy to Cultural Planning**

Period	Characteristics	Definition of Culture
<p><i>"Arts for Arts Sake"</i> - 1950s to the mid 1960s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arts were valued for their educational and "civilizing" value</li> <li>• The focus was on professionalization, building institutionalized centres for cultural production, raising standards of artistic excellence.</li> <li>• Broadened access was sought through public subsidies and interpreted through the prism of the <i>democratization of culture</i> - generally interpreted as increased access to the products of one culture, mostly European high art forms</li> <li>• Those controlling the emerging cultural policy agenda did not consciously seek to fashion a protected and elite culture, the assumption was that the wider community <i>actually</i> wanted what the cultural decision-makers <i>believed</i> they wanted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidized cultural production focused for the most part on nineteenth century pre-electronic forms of artistic expression divorced from the economic domain.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Decentralization and Democratization</i> Late 1960s to mid 1970s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural policies turned to the left to address the needs of underserved and/or minority communities, and were driven more by social and political concerns - part of the upswing in democratic sentiment throughout the Western world</li> <li>• Decentralization of cultural policies took the form of the creation of local cultural infrastructure, and more neighbourhood or community-based activity. Cultural policies aimed at "increased participation" in cultural development, moving people from being "mere consumers" to "active producers" of culture</li> <li>• Cultural policy was heavily influenced by urban social movements ranging from citizen participation in preserving local architectural heritage, environmentalism, feminism, youth and ethno-racial minorities, among others</li> <li>• Cultural policy debates regarding access began to be shaped by the more radical concept of <i>cultural democracy</i> - acknowledging the existence of many cultural traditions and alternative values.</li> <li>• However, this was still largely within the liberal scheme of social utility and "empowering minorities" from the centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still dominated by the "pre-electronic" art forms - symphonies, ballet companies, opera companies museums, and libraries. ... but there were efforts to open up the doors of established institutions to other cultural traditions.</li> <li>• The beginning of a challenge to existing hierarchies and distinctions between "high" and "low" (popular and contemporary) cultural forms.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Cultural Planning Approach</b></p> <p>Beginning in the early 1990s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The steady broadening of the scope and the characteristics of local cultural development culminates in the cultural planning approach.</li> <li>• “[Cultural planning is] an intellectual and professional discipline concerned with the process of identifying, developing, managing and exploiting a city’s cultural resources. The distinctive feature of it is precisely the way in which a cultural <i>perspective</i> becomes the defining framework for policy and strategy. Cultural planning involves a process of monitoring and acting upon the economic, cultural, social, educational, environmental, political and symbolic implications of a city’s cultural resources in order to inform the formulation of policies and strategies [that cut] across the public and private sectors, different institutional concerns and different professional disciplines” (Comedia, 1991).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is understood in the broadest sense of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values in art and learning, and in institutions and ordinary behavior.</li> <li>• More specifically the focus is on <i>cultural resources</i>, but defined in much broader terms than conventional “aesthetic” definitions of artistic and cultural expression.</li> <li>• The critique of Eurocentric norms and definitions – norms that continue to exert a strong, self-reinforcing hold in most jurisdictions – now deepens in cultural policy discourses.</li> <li>• The critique is no longer simply about challenging traditional definitions of “excellence” and “quality” but rather the questioning of fundamental notions of how arts and culture are defined, valued and supported in policy terms.</li> <li>• The authority of leaders in the cultural sector, and of historically advantaged institutions, now begins to be challenged more openly. The earlier stance of linking the interests of these institutions and their leadership to a general public interest in culture is now seen as partisan and self-serving. New formulations of the public interests served by arts and cultural production are called for.</li> <li>• There is an attempt to reintegrate the social and political goals of the earlier “decentralization and democratization” period with growing recognition of the economic significance of cultural production.</li> </ul>
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A more detailed description of how cultural planning has been viewed and practised in select jurisdictions internationally is set out in Appendix A. A number of important common themes emerge from this analysis.

The idea of “cultural planning” emerged in the early 1990’s in the United States, Australia and Europe out of dissatisfaction with previous cultural policy-led urban regeneration and economic development strategies. “Reclaiming” urban centres had been accompanied by gentrification and the marginalization of artists and cultural workers (Bianchini. 1997). Previous approaches also tended to focus on large-scale tourism promotion and a few “flagship” cultural attractions as a means of marketing a city’s image. Cultural policy-led approaches were seen to adopt too narrow a definition of “urban regeneration”, focusing too narrowly on economic and physical dimensions and failing to integrate them adequately with cultural, symbolic, social, and political aspects of cultural development (ibid.).

Cultural planning had many characteristics that were appealing. Unlike traditional cultural policies that continued to be dominated by “aesthetic” definitions of culture, drawn largely from European high culture traditions, cultural planning adopted as its basis a broad definition of *cultural resources*. Cultural resources were defined in different ways in different jurisdictions but all moved beyond a focus on specific disciplines or art forms to a broader understanding of local cultural resources and activities. Bianchini and Santacatterina (1997) maps cultural resources in the following terms:

- the arts, media and heritage;
- the cultures of youth, ethnic minorities, communities of interest and ‘neo-tribes’;
- local traditions, including archaeology, local dialects and rituals;
- local and external perceptions of a place, as expressed in jokes, songs, literature, myths, tourist guides, media coverage and conventional wisdom;
- topography, and the qualities of the natural and built environment, including public spaces;
- the diversity and quality of leisure, cultural, drinking, eating and entertainment facilities;
- the repertoire of local products and skills in the crafts, manufacturing and services..

Cultural planning did not reject “the arts” or aesthetic definitions of culture, but rather saw these forms of expression as one dimension - an indispensable dimension - in a larger planning and

policy domain. The old paradigm was not rejected, but *enveloped* in a larger framework of understanding and action.

The second advantage of cultural planning was its *territorial* rather than sectoral focus; the latter has dominated cultural policy discourses. The Canadian cultural sector is generally viewed in the following sectoral terms:

- Film and television;
- Broadcasting;
- Live performing arts;
- Sound recording;
- Writing and publishing;
- Heritage;
- Visual arts and crafts; and
- Digital media (Foot, 1998).

Again cultural planning does not abandon a sectoral approach, but places sectoral issues in the context of a larger set of urban development concerns. The overriding goal is *how the identification, monitoring and utilization of cultural resources contribute to the integrated development of place*. Cultural planning acknowledges the full spectrum of economic, cultural, social, educational, environmental, political and symbolic dimensions of cities and civic life (Comedia, 1991). It also acknowledges that successful cultural plans must engage efforts across the public-, private or commercial, and voluntary sectors.

Cultural planning approaches promised to place cultural resources at the centre of planning and policy-making in cities, and to “bring culture in from the margins of local governance” (Council of Europe, 1996). The following passage summarizes many of the claims made for cultural planning:

two way relationships can be established between these resources and any type of public policy - in fields ranging from economic development to housing, health, education, social services, tourism, urban planning, architecture, townscape design, and cultural policy itself. Cultural planning cuts across the divides between the public-, private- and voluntary sectors, different institutional concerns, types of knowledge and professional disciplines.

In addition, cultural planning encourages innovation in cultural production, for example through interculturalism, cooperation between artists and scientists and crossovers between different cultural forms. ... Cultural planning is not ... 'the planning of culture' - an impossible, undesirable and dangerous undertaking - but rather (taking) a cultural *approach* to urban planning and policy ... Cultural planners and policy makers, artists and/or cultural managers become 'the gatekeepers' between the sphere of cultural production - the world of ideas and of production of meaning - and any area of policy-making ... (it also improves) the cultural skills of politicians and decision-makers more generally (Bianchini and Santacatterina, 1997, 85).

The literature from other jurisdictions suggests some successes and many disappointments in implementing cultural planning approaches. Before examining these lessons, and their possible implications for Canada, we must establish the historical context in this country.

## 2.2.2 Local Cultural Development in Canada

### National Cultural Policy and the Legacy of Massey-Levesque

The post-war cultural agenda in Canada has been defined largely by Ottawa and by national cultural policy. The most important influence in shaping this agenda was the Royal Commission on the Arts, Letters and Sciences, better known as the Massey-Levesque Commission, which tabled its report in 1952. The themes of the Commission - nationalism, economic and cultural sovereignty, and the "civilizing" impact of the high arts<sup>8</sup> - defined a cultural policy discourse that dominated for many decades. For Zemans (1996) Massey-Levesque was the last coherent statement of government intentions in cultural policy. The vision of the Commission was consistent with what Cummings and Katz (1987) describe as the two principal purposes common to cultural policy in many countries: the establishment or reinforcement of national identity and the promotion of national unity; and a policy of "cultural defense," prompted by the fear of "cultural imperialism" which threatens national sovereignty.

Massey-Levesque introduced a cultural policy discourse dominated by a "two-tier" cultural system. One tier consisted of the state-subsidized, predominantly Eurocentric, "civilizing" or "high" arts system, usually linked to lofty goals of national identity and cultural sovereignty. The other consisted of the various forms of "popular" culture, either community-based activity or more commercial forms. Popular culture operated in the marketplace or as a voluntary activity; the expectation was that it be demand-driven. Cultural policy that addressed the subsidized system operated on a supply-side basis: "if we build it [or create it], they will come."

The Commission amplified existing tensions of centres and regions in Canadian cultural policy. The centralist vision of the Commission rested on the establishment of major or "flagship" organizations – mostly in central Canada and regional capitals - that were charged with circulating work to other parts of the country. Canadians outside these centres naturally – and accurately – saw this approach as elitist and dominated by a central Canadian aesthetic (Litt, 1991). The strategy, which was justified as a way to make the best use of limited resources and make artistic

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<sup>8</sup> The Commission defined culture as "that part of education which enriches the mind and refines the taste. It is the development of the intelligence through the arts, letters and sciences" (cited in Tuer, 1992, 26).



“excellence” broadly accessible to a sparsely populated country, was responsible for establishing or expanding most of the major arts organizations and principal training schools in the country. However, it failed miserably to address the need for local cultural expression and development (Zemans, 1996). A second result of this centralist vision was that the needs of a specific group of historically advantaged art forms and cultural institutions assumed control of the cultural policy agenda, over the interests of newer cultural groups and the needs of an increasingly diverse public. Another consequence was that “aesthetic” objectives that served dominant communities were distinguished from “social” objectives that served “ethnic” or “heritage” communities<sup>9</sup>.

A core concept in cultural policy discourses, initially framed in the late 1960s, is the distinction between the *democratization of culture* and *cultural democracy*<sup>10</sup>. The democratization of culture involves broadening access to the products of one culture. The more radical *cultural democracy* involves acknowledging the legitimacy of many cultural traditions. The democratization of culture, generally interpreted as the promotion and diffusion of European forms of high culture, dominated cultural policy in Canada in the post-war period. Immediately following Massey-Levesque the focus was on raising standards of artistic excellence and on bringing Canadian artistic expression up to internationally recognized standards (Zuzanek, 1987). However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, amidst the general upswing of democratic sentiment, there is evidence of genuine effort on the part of the federal government to acknowledge the distinction between the two concepts, and to press for the more radical goal of cultural democracy (1987).

By the early 1980s, despite a praiseworthy statement about equity in the final report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Applebaum-Hebert (Applebaum-Hebert) Committee (1982),<sup>11</sup> cultural democracy had largely disappeared from the policy discourse in the face of economic recession and rising neo-conservative ideology. Zuzanek is not kind in his assessment of cultural policy making in Canada.

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<sup>9</sup> Cohnstaedt (1992) demonstrates that the Canada Council was much slower to dismantle these distinctions and implement reform than was the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States. Nearly two decades after the Canada Council was established it still maintained responsibility for “mainstream” cultural expression that was evaluated on grounds of artistic “excellence”; funding for the “minority arts” fell to the federal department responsible for multiculturalism

<sup>10</sup> The principle was first articulated by Augustin Gerard, an official in the French Ministry of Culture (cited in Langsted (1990).

<sup>11</sup> “The elimination of discriminatory barriers is an imperative of social policy. Our Committee believes it is also an imperative of cultural policy” (1982, 9).

The debate over the “pros” and “cons” of the programs or democratization and cultural democracy was never resolved (or for that matter pursued) at a theoretical level. Rather, in typical Canadian fashion, it was abandoned, forgotten, forlorn... The focus of the discussion in the sphere of cultural policy has shifted from “participatory” activity to “managerial” strategies; from democratization of the arts audiences to the study of economic impacts: from self-expression and subcultures to “universal” cultural values and cultural heritage. This change happened without being intellectually consumed...avoiding the issue of democratization is a reflection not only upon the inadequacies of past programs but as well on the intellectual shallowness of the pragmatic and utilitarian approaches adopted by many governments today (Zuzanek, 1987, 13).

The context for Canadian cultural policy was fundamentally altered with the passage of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Part I of the Canadian Constitution Act), which gave constitutional protection to certain fundamental rights (Cohnstaedt, 1988). The Constitution strengthened individual rights through the Charter’s entrenchment of “Fundamental Freedoms and Equality Rights.” It also strengthened group rights by protecting Official Languages and Aboriginal Rights and the direction that the Charter be interpreted “in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritages of all Canadians.” The overall effect was to strengthen liberal democratic principles over the nationalist objectives and British traditions that had dominated much of Canada’s cultural policy until that time (1988). This shift from acknowledging the historically-based identities of a small number of “founding peoples,” to embracing cultural diversity as a constitutional and broader social norm, is fundamental.

A human rights context for cultural policy is not new. Culture was identified as a fundamental human right in the 1948 International Declaration of Human Rights, and was further elaborated in the 1966 Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights<sup>12</sup>. Despite this history, culture as a fundamental human right - or *cultural rights* - has until recently been the least understood and developed area of human rights. Recognition of cultural rights is now a growing trend in both the human rights and cultural policy communities (Council of Europe, 1997).

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<sup>12</sup>The covenant was ratified by Canada in 1976.

Daswani (1995) offers the following principles as a framework for defining cultural rights in more precise terms:

- Freedom to choose one's own culture, including the freedom to choose not to belong to any group;
- Respect for one's culture, its integrity and its nature as a dynamic reality, including the rights of indigenous people and others with distinct cultures, cultural autonomy and linguistic rights;
- Equality of access, including financial and physical access;
- Equality of opportunity for participation by all, both in the creation and enjoyment of majority/minority cultures;
- Freedoms indispensable for creative activity, including freedom of expression and intellectual property rights;
- Participation by all, including representatives of disadvantaged groups, - in theoretical analysis of policies, decision-making and practical implementation; and
- The protection and development of cultures in which to participate.

The challenge facing all jurisdictions is how principles such as these can be translated into more precise policies. There is also a need to define performance measures and cultural indicators to assess the degree to which individual cultural institutions, together with the larger cultural systems to which they belong, actually succeed in achieving the desired policy outcomes (Delgado, 1998)<sup>13</sup>.

### **Local Cultural Development in Canada**

The postwar period also saw substantial change in local cultural development in Canada<sup>14</sup>. In 1944 the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA) presented a "Brief Concerning the Cultural Aspects of Canadian Reconstruction" to the Turgeon Special Committee on (Post-war) Reconstruction and Re-establishment. The brief called for a strengthened federal role in cultural affairs and, more specifically, for a central coordinating mechanism that Massey-Levesque would subsequently shape into recommendations to establish the Canada Council. Less well known is the FCA's parallel call for *decentralized* cultural development through the establishment of a network of

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<sup>13</sup> Delgado maintains that a great deal of cultural policy in the past has been little more than a rationalization for existing administrative and/or funding commitments.

<sup>14</sup> It is a tribute to the power of the Massey-Levesque that a prevailing myth in cultural policy discourses for many years was that cultural life in Canada began with the work of the influential commission.

community arts centres. This second part of the FCA vision was unfortunately lost in the post-war rush to centralization (Tuer, 1992).

Community centres, each equipped with a theatre, movie projector, art gallery and library, were to provide artists with local contexts for exhibitions and community recognition. The centres would also engage in ambitious adult art education in order to build an informed local audience for local and national cultural activity such as traveling programs and exhibitions from national institutions. Here was an integrated vision of cultural development linking local cultural development to a viable national culture. The Turgeon Committee was enthusiastic about the community centre concept:

[It was] the one thing which really captured the Committee's imagination and which occupied the larger part of the discussion, especially given its potential as an infrastructure that would serve the amateur and the professional; which made federal, provincial and municipal governments financially responsible for culture; and which addressed the problems created by central Canada's domination, the country's vast size, and its reliance on foreign cultural producers, organizers and philanthropists (Tuer, 1992, 34).

While arts and cultural activity in Canadian communities can be traced back many decades<sup>15</sup>, it is nonetheless true that more formal policies and support infrastructures were largely a post-war phenomenon. Bailey (1978) claims that community arts councils, a key mechanism for supporting local arts activity in many jurisdictions, are "an original Canadian product". The first community arts council in North America was established in Vancouver in 1946. Local activity grew through the 1950s and 1960s, fueled by the expansion of federal funding. In Ontario in the 1960s and early 1970s, arts development at the local level remained largely the preserve of local arts councils. It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that municipalities began to take the arts more seriously. This period saw an explosion of activity - arts and cultural facilities were built, policies and plans adopted, and municipal staff positions created (Elvidge, 1996).

The Canadian Conference for the Arts (CCA) held its 1978 annual conference on the theme of municipal cultural policy, based on the claim that "local government involvement in the arts [had] lagged" (Bailey, 1978, 2). In 1986 the Task Force on the Funding of the Arts in Canada reported

that municipalities provided about 6% of total operating revenues of arts organizations, compared to the federal government's 23% and the province's 28% (1986). The Taskforce viewed municipal arts and cultural development as "the most crucial area of Canadian cultural evolution". The CCA's 1988 annual conference returned to the theme of municipal cultural policy, evidently believing that municipal governments still needed prodding.

In 1991 the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conducted research on municipal cultural activity. The study concluded "most municipalities ... have developed policy and support mechanisms to assist arts, culture and heritage in their communities" (FCM, 1991, 2). The study confirmed the substantial involvement of municipalities in providing grant support, dedicated municipal staff and specialized facilities. Recommendations in the report were weakened by narrow and inconsistent definitions - e.g. the exclusion of libraries, the restriction of "culture" to the performing and visual arts, associating "heritage" narrowly to built heritage. Most of the proposals for change were exhortations to "work together," and contained little theoretical or methodological clarity.

Cardinal (1998) traces the evolution of municipal policy in select communities in Canada from the 1950s to the 1990s, comparing Canadian experience to patterns described by Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) in Europe<sup>16</sup>. She finds evidence of the cultural planning approach in recent planning exercises in Vancouver, Greater Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Kitchener citing the following characteristics:

- Increased citizen participation and involvement in policy/plan formulation<sup>17</sup>;
- Greater attention to issues of cultural diversity and pluralism;
- Broadened definitions of culture; and
- The use of "community cultural development" as the integrating framework for linking arts, heritage and cultural industry activity to broader civic concerns (1998).

A serious barrier to cultural issues becoming a more prominent part of the agenda of local government is that they do not fit neatly into existing administrative structures or municipal

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<sup>15</sup> Teather (1999) traces local museum development to the late eighteenth century. Tippet (1990) describes a rich heritage of local arts and cultural activity in English Canada before Massey-Levesque.

<sup>16</sup> The broad patterns conform to the phases captured in Figure 1.

<sup>17</sup> Although in one community the process involved only 60 local citizens.

departments. Local cultural facilities and programs are considered *community or human services* in many communities, or part of *parks and recreation* departments in others. In larger communities the expanding cultural industries, including cultural tourism, pull culture into the orbit of departments responsible for *economic development*. The conservation of land-based heritage resources - including the built environment and cultural landscapes - generally falls to *land use planning*<sup>18</sup>.

A further legacy of Massey-Levesque that has acted against more integrated approaches to local cultural development is *discipline-based funding*. This is the distinction between categories of cultural activity - music, dance, visual arts, literary arts – which became the norm after the establishment of the Canada Council. The persistence of a discipline-based orientation has had several significant impacts. First, it acted as a barrier to forms of expression that fell outside Western European artistic traditions, and perpetuated the interests of historically advantaged institutions.<sup>19</sup> The fracturing of cultural activity along disciplinary lines also undermined a shared sense of identity across the cultural sector, undermining the impact of advocacy efforts and reducing the profile of cultural activity in communities.

Discipline-based traditions are giving way to the more integrated framing of cultural planning issues characteristic of cultural planning. The Culture Plan adopted by the former Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto signals a broadening approach (Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, 1995). Although still couched largely in sectoral terms the plan did address the full spectrum of arts, heritage, libraries and cultural industry issues. While it stressed the many contributions made by cultural activities to the city's vitality and well-being, it was an economic impact analysis, commissioned by the City and completed by Statistics Canada, that earned the plan its political legitimacy (Nicholson, 1997). The plan assigned the Culture Office responsibility for monitoring cultural issues "horizontally" across all municipal departments and services. Staff of the Culture Office undertook the plan themselves (rather than contracting the process out to external consultants) in order to build relationships inside and outside government (ibid.).

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<sup>18</sup> The City of Toronto amalgamation is revealing. In the restructuring the Culture Office was first assigned to the Community Services Division, but then quickly transferred to Economic Development. It was clear that for the downtown core - although not for large sections of the rest of the city – legitimacy and "clout" lay in economic development (Nicholson, personal interview, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> The Los Angeles City 2000 Plan states that decision-making by art disciplines is inconsistent with public interests in a pluralist society for two reasons: it perpetuates historic inequities by favouring established disciplines and institutions, and it separates creative expression from its community or cultural context (Mulcahy, 1995).

A South Etobicoke Cultural Strategic Plan (1996) signals a further move away from a sectoral to a more strategic mapping of cultural planning issues. Goals and actions were identified in the following areas:

- Community design;
- Education and instruction;
- Audience development;
- Culture and economic development;
- Cultural facilities and open space;
- Cultural organizations infrastructure, or coordinating administrative and governance structures;
- Marketing culture;
- Funding cultural initiatives, and
- Tools for updating the strategic plan.

The Municipal Association of British Columbia (1997) sought to lay out a more integrated municipal approach to local cultural development and established a number of useful reference points. The following range of municipal roles was identified:

- *As funder* - for example, providing project funding, grants in aid, annual grants;
- *As facilities manager* - managing municipally owned facilities, supporting facilities at "arm's length, or providing indirect support for facility development." e.g. forgiving of property tax or providing zoning exemptions;
- *As enabler or facilitator of cultural activity*; and
- *As advocate and supporter*.

Three different types of municipal cultural plans were identified (MABC, 1997):

- *Single issue plans* - addressing one cultural issue, such as heritage building conservation;
- *Broader community planning processes* - integrating cultural policies or planning statement into other city planning documents; and
- *Comprehensive arts and cultural planning* - incorporating all elements of local cultural development.

For more than two decades the Heritage Canada Foundation has worked in heritage-based community development strategies. An evaluation of Heritage Canada's Regional Heritage Programme (RHP) in 1996 is a valuable source of insight (Weiler, 1996)<sup>20</sup>. Conclusions are set out in Figure 2.

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<sup>20</sup> Caution is needed in extrapolating conclusions too far because RHP projects took place primarily outside large urban centres.



**Figure 2: Lessons From Regional Heritage Programs (RHP)**

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**Core Principles**

- Issues are best tackled as inseparable parts of the whole.
- Community solutions work best while those imposed from above fall short.
- Based on a shared vision of heritage as the totality of the natural and cultural environment including, the living heritage of local customs and traditions.

**Program Successes**

- Heightened awareness of heritage and the benefits of increased attention to heritage conservation.
- Increased co-operation among various jurisdictions, organizations and businesses.
- Strengthened leadership by regional co-ordinating bodies, especially where the project was undertaken with a pre-existing, non-profit organization whose primary focus was heritage.
- Modest gains in tourism and small business development.

**Guides to “taking action and keeping track of results”**

- Change things gradually and look ahead to long-term benefits.
- Build momentum by getting visible results right away from some easy-to-do initiatives.
- Be willing to take calculated risks.
- Improvise by seizing opportunities not anticipated in your original plan.

**Lessons about working with communities**

- The process cannot be rigid and must remain adaptable to changing circumstances.
- The importance of a skilled facilitator who acts as “a cheerleader, referee, or mediator” in mobilizing public participation.
- The importance of working to ensure people know where they fit in, that they are clear on procedures, and know their perspectives will be heard.
- The centrality of reaching community consensus that builds long-term relationships.

**Program Disappointments**

- Confusion over what RHP was really about.
- Weak monitoring and evaluation of projects.
- The inability of projects to become self-sufficient after government start-up funding ran out.

**Performance Measurement**

- Outcome assessment should include both quantitative measures (e.g. numbers of jobs created or residents participating) and qualitative measures (e.g. probing residents’ feelings and watching for changes in day-to-day community behavior).
  - Positive indicators identified include raised confidence, increased mutual respect and greater harmony.
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The failure of RHP programs to become self-supporting after start-up government funding ran out speaks to the need for local heritage and cultural groups to broaden and deepen networks of local support, drawing on the insights of planning and community development.

Another source of insight into emerging cultural planning practice in Canada is the Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique in Montreal, an agency that is active in local and neighborhood cultural planning (Laperrière, 1995). Local cultural decision-making is described as *more* – not less – complex than at more senior levels of government. As decisions about cultural matters are pushed down to where people live and work they become more politically charged and can generate intense conflicts: “local decisions often have a direct, visible and immediate impact ... they leave no one indifferent” (Laperrière, 1995, 3). As recognition of the importance of local cultural development grows, especially in economic terms, “[culture] may be becoming too important for its own good. .. [it is] seen by many government officials as too important to be left in the hands of ‘cultural people’. [The result can be that] the so-called ‘cultural needs’ of the population are often left behind, simply because they are not easy to identify” (1995, 6).

Traditional cultural planning approaches are described as inadequate: “cultural planners cannot simply go on asking for more money and more facilities for culture”. “Linear” – or rational - planning models can still be effective for planning specific cultural facilities or events, but only if certain conditions are met:

- A single decision-making authority is involved - i.e. one level of government;
- A clear and unambiguous need can be recognized - i.e. “there is no library in district X:”
- The objectives are incontestable;
- The means - money, land permits, etc. are readily available; and
- The community - i.e. the artists or cultural workers and local residents - know and agree on what is desired (1995, 7).

Situations that meet all these requirements are rare.

A series of new cultural planning principles and assumptions is offered:

- The traditional “product-oriented approach,” while excellent for tourism and resource management, is less useful for local residents; a more “user-oriented” approach is emerging, one initially developed for neighborhood purposes but that can also be applied to visitors and tourists who wish to discover “the real” life of the city;
- Tourists, even international ones, “are also local people ... the best way to make them appreciate local culture is not to deny all sense of localism ... make them aware that your own local product is the same but different;”
- Cities and neighborhoods need a “signature” to be recognized and that can be provided by “exhibitions, festivities, festivals of all kinds;”
- Small and parochial are not necessarily inseparable: “you can be small in size and have an international orientation, or big and still be close to the needs of various local communities;”
- A new breed of cultural facility is needed, the “in-between building ... [this is] not a medium-sized building but one able to obtain international recognition while respecting local requirements;” and,
- Avoid “ghettoization” by counterbalancing support for cultural difference or multicultural events -“side-by-side diversity”- with a concern for *intercultural* events (1995, 10-11).

Civic engagement related to issues of diversity and pluralism is one of cultural planning's most significant challenges, but also one of its greatest opportunities:

What role can cultural and artistic activities play at the local level in bringing the different ethnic and linguistic communities closer to one another while preserving their distinctiveness, but at the same time giving them the confidence to participate in a common cultural project? When politicians discuss such issues at the national level, it is easy to make sweeping statements. To make such statements operational at the local level is a more challenging task (1995, 12).

### **2.2.3 Barriers and Bridges to Cultural Planning Approaches**

The literature on cultural planning in other jurisdictions, together with this examination of Canadian experience, suggests a number of lessons regarding the emerging cultural planning approach. Appendix B provides a synthesis of key themes drawn from other jurisdictions.

#### **Broadening Agendas: Opportunities and Dangers**

A significant part of the appeal of cultural planning has been its more holistic vision of local cultural development. Many factors are driving a broadening and diversification of cultural planning agendas in cities. The first is economic. Cultural products and experiences have become increasingly significant sources of wealth creation and employment in an expanding knowledge-based economy. More specifically, the converging of cultural, information and communications industries brought about by digital technology is fundamentally repositioning the arts and culture on the agenda in all jurisdictions (Murray, 1998).

Unprecedented levels of ethno-racial and cultural diversity in cities are a second factor driving a broadening of cultural planning issues. Modern transportation and communications systems facilitate mass global migration while simultaneously making possible continued links with countries of origin - extended diasporic communities around the world. An unprecedented global expansion of capital has accompanied the movement of populations. Combined, these factors are transforming cultural production and consumer practices in radical ways. This process of transformation has given rise to what Cornel West (1993) calls a new cultural politics of difference – a process through which different groups transform concepts of cultural representation and, in particular, the meaning, limits and function of art. Others are less optimistic about the long-term impact of globalization on cultural production<sup>21</sup>.

A third factor contributing to a broadening of cultural agendas in cities is growing recognition of the cultural dimension of sustainable development, and of the indivisibility of natural and cultural environments (UNESCO, 1998). In Australia some of the most progressive work is investigating

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<sup>21</sup> Jameson (1998) questions whether we are seeing the liberation of local cultures and identities from restricting state and national forms or the consolidation of transnational domination in globalization from which it is impossible to de-link. What we celebrate as pluralism in many ways masks vastly unequal relations between groups and races.

urban development, cultural planning and management in the context of broad frameworks such as sustainable development. This work utilizes performance measures and indicators to track urban development and links databases into integrated information and decision-making systems, many making use of the growing sophistication of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 1998).

The growing significance of cultural planning coincides with the re-emergence of *place* as essential to planning practice. The focus on functional dimensions of cities will not disappear but will be crosscut by “re-placing” of the planning profession (Wight, 1999). Despite rising ethno-racial and cultural diversity in cities citizens still share:

a collective home place ... a region-scale place that a majority might invoke in a foreign place to describe their home turf ... although collective home places are billed as the new natural places and eco-states as the new political places, they share a common ecological denominator. Their combination would create a merger of the political and the natural, resulting in a blended political and ecological citizenship (1999, 267)

Sandercock (1998) believes planning will increasingly be called on to address two basic questions, both central to cultural planning: “how might we live with each other in the multicultural cities and regions of the next century? And how might we live well and sustainably on the earth (1998, 230)?

Despite the appeal of these broadened visions of cultural planning and local cultural development, the literature also reveals dangers in embracing too large a conceptualization of cultural planning issues. Stevenson (1992) argues that “if ‘culture’ is interpreted as ways of life, urban planning *is already* cultural planning” (1992, 8). Cultural plans must address more than conventionally defined arts activity and “aesthetic” concerns, but they must be manageable in political and administrative terms. Some middle ground must be found that opens up the definition of culture that is the “object” of cultural planning, but bounds the system in manageable terms.

## **Whose Planning Agenda?**

Despite the stated intentions in most jurisdictions to broaden the scope of cultural planning, the evidence suggests that “aesthetic” or “fine arts” definitions of culture continue to dominate planning agendas. Several factors are cited. The first is the strong hold that a specific set of historically advantaged cultural institutions and interests maintains on the planning and policy-making agenda. Cultural agendas pretend to be open and inclusive, but in fact remain captured by traditional interests. Tysack (1997) analyzes the persistence of traditional agendas in Australia, citing the following factors:

- Consultants and municipal staff who have a relatively free rein and in practice control the amount and quality of community involvement;
- Local councils that do not establish criteria to determine what constitutes an appropriate policy;
- Councilors and city staff who talk about wanting equal partnerships across the community in formulating policy, but in practice treat community inputs as casual advice; and,
- Communities who want to be involved in policy-making and implementation, but are prevented from doing so by municipal structures that are not sufficiently flexible or resourced to accommodate this involvement (Tysack, 1997).

One part of the solution, Tysack argues, lies in striking a better balance between broad statements of policy direction and more focused action plans and strategies: the former can obscure the intentions and the interests being served; the latter cannot.

Other factors that prevent a broadening of the planning agenda: institutional inertia; the existence of powerful and well-connected boards of trustees in cultural institutions; the failure of professional training and education programs to provide future cultural workers with alternative assumptions regarding cultural production; structural barriers in local government decision-making; and, the continued hold that zoning and land use issues have on local planning practice (Brednock, 1997).

## Values and Norms

A deeper explanation for the continued power that “aesthetic” definitions of culture have over cultural planning is the resilience of European values and norms (Bowen, 1997). Not only the language but the entire conceptualization of contemporary cultural policy is bound up in 19th century European bourgeois images of the self and of collective - specifically national - identity (Betz, 1994). This has several implications. The first relates to the impact that Eurocentrism has on what *forms* of expression we consider “culture” - distinctions between “high art”, folk art, kitsch and popular culture, and what these forms of expression represent in the world. The question is less how to “add” culture to the local planning agenda, but rather *whose* culture is currently shaping our urban experience?

In this context Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) see cultural planning as a means of linking the debate on the future of cities as physical and economic entities, to the future of citizenship and local democracy. “Urban cultural policy in the 90s should be driven by a new ‘civic’ inspiration, ... and become one of the key instruments to trigger off a broader politicization process and create stronger links between civil and political society’ (1993, 206). The authors are not naive about the challenge:

(The book) examines wider themes concerning cultural policy and the future of cities as public realms and political communities. ... (this is) linked with the debate on the future of citizenship and local democracy in western Europe. Two key problems in this area are the increasing social, spatial and cultural segregation of low-income groups in West European cities and the need to make ethnic and racial minorities an integral part of the civic network. The evidence is that the latter will be hard to accomplish. Can cultural policy makers encourage immigrant communities and other disadvantaged social groups to demonstrate the relevance of their ideas, aspirations, skills and resources to the city's overall development? (1993, 199).

Cultural studies scholars in Australia have been especially critical of the lack of scrutiny of cultural planning assumptions (Barrett-Lennard, 1994). Cultural activity in cities is seen as an important means of resisting the privatization of public space - both physical space and aesthetic or symbolic space. If it is to do so, however, it must *contest* rather than accept at face value notions of “public art”, “public access”, and “community”, among other core concepts. “The rhetoric of community

distances its conception of social life from the present by setting up an opposition between the desired society and the existing society. By proposing a society with no conflict or alienation it provides no useful understanding of the measures necessary for the move from here to there" (Garrett, 1994, 83). Cultural planning frameworks that simplify complex conditions and power relations act to de-politicize urban cultural issues. Hunter (1994) is critical of much of the rhetoric of the 1970s community arts, urging we be on guard against "the rapaciousness which lurks within our most edifying gestures" (1994, 21).

### **From Liberalism and Nationalism ...**

A further reason for the resilience of European norms in liberal democracies that has been analyzed by political scientists for some time, is the tension in liberal democracies between *demos* and *ethnos*, or equity and diversity. Liberal democracies have tended to support individual or civil rights and identities emphasizing equality over group rights and identities emphasizing difference. Taylor (1992) questions the continued legitimacy of this stance as it applies to the public institutions and structures of society – education systems, political parties and cultural institutions.

Cultural studies scholars have sought to probe deeper to understand why there exists such a huge gap between the rhetoric of national identity in liberal democratic societies that is inclusive and pluralistic – with legislated and institutionalized commitments to equity, and the experience of many ethno-racial minorities of an exclusionary and monocultural society. Tator (1998) argues that liberal democracies contain within them fundamental tensions between democratic ideology – our strongly held beliefs in "tolerance," "openness" and "equity", and systemic structures of discrimination. The *language* of liberalism lulls us into a false sense of complacency and diverts attention from systemic discrimination. They theorize this phenomenon as "democratic racism."

Cultural and multicultural policy in Canada and other Western democracies must be viewed as part of the larger Western project of *nation-building*, a project that establishes structures, desires, narrative forms, and classifying and differentiating practices essential to Western modernity (Mackey, 1996). Mackey argues we must understand this project as a *teleology*, one based on Western notions of progress, liberty, equality, reason and human rights, and entailing the "continuous physical and moral improvement of entire governable populations through flexible strategies" (Asad, 1993, 12, cited in Mackey, 1996). In this view government policies such as multiculturalism in Canada are strategies to manage, institutionalize, differentiate, and normalize



diversity. They do this by proposing that Canadian identity, with its stated commitments to tolerance, diversity and equity, is a unified entity, part of the larger Western project of progress and emancipation. The project gains its authority and reinforces its power not by claiming to be cultural - as in the unique characteristics and project of a specific cultural or ethnic group - but by claiming to be *universal and rational* (1996, 305). This is the source of Western cultural power: that it is *unconscious* and dominates through culturally unmarked and supposedly universal notions of rationality, progress and equality. More critical perspectives and analytical frameworks are needed to challenge these assumptions.

### **...To a Re-Imagining of Cities**

Hawkins and Gibson (1994) believe cultural planning offers alternatives to models of urban planning which perpetuate the myth of planning as a value-free, technical process responsible for managing the urban environment. They call for cultural planning to facilitate both cultural and economic diversity, countering visions of cultural standardization and economic concentration. A strong emphasis is placed on sustaining culturally diverse spaces within the urban fabric. Many of the most interesting spaces are "unplanned" ones that have grown up in response to the needs of diverse communities - ethnic enclaves and parts of the city inhabited by gay and lesbian communities, for example. Young (1990) also articulates a vision of cities based on heterogeneity rather than unity. She describes the city having four characteristics: social differentiation without exclusion; variety through multiuse differentiation of public space; eroticism through opportunities to encounter the "other" in ways that challenge routine; and, public space open to all in ways that do not demand transcending difference (1990).

Arts and cultural activity in cities can challenge dominant assumptions and identities, and can provide channels for opening-up possibilities for urban reform (Sandercock, 1998). Planning has traditionally paid little attention to the work of artists and other cultural workers who use myths, stories and metaphors to challenge conventional narratives (Mandelbaum, 1991). Mandelbaum describes the importance of "alternative histories" that challenge accepted historical narratives and thus portray a world that is complex and contingent, offering opportunities for the less powerful to have influence (ibid.).

Writers concerned with questions of marginality, identity, difference and justice - Canadian writers such as Thompson Highway, George Elliot Clarke, Dionne Brand, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Joy

Kogawa - are important sources of insight. All share a commitment to moving beyond postmodernism as a dismantling critique to finding in it seeds of a different kind of future. As many are writers of colour it is also significant that they seek to move beyond the narrowness of racial pride and separate identity, to theories and practices:

... built on a politics of hope, a concern for economic and social justice and equality, a new moral vision or consciousness, and 'an epistemology of multiplicity' ... in their work the conditions of postmodernity are a way of being and knowing, acting and loving that provides us, as planners, with a way forward in the face of uncertainty and in spite of the death of the grand theories about social change (Sandercock, 1995, 78).

### **Social Justice *and* Economic Development**

A defining feature of the emerging cultural planning approach in many jurisdictions is the reconciliation or reintegration of economic with social and political goals. The "depoliticizing" of cultural planning that occurred in the 1980's, with its focus on economic issues, is to be reversed and a broader set of social and political issues and inequities engaged (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993). Aitken-Rose (1998) proposes a cultural planning framework constructed around three goals: employment, solidarity (or civil society), and cultural identity.

The cultural strategies pursued by the Greater London Council (GLC) in the late 1980s are models to study. Noteworthy is the degree to which plans combined rigorous economic analysis with clear social justice goals addressing the independence of cultural producers and the interests of minority communities. Much of the GLC agenda must be understood in the context of "Post-Fordist"<sup>22</sup> cultural production based on the decentralization of cultural production and the fragmenting of identity-based "niche" markets. A strong focus was on distribution strategies based on "diasporic networks" of geographically dispersed but culturally linked markets of consumers – strategies that link consumers in sufficient numbers to make cultural products commercially viable (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986).

Strategies modeled by the GLC represent efforts to shift from a "push" model of social justice – strategies engineered by the welfare state, to a "pull" strategy based on the removal of barriers and

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<sup>22</sup> In contrast to "Fordist" - as in Henry - mass cultural production and dissemination.

a demonstration of the benefits of more pluralistic cultural production. A Cultural Diversity Action Plan produced by the Arts Council of England takes a similar position (1998):

Originally seen as marginal, with ownership almost entirely vested in ethnic communities, cultural diversity is now recognized as a major player in the ongoing dynamic at the heart of British cultural life. As such, it needs to feature centrally, not only in arts policy at large, but in all the mechanisms that animate culture ... Change needs to be answered by consistent institutional change along a broad axis (ACE, 1998, 1).

### **“Improved Coordination”**

Cultural planning promises to bring cultural issues “in from the margins of governance” by facilitating more integrated and coordinated action across the public, private and voluntary sectors. City governments are called on to move toward more “horizontal” approaches to planning and policy making, connecting cultural issues more effectively with other areas of municipal planning and policy-making (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993). The literature suggests that this “horizontal coordination” has been hard to achieve. A frequent explanation offered is the “failure of municipal leadership ... decision-makers (who are) not able to make practical action plans linking public, private and voluntary sectors” (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993, 201). This is too simplistic an explanation. Other barriers must be acknowledged.

The call for improved policy coordination and integration occurred in many fields through most of the 1980s. Volkerling (1998) examines how the holistic framing of cultural policy issues in New Zealand was one of the first casualties of the restructuring and downsizing in the public sector that followed in the 1990's.

[While] integration of the cultural, economic and political arenas' continues to be stressed ... general non-operational statements of principle exert little practical influence on the shaping of government policy or on how appropriation decisions [are made]. It is possible to rationalize these outcomes in terms of accepted cultural policy concepts - cultural heritage, cultural identity, access, understanding, participation, quality of life and community development, for example; but these (concepts) .... hold little sway within the new policy environment. Finally, no effective policy coordination mechanism exists to allow integrated

planning across the sixteen departments now responsible for such programs (Volkerling, 1998, 3).

Many obstacles stand in the way of achieving greater policy coherence and administrative coordination. Boston (1992) identifies the following factors:

- Organizational fragmentation;
- Policy complexity;
- Resource scarcity;
- Sectoral interdependence;
- Conflicting values;
- Competing interests;
- Departmental rivalries;
- Increasing specialization;
- The sheer scope and scale of government activity;
- The overload of senior policy makers; and
- The growing complexity of many policy issues and the increasing interdependence of policy problems and their solutions (1992, 88).

Assessment of different government structures and control mechanisms has attracted some academic analysis. Yet "relatively little is known about the impact of these institutional and procedural changes on either the process of policy coordination or the quality of administrative coordination" (1992, 90). Mechanisms to improve coordination can be identified, but "there is no easy recipe for success, nor any ready-made technology for coordination" (ibid.). The following requirements of policy coordination are offered, based on the New Zealand experience:

- Strong central coordinating agencies ... adequately resourced and staffed;
- A clear understanding of advantages and disadvantages of de-coupling policy and service delivery;
- Ensuring that senior officials have incentives for collaboration and serving larger collective interest - rather than narrow departmental interests; and
- A recognition of the danger of assuming that departmental reorganizations can solve policy coordination problems - they seldom do (1992, 100).

This analysis focused largely on senior levels of government in Parliamentary democracies where party discipline and other mechanisms of centralized control exist to enforce coordination. Even here coordination has been hard to achieve. The challenge of coordinating policy at the local level, where there are few centralized control mechanisms, is a more plausible explanation for cultural planning's failure to establish integrated strategies than a "failure of municipal leadership".

### **Acknowledging not "Integrating" Cultural Planning Issues**

Hawkins and Gibson (1994) argue there is no need to "integrate" cultural planning into mainstream decision-making in cities because it *already* finds itself in the midst of major tensions in cities - between development and amenity, between public and private ownership and control, between local and international culture.

If there is an area of government in Australia that has been most at the vanguard of cultural expression and development over the past 10 years it is local government. All over Australia councils have been grappling with development applications for large scale shopping malls that have massive implications for main streets, tourist resort areas that transform local economies and local leisure practices. They have also been building massive cultural centres - often reflecting a dangerous combination of money and narcissism; they have been licensing street markets ... and supporting Aboriginal museums in order to attract tourists. These are all cultural developments that have phenomenal impacts on local economies, urban form and the ordinary cultural practices of residents - how they shop, what they do in their leisure and so on (1994, 220).

Cultural planning must be based on more realistic and rigorous analysis of the economic and political forces at play. It must move beyond "the arts" into the wider cultural economy.

.... a cultural economy addressing public and private, high and low, home-based and city-based culture. Cultural planning in Australia needs to move beyond motherhood statements about how good culture is for local identity and economies. It needs to reflect a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between political processes and economic forces. The implicit emphasis on the aesthetic benefits of culture - good design, heritage

streetscapes, public art - makes cultural planning policy blind to the forces shaping cities"  
(1994, 220).

Supporting broad community-based planning and decision-making aimed at addressing complex urban problems is a core function of urban planning. What insights can be drawn from the planning literature that can inform emerging cultural planning approaches? In particular what has planning learned about strategies to deepen and extend networks of local support?

## **2.3 Planning and Community Development**

### **2.3.1 From “Community Participation” to “Citizen Engagement”: How Far Have We Come?**

For the purposes of this dissertation planning will be defined as an integrated process of decision-making, action and evaluation tied *to place*. While planners may draw on insights and tools from other disciplines - policy analysis, organizational development, communications theory, systems analysis, critical theory - it concerns the application of these related disciplines in territory-bound communities.

The call for more participatory planning methods has a long tradition in the planning literature. Public participation in surveys, evaluation and plan making was a cornerstone of the outlook of early Anglo-American “visionary” planners such as Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford. Geddes advocated citizen participation in planning through “civic exhibitions” on urban and regional issues, through surveys, and through alternative plan creation (Alexander, 1994). Mumford saw plans as “instruments of communal education” (1938/1970).

The professionalization of the field that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, and its institutionalization as a function of local government, undermined these calls for community participation. The professional culture was technocratic, and its concerns viewed as “apolitical”. The focus was on the administration of land and on the efficient delivery of municipal services: growth and development were generally viewed in positive terms. These perspectives peaked in the early 1960s. Calls for increased participation rose rapidly in the late 1960s and 1970s (Grant, 1992). This was a tumultuous period for Canadian planners who found themselves pulled in several directions. The first was toward greater citizen participation, part of the upsurge in participatory democratic politics. Anti-establishment sentiment in planning was felt in citizen opposition to urban renewal, high-rise development and urban expressways. Planners frequently found themselves in the middle of three-way disputes among their municipal government employers, private developers and concerned citizens.

The fracturing of public interests confronted planners with a crisis of legitimacy: whose interests

were they to serve? and what expertise could they alone bring to serving these interests? “[N]either the profession nor the public at large are sure of just what special expertise the community planner claims to command, nor are they convinced that (whatever it may be) it is really needed” (Richardson, 1966, 3). The net effect of the late 1960s community battles was to place planning firmly on the political agenda. The structure of political-economic power has rarely been so clearly exposed.

The demand for participation declined precipitously again in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the onset of the economic recession. The dominant concern for communities in the 1980s was not how to involve citizens in community planning, but rather how to keep citizens employed and the tax base growing. The restructuring of local economies brought on by globalization ensured that the ideology of planning tilted right. The radical critique in planning theory (Harvey, 1988; Kiernan, 1990), a critique that sought a broader context for planning decisions, withered in the face of neo-conservatism and skepticism regarding activist governments. The period saw the rise of development strategies that emphasized public-private sector partnerships. Many planners turned away from broader contextual issues and returned to functional land use questions, the traditional core of the discipline (Dear and Laws, 1987).

In response to neo-conservatism and public sector retrenchment it was perhaps inevitable that the late 1980s and 1990s brought a renewal of interest in citizen participation. The communitarian movement was one response. Communitarians claim that the modern state had undermined capacities in individuals and communities to address problems. There were calls to “rebuild the capacity” of communities and “renew civil society” (Bellah, 1985; Etzioni, 1991; Nozick, 1992; McKnight, 1994). Communitarian advocates pointed to the powerful role that voluntary organizations can play in civil society. Bellah (1985) cites the role played by churches and family and voluntary organizations in the American civil rights movement as evidence of this potential. Others are less persuaded:

[These hopes] seem misguided and highly unlikely to be fulfilled. The example of the civil rights movement reveals the difficulty. There is simply no comparison between the black church, which produced the movement, and the institutions of the overwhelmingly white, middle-class people who are the subject of Bellah's investigation. The black church did not first have to be revived to produce the civil rights movement; it was already the central institution of social cohesion and transformation for an embattled people whose



unceasing travails had only made the black church stronger and more necessary. The creation and protection of a community were already at the heart of its meaning; it was not a 'community of memory,' but a community of current practice; not a repository of abstract ideals to be 'applied,' but a solid way of life. Bellah's resort to this example is a tacit admission that many of the white, middle class institutions in which he places his hopes for transformation are socially moribund (Leinberger and Tucker, 1991, 52).

Putnam's (1993) influential work seemed to lend empirical evidence to communitarian claims. He and his colleagues set out to assess factors influencing the effectiveness of regional governments established in Italy in the early 1970s. More specifically the study set out to assess two things. First, could the way institutions are structured and function affect the quality of political decision-making? Second, what other factors contributed to the success or failure of these institutions? Findings confirmed that institutional structures *do* affect the quality of governance. However, structures alone were not sufficient to ensure success; social and cultural context and history profoundly conditioned the effectiveness of institutions. Those governments that succeeded had strong traditions of civic engagement that could be traced to the early Middle Ages. These traditions were *not* characterized by social consensus and political harmony, but by civic education and "social capital" - patterns of associationism, moral trust, and co-operation embodied in vibrant networks of public-spirited citizens.

Questions of culture *versus* structure are not helpful:

... attitudes and practices constitute a mutually reinforcing equilibrium. Social trust, norms of reciprocity, networks of civic engagement, and successful co-operation are mutually reinforcing. Effective collaborative institutions require interpersonal skills and trust, but those skills and that trust are also inculcated and reinforced by organized collaboration. Norms and networks of civic engagement contribute to economic prosperity and are in turn reinforced by that prosperity. ... [We need] to understand how history smooths some paths and closes others off ... [we also] are *just beginning the serious study of organizations* (1993, 180, italics added).

Putnam appeared to have found empirical evidence to support what champions of citizen participation have claimed for some time about benefits of broadened participation in decision-making. These claims include: that decisions would draw on a broader base of knowledge and

opinion; that decisions would be supported and better understood; and, that citizens would be educated and transformed through their involvement (Alexander, 1994). Cultivating the ability to assess public issues would also reinforce understandings of citizenship and community (Orr, 1992; Taylor, 1992; Barber, 1984).

Idealism of this sort had long been disputed by those who argued that what passed for participation in most communities is the entrenchment of standard, mostly perfunctory advisory processes for public involvement, activity that works to actually *diffuse* more meaningful citizen action (Langton, 1978). The literature had for some time made clear the barriers to genuine engagement:

- The unrepresentative - higher than average - income and education of participants;
- The tendency for power to be concentrated in the hands of a cadre of professional activists;  
and
- The strong likelihood that fuller participation would, contrary to the expectations of activists, be driven by conservative rather than by progressive reform (1978).

McCann (1986) argues that strategies employed by many public interest groups paradoxically *undermine* the forms of participation needed for genuine democratic reform. Groups that make no demands on their members other than the payment of modest membership fees are one example:

[Fees provide] middle-class adults with a painless means to remain faithful to their liberal idealism without disturbing their conventional roles in the larger corporate society... In short the public interest group appeal ... has succeeded precisely because leaders have acquiesced to the logic of collective inaction and settled for a constituency of passive supporters rather than attempting to create more democratic forms of purposeful citizen engagement (1986, 191).

Jensen (1998) also urges caution regarding claims about civil society solutions to social problems<sup>23</sup>. Yet it does seem clear that the “two cell mental map” of public and private sectors must give way to the “three cell map” that adds the third or voluntary sector (Barber, 1984). Analysts agree that there will be greater reliance on the voluntary sector but also that our knowledge of this sector is still in its infancy (Drucker, 1993; Cooperrider, 1991).

Part of the explanation for conflicting claims regarding citizen participation flow from two related but conflicting forces. The first is the rise in political apathy and cynicism in industrialized countries, a product of the “legitimation crisis” - the declining faith in the fairness of society’s institutions and the wisdom of institutional decisions (Orr, 1992). On the other hand, citizens are also questioning authority, demanding increased accountability, and expressing a desire for a greater role in decision-making.

In the late 1990s the discourse in Canada has shifted from “public participation” to “citizen engagement”. With it has come acknowledgment of the limitations of past models and approaches to public participation. These shortcomings include:

- Exercises restricted to experts and leaders - interest groups - rather than citizens;
- Exercises that are thinly disguised sales efforts designed to sell the public a favored solution; and,
- Exercises that focus on informing the public but do so in ways that overload citizens with technical detail and jargon-laden terminology in ways that succeed in frustrating, rather than supporting, better decision making (O’Hara, 1998, 5).

Some evaluations of citizen engagement point to positive short term results, in particular to an increase in the amount of deliberation that goes into the choices made by participants (Schneider, 1997). Yet few evaluations “have been conducted in a formal, scientifically rigorous manner” (ibid., 2). Most processes of engagement are simply unable to provide adequate information, facilitate an educational process through moderated face-to-face discussion in small groups, and promote a greater understanding of the issues (ibid.). The vast majority makes use of conventional rational problem-solving and conflict resolution approaches that discourage any substantial reframing of issues or consideration of alternatives. Those who participate are rarely representative of the population that will be impacted by a particular decision: little concerted effort is generally made to attract marginalized groups and individuals. “In short, based on the available data, there appears to be a significant deficit in Canada with respect to the *application* of conceptual models that promote ... dialogue” (1997, 2, italics added).

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<sup>23</sup> She points to neo-conservatives in the United States who have waged a clever battle to displace the state

O'Hara summarizes barriers to citizen engagement and its further development in Canada:

- The increasing demands that citizen engagement places on individuals at the same time as schools cut back on civic education and not all graduates seem equipped with the skills and abilities required for the deliberative process;
- The resistance of vested interests to any change in the relationship “between the governed and the governing” ... which is critical if governments are to “let go of the process” and seriously engage citizens in a deliberative way;
- The need to address tensions between representative democracy and citizen engagement, and agree on how to balance calls for “leadership” with the demands of citizens for involvement in discussions about their future; and
- The lack of basic infrastructure and funding in Canada to support significant efforts to engage citizens, in contrast to the infrastructure and funding provided by non-partisan, non-profit foundations and organizations in the United States (1998, 33).

Questions regarding citizen engagement and its potential to strengthen public decision-making and problem solving in communities arrive at a critical moment. Jensen (1998) believes Canada and other Western democracies are at a watershed comparable to the late nineteenth century and the rise of the modern state. Few believe that the market holds all the answers to society's needs. But the assumption of full employment needed to fuel the activist state also seems unlikely. Even social democrats have come to reject the premise that social problems can be solved or social justice advanced through “trickle-down” social programs, or through an unquestioned reliance on publicly funded institutions. There is no longer acceptance that the mere *existence* of government programs can be equated with advancing a public good (Ehrenreich, 1998, 24).

Panitch (1991) believes the solution is neither the neo-conservative dismantling of the state, nor the paternalism of the liberal welfare state.

People remain troubled by ‘big government’. But they don't want to be shunted, like ping pong balls, back and forth between the power and discrimination of the state and the power and discrimination of the market. In other words, the real issue of our time is not about privatizing government, but democratizing it, and then using that democratized public

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by evoking the *language* of civil society and greater reliance on the charitable sector.

sector to democratize the private sector. The issue is not less state versus more state, but rather *a different kind of state* (1991, 6, italics added).

Government's role is increasingly one of guiding, not driving change. This still entails establishing, through consultation and dialogue, clear policy intentions and performance standards. Its job in many cases is then to step back and support collaboration in realizing these targets. In many spheres, government will play a much smaller role in achieving *common* goals; policies and program plans will be customized to fit needs, and decisions pushed to the most local level at which they can be addressed effectively (Panitch, 1991).

However, the rush to re-invent governance systems along more decentralized lines runs the risk of overcorrecting:

The paralysis of the decision process by excessive participation will eventually result in a movement to hand the process back to elites with only broad accountability for results according to the then current social values. Eventually, effects on certain social expectations will become sufficiently serious so that distrust of the experts will revive and there will be a new wave of demands for participation until the frustration of more diffuse social interests will again result in reversion to experts (Brooks, 1973).

An "integrative" approach, one designed to support rather than to replace traditional decision-making systems, is needed (Dale, 1996). This will require greater clarity regarding those issues that are subject to decentralized and/or consensual decision-making, using multistakeholder mechanisms such as environmental roundtables, and those that are not. A central challenge will be to define in more precise terms the relationship between multistakeholder or multipartite bodies and liberal democratic governments (1996). More precision will be needed in defining the roles and relationships among actors across the public-, private- (or commercial) and voluntary sectors.

### 2.3.2 Planning as Public Dialogue and Civil Learning

If citizen engagement is to result in better public decisions, the challenge is less “increasing participation” than it is deepening understanding and revealing the values that lie beneath these decisions. In this context “public dialogue” is increasingly used in a normative sense to describe the thoughtful engagement and consideration of social issues. It is frequently portrayed as offsetting the trappings of modernity - scientific rationality, technocratic jargon and a state-centred approach to problem solving. It is built on an epistemology that emphasizes “undistorted” dialogue and experiential social learning as the principal sources of knowledge and education: “the holy grail of this quest is no less than the achievement of a true democracy where people participate in public affairs equally, sincerely, and thoughtfully” (Schneider, 1997, 11).

Schneider and others urge caution about these idealistic expectations, demonstrating the many barriers to engagement and dialogue. Nonetheless it is significant to note that the language that recurs in the discourse on citizen engagement and public dialogue is the *language of learning* – “thoughtfulness,” “deliberation,” “insight,” “judgment:”

[Public judgement is] a particular form of public opinion that exhibits 1) more thoughtfulness, more weighing of alternatives, more genuine engagement with the issue, more taking into account a wide variety of factors than ordinary public opinion as measured in public opinion polls, and 2) more emphasis on the normative, valuing, ethical side of questions than on the factual, informational side (Yankelovich, 1991).

The notion of “deliberative democracy” forms another important part of this discourse (Barber, 1984). To function effectively, deliberative democracy requires spaces and time within the public policy or planning process where people can interact with one another: “[they need opportunities to] learn about the views of others that differ from their own in a way that develops a sense of the public interest as a reconstruction of [their] own personal and private interests”<sup>24</sup> (cited in O’Hara, 1998, 12). Dahl (1992) argues a central challenge of governance in pluralist societies is the development of “empathetic understanding” of others who may seem strange and threatening. Establishing and sustaining such empathy is especially difficult in countries with hitherto relatively

homogeneous populations.

Many processes of public dialogue and civil learning are weakened by their failure to challenge dominant values and identities that underpin decision making (O'Hara, 1998). Grant (1991) argues that the planning field remains locked in two of the dominant value clusters or sets in North America: the "individualism-democracy" cluster that includes values such as individualism, privacy, private ownership and democracy; and the "scientism" cluster that contains efficiency, technological progress, professional expertise and rationality (Grant, 1991). The result is that it is difficult to open up deliberations in ways that allow genuine alternatives to be considered.

The evolution of the healthy communities' movement internationally stands as a symbol of the difficulty identifying and sustaining clarity regarding underlying values. The healthy communities' movement internationally originated with a clear political ideology that was social-democratic and collectivist. Baum (1993) analyzes how these values were gradually "co-opted" by economic rationalism, individualism and misplaced professionalism as the language of healthy communities was taken up by the apparatus of the liberal democratic state (Baum, 1993). A recurring theme in this dissertation is the degree to which the easy *language of reform* acts to disguise rather than reveal planning choices.

If civil learning is to challenge surface appearances individuals must come to new understandings of themselves before they can know and participate in the world in different ways. This spiraling-out from personal to broader collective learning and change is a theme in the work of many analysts. Etzioni (1991) proposes a "guidance theory" that links individuals, organizations and community dimensions of planning with systemic and societal change. Freidmann (1992) describes "loops of articulation" that "spiral outward from the household economy to progressively larger domains of social practice ... before returning to the micro-economy of local communities where households and their immediate concerns become again visible" (1992, 53). A program of planning education for First Nations utilizes a spiral model that radiates outward from individual healing and intellectual and spiritual engagement to broadened collective problem-solving: a process of learning for "critical consciousness, collective action and common meaning" (De Mello et. al., 1994).

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<sup>24</sup> Barber (1984, 20) cites John Stuart Mill: "it is hardly possible to overrate the value ... of placing human beings in contact with persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar."

These perspectives owe a debt to Freire's (1970) model of conscientisation and popular education that begins with personal experience, builds outwards toward critical consciousness of the deeper structures of inequality these experiences illustrate, and culminates in collective action as an outcome of praxis, a process of reflection, action, and further reflection. Translating Freire into a North American context is problematic because sources of inequity are often more subtle and hidden on this continent than in the developing world, and classlessness and individualism remain powerful myths (Labonte, 1990). Public dialogue and civil learning today must acknowledge the inequities in power that make "rational dialogue" impossible (Orr, 1992).

Strong local organizations are needed that provide institutional structures to support both civil learning and action. However, the social learning vision of planning as a socially transforming process has not been realized, nor has it delivered a "learning society" (Friedmann, 1987). One factor may well be inadequate organizational infrastructure to support civic engagement.

### **2.3.3 Organizational and Whole System Learning**

The need to participate in decision-making "is not the need of the individual but of the 'organized individual' ... cities are complexes of organized individuals, who have an ever-increasing need, also for reasons to do with their jobs, to participate in the decision-making process" (Cacciari, 1998, 76). Analysts argue those traditional institutional structures and systems must give way to new forms of organization.

There is a difference between 'reforming' our local institutions and 'transforming' them. ... Unless we 'rethink' and 'retool' all our local institutions to be compatible with a constantly changing, interconnected and increasingly complex society, we will slam into the barrier equivalent to the iceberg that sank the Titanic (trying to make the structure of our present institutions efficient rather than birthing new approaches). ... the old ways no longer work and are no longer appropriate for the twenty first century society. ... our local communities will have to become experimental laboratories to test out new ideas, continuously building new skills and knowledge to prepare for a time of intense change. We will need to develop new capacities – capacities for transformation – and integrate them in new ways into the thinking and operations of the institutions of our local communities" (Smyre, 1998, 41).



Guidance and insight regarding the development of these “capacities for transformation” can be found in contemporary management theory, specifically that of organizational learning (Senge, 1990, 1995; Dixon, 1994). Pedagogy has traditionally concerned itself with the learning needs of individuals; organizational learning examines the requirements of *collective learning* in organizational settings. Dixon (1994) defines organizational learning as “the intentional use of learning resources at the individual, group and system level to continuously transform the organization in a direction that is increasingly satisfying to its stakeholders” (1994, 23).

One facet of organizational learning has to do with establishing more effective systems for information sharing and knowledge building within organizations. Huber (1991) believes organizational learning is composed of at least four different processes: knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational learning. The steps of generating, integrating, interpreting and acting on information are not new to organizations. But typically different parts of the organization conduct each step in the cycle, which meant that system-level learning is lost. Consciously designed mechanisms and processes are needed to facilitate this system-level learning.

Dixon (1994) describes such a system, proposing a four step organizational learning cycle. The first process or step is when individuals in the organization learn, either through interacting with the external environment or through experimenting to create new information internally. The second step is the integration of the new information into the organization. The third step is the collective interpretation of all of the available information related to an issue. The fourth step is taking action based on the interpretation. The action generates feedback, and that new information brings us back to step one to begin the cycle again.

On a deeper level building learning organizations can provide contexts in which fundamental shifts in how we think and interact can be experienced, changes that relate to bedrock assumptions and habits of Western culture as a whole (Senge, 1990a). “Organizations are fractal of society. By challenging assumptions in organizations we may provide an experience of alternative ways of thinking and acting that people can carry into other aspects of their lives” (Senge, 1990a, 10). Kruth (1998) makes a similar point: “it is at the process level where the opportunity lies.. like repeating patterns in fractal geometry, human processes and ways of being are evident at different levels, from the local to the global” 1998, 32).

The practices of organizational learning begin in a fundamentally different understanding of the relationship between self - or ego - and "other." They assume that there is no "self" independent of the cultural or group practices in which the person happens to grow up. Human identity is contingent and formed dialogically through interactions with others (Taylor, 1992). Organizational learning also assumes that conventional ways of thinking and speaking about social reality are inadequate for the complexity of present circumstances: "Implicitly, our conventional language relates to a world of linear relationships, simple, cause and effect, and separate circumstances, be they events, individuals, causes, or effects. But that is not the world we live in. Our world does not change in the same way our language does" (Michaels, 1995, 463).

Three facets of the mechanistic paradigm have become dysfunctional amidst the complexity we inhabit today: fragmentation, competition and reactivity (Senge, 1990). Combined, these habits of mind and behaviour separate us from the world we inhabit and force us into an analytical mode that assigns primary status to the parts and assumes that they exist independent from the whole. "Worse yet, the analytical model doesn't accept its contingent status. It adopts the face of necessity and claims universal validity. Thought creates the world and then says, 'I didn't do it'" (1990a, 13).

Many of the serious challenges facing communities are those that are "invisible" (Higgs, 1988). Our dominant worldview forged when threats to survival were immediate, sudden and dramatic, is ill equipped to cope with complex issues whose roots lie beneath surface appearances. The challenge is to see the pattern and the larger forces that lie beneath surface symptoms. Yet when we draw back to create maps of this larger context, the maps themselves become invisible to us. The more efficient a model of the world turns out to be, the more it recedes into the background and becomes transparent. the more it becomes "reality" itself:

The danger of success is that the thinking behind it can become entrenched and disregard the necessary context of its effectiveness. When a model loses its 'situation' and generalizes its validity to universal categories, sooner or later it stalls our capacity to deal freshly with the world and each other. The map is not the territory but we can only guide ourselves with maps. *As cartographers, however, we are far from neutral. Our perceptual apparatus, with its biological, personal, and cultural filters, is actively involved in the construction of these maps. So where is the territory underlying the maps? ... 'it is interpretation all the way down'. The issue is deeper than recognizing that the map is not the territory. We should consider the benefits of acting as though we had no access beyond*

our culture to such things as a territory. We only have provisional maps permanently open to revision and recreation (Senge, 1990a, 19, italics added).

This raises the inevitable charge of nihilism and relativism<sup>25</sup>. However, contexts that reveal their own precarious nature, or that invite revision and recreation, are inherently better than those that mask these qualities (Senge, 1990). The assumptions that direct our thinking and our acting must be continually challenged and revealed. Organizations provide the “containers” in which these assumptions can be continuously examined. They provide contexts in which members can continually learn and experiment, think systematically, question their assumptions and mental models, engage in meaningful dialogue, and create visions that energize action.

Many of the tools and practices of organizational learning operate on the assumption that the relationship between words and the world is not linear but circular; we talk about what we see, but we also see what we talk about. We invent structures and distinctions through traditions of observation and meaning shared by a community (Michaels, 1995). Among the disciplines or practices associated with organizational learning are *systems thinking*, *achieving personal mastery*, *surfacing and testing mental models*, *building shared visions*, and *team learning* (Senge 1990, 1995). Other tools include *identifying system archetypes* - recurring patterns of behavior and dysfunction - and *charting strategic dilemmas* - exposing recurring tensions or problematques in the organization’s business or field of operation (Michaels, 1995).

Michaels extends the boundaries of organizational learning to examine learning in larger human systems, specifically on matters of ecological management (1995). In so doing he explores the forces that inhibit or enable learning at many scales and in many different contexts. Contrary to widely held assumptions, most people under most circumstances are *not* eager to learn. Change in organizations therefore requires three things: confirmation of the inadequacy of the current situation, anxiety about the consequences of not acting, and the psychological security needed to attempt change (Schein, 1992).

Other requirements of whole system learning include:

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<sup>25</sup> Distinctions between absolutism and relativism, or between rationality and irrationality, are clumsy and unhelpful, remnants of obsolete Cartesian language (Senge, 1990).

- Acknowledging uncertainty and embracing errors;
- Minimizing the learner's sense of vulnerability;
- Using facilitators rather than chairpersons;
- Paying more attention to training in group process skills - acknowledging feelings, learning to listen, providing constructive rather than critical feedback;
- Providing short-term reinforcements and rewards;
- Reinforcing learning by becoming teachers, and
- Using disasters and crises as learning occasions (Michaels, 1995, 478-484).

The cognitive aspects of whole system learning have to do with understanding, using and evaluating information. Again contrary to widely held assumptions, more information makes learning and making decisions harder, not easier. Uncertainty increases when a systems perspective is applied because the demonstrable or suspected relationships proliferate. The destabilization of "truth" posed by postmodernism also means that we must learn to perceive "facts" differently, and learn to understand them from the "rationality" of other interests.

In the context of these complexities whole system learning requires a new set of images, stories and metaphors:

Coercion aside, we influence each other through the *stories* we tell. These stories can be in the form of technical reports rich in theory and data, that is metaphors that, in this culture, imply authority and objectivity. But the stories that apparently have the strongest influence are those rich in gut-level metaphors that elicit feelings of fear, hope, security, threat (ibid., 1995, 477, italics added).

Several "schools" of metaphors can assist learning in circumstances of uncertainty and complexity: those drawn from *biological growth and development* - with concepts like nurturing, maturing, growth, fulfillment, decline and death; those from *the realm of ecology* - with concepts of interdependence, diversity, resilience, competition and collaboration, carrying capacity, vulnerability, cyclicity and continuity; from *music* - not contradiction but counterpoint, dissonance, harmony, mixed voices and instruments, themes and variations. *Learning-related metaphors*

embrace all of these - discovery, exploration, adventure, questing, knowledge, insight, new experience, risk, vulnerability, error and accomplishment (ibid., 477)<sup>26</sup>.

There are two kinds of learning: one for a stable world and one for a world of uncertainty and change. Learning appropriate for the former world has to do with learning the right answers and learning how to adapt and settle into another mode of being and doing. Learning appropriate for our world has to do with learning what are the useful questions to ask and learning how to keep on learning since the questions keep changing (ibid., 484).

This entails that we learn to *accept* rather than resist difference. Dissension, disagreement, and the acknowledgement of difference or contradiction have been integral to planning only in the context of processes designed to eliminate them - for example, through conflict resolution, mediation, or “defeating” opponents. Accepting difference has implications for learning and change at a variety of scales:

A valid response may be to generate new knowledge on frameworks and organizational arrangements that thrive on and embody discord, contradiction, dissension and discontinuity. How can we develop processes and structures capable of living with incommensurable perspectives, which are so characteristic of the dynamics of global civilization? The ultimate question is ... how to interrelate inherently incompatible perspectives without producing yet another ‘frozen’ perspective to compete with them in a process which again proves unable to transcend itself. Paradoxically, embodiment of discord may be the foundation from which all global change proceeds and succeeds (Cooperrider, 1991, 784).

Continuous learning and engagement of this kind requires local organizations capable of supporting sustained reflection and action. Emerging trends in museums suggest that they have important potential roles to play. They can be one part of a new institutional infrastructure needed to support emerging cultural planning approaches.

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<sup>26</sup> “Three meta-stories underlie these schools of metaphors, meta-stories “that can be told with the same basic ‘plot’: the story of *ecological processes*, that of *formal systems theory*, and that of the *spiritual oneness* of all. It is the myth of connectedness, of interdependence, of mutuality. Persons and groups inclined toward one of these stories could, through the use of appropriate metaphors, come to understand the other stories and thereby learn, perhaps, how to construct a shared perspective appropriate for new ways of ecological management” (1995, 478).

## **2.4 Museums: Changing Purposes, Changing Practices**

### **2.4.1 Themes in Canadian Museums**

Thus far the literature review has explored the intersection of two fields: local cultural development, and planning and community development. Traditional theory and practice in both is challenged by a series of factors ranging from radically changed epistemological assumptions, shifting demographic and political realities, and pragmatic matters of resource constraints. The literature review has pointed to a convergence of interest between these two fields. Each has insights and strengths that can contribute to renewal in the other. The emerging cultural planning approach is the place where this synergy can be explored.

For this potential to be realized specific institutional settings are needed in which cultural planning can be practiced and championed. Local museums are one such institution.

#### **National Policy**

As in most facets of life in Canada in the postwar period, museum development was dominated by Ottawa and by national policies. The museum field in Canada is composed of a relatively small number of major establishments with international reputations<sup>27</sup>, and a much larger number of smaller community museums, specialized museums and public art galleries. It is estimated there are 2400 such institutions in Canada, and over 700 museums in Ontario (Teather, 1999).

The pre-war period, to the extent that a policy direction can be discerned, was decentralist in spirit (Grant, 1991). A 1932 study of the state of museums in Canada, which was tellingly funded by the Carnegie Corporation and completed by two British experts, placed responsibility for the provision of financial support for museums on provincial and municipal governments (Miers and Markham, 1932). A centralist approach was not viewed as feasible due to Canada's vast geographic distances and regional cultural differences. Maintaining the national museums was viewed as the appropriate focus of federal government efforts. This vision of museum development was reversed in the post-

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<sup>27</sup> Such as the National Gallery of Canada, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Ontario Science Centre, the Art Gallery of Ontario, etc.

war period with the expansion of the role of the federal government; the Massey-Levesque Commission gave voice to these more centralist assumptions. The number of museums continued to expand across Canada through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.<sup>28</sup>

In 1972, Gerard Pelletier, then Secretary of State and the minister responsible for culture in the Trudeau government announced the National Museum Policy. The policy recognized government as the “contemporary patron of the arts,” a role earlier played by the church or by wealthy patrons (Grant, 1991). Pelletier was strongly influenced by European cultural policy at that time, especially the views of French Minister of Culture Andre Malraux. The National Museum Policy was built on the principles of *democratization* - increased access “to the products of cultural activity for all taxpayers, not only a select group,” and *decentralization* - “an active battle against vast distances in order to make our cultural symbols available to all Canadians (1991, 12)”.

The limits of the concept of the democratization of culture have already been described. There was, however, another revealing side to the policy, one that was not immediately evident. Pelletier indicated that a prime motivation was to “make the federal presence felt throughout Canada.” Consultation with the provinces was not on his immediate agenda, for, as he later commented, “we never had a ... federal-provincial conference because the pretension of many provinces was that we had no role to play” (cited in Grant, 1991, 13). What evolved, paradoxically, was a centralized program of decentralization. The democratizing *intentions* may have been admirable but, as in most facets of post-war public policy, it was the federal government that defined and drove the agenda.

The heady promise of the National Museum Policy was short-lived. The policy was a product of the first Trudeau government that had an electoral majority, imaginative and visionary ministers like Pelletier, and money to spend. The policy’s long-term impact was undermined by an economic downturn by the mid-1970s, the reduction of the government to minority status, and a dawning realization of the complexity and difficulty of implementing national cultural programs without the cooperation of the provinces. Federal museum policy ebbed and flowed over the next two decades as many of the tensions and paradoxes of the 1972 policy were played out. The federal government maintained an important, though limited role in local museum development through a number of

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<sup>28</sup> Of the over 2000 museums and related institutions in Canada, Teather (1999) estimates that some 80-85% were established since 1945.

important national programs.<sup>29</sup> Leadership and momentum shifted to provincial and local levels of government.

### **Community Museums in Ontario**

The case study that is the focus of this dissertation is a small community museum in Ontario. It is therefore useful to understand this more specific context of museum development in Canada. The emergence of community museums in Ontario in the decades after the Second World War was a product of profoundly anti-modernist sentiment, a defense against the onrush of immigration, urbanization, and the disappearance of local institutions and streetscapes (Tivy, 1993). Community museums grew out of a fear of the loss of local character and nostalgia for an idealized past and the values associated with that past. Descendants of long-standing families played leadership roles; the preservation of their personal histories was indistinguishable from efforts to preserve the most significant facets of the community's history.

Community museums in Ontario followed a similar pattern to museum development across Canada in the post-war period. Growth and expansion were rapid in the 1960s and 1970s, stimulated by increased government spending, first at the federal and subsequently at the provincial level. This pace gave way to more controlled growth in the 1980s (Baeker, May, Tivy, 1992). Evidence of the shift from federal to provincial leadership can be seen in the 1981 passage of the Community Museum Policy for Ontario (Government of Ontario, 1982), a milestone in museum development in Canada. The policy emphasized museum "quality" as the principal criterion for funding. Implementation of the policy focused on a series of minimum operational standards that were phased in over time and became a pre-condition of annual provincial operating grants. Compliance with the standards held the added "carrot" of making museums eligible for project funding for exhibition development, facilities improvement, environmental controls for collections, computerized collections cataloguing, and other operational needs (1992).

Most museum directors and curators viewed the standards in a positive light. Many used them as levers to extract funding for facilities and program improvement from museum boards and

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<sup>29</sup> Specifically: the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN), a national computerized collections register; the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI), a research and treatment centre for the conservation of museum collections; the Museums Assistance Programmes (MAP), a modest funding program that continued to play a leadership role in supporting museum development.



municipal councils. Even after implementing the standards many community museums in Ontario still operate with minimum levels of human and financial resources. As budgets grew – in many cases modestly – provincial-operating support remained static. The result was that operating grants from the province came to represent a smaller and smaller percentage of total operating budgets.<sup>30</sup> As provincial contributions to budgets declined, so did provincial policy leverage. Municipal governments are currently by far the largest single source of financial support to community museums (Doherty, 1996).

The Community Museums Policy for Ontario acted to reinforce the already conservative orientation of community museums. The policy had a predominantly “Protestant” tenor that focused attention on the practical aspects of managing and interpreting the physical evidence of the past (Tivy, 1994). It encouraged more professional standards of operation, but it did little to encourage museums to critically examine their collecting or interpretive assumptions. “Common sense and present circumstances” took precedence over more challenging questions related to the changing role of community museums in local communities. The policy had its critics. Kurylo (1984) believed the policy lacked any overriding vision about the role and importance of museums in local communities. In the absence of such an animating set of purposes, the policy, and the accompanying museum standards, were merely “rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic”.

The focus on higher operating standards as the bedrock policy intention is inseparable from the process of professionalization in the field. In 1979, few community museums or public art galleries had staff with professional training or formal qualifications in museum work. By 1990, the corps of professionally trained workers was expanding, due in part to the Ontario Museum Association’s Certificate in Basic Museum Studies, which addressed the fundamentals of museum operations, along with post-secondary courses and programs in museum studies, arts administration, or heritage conservation. A shift began away from a workforce that had previously been locally recruited and trained on-the-job (Baeker, May, Tivy, 1993).

Throughout the 1980s, local museums searched for the more meaningful role in their communities called for by Kurylo. Most pursued this by expanding public service through enhanced school programs, and by establishing more dynamic and interactive exhibitions. Some began to produce exhibits and programs in cooperation with ethno-cultural groups to tell previously unacknowledged

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<sup>30</sup> By the mid 1990s on average, less than 15% of museum budgets (Doherty, 1995).

facets of the community's history (Tivy, 1993).

Three paradigms characterize collecting and interpretive practices in community museums in Ontario.

1. *Rescuing the Past* (The Age of Collecting: 19<sup>th</sup> Century - 1972): This period was characterized by antiquarian approaches to collecting, to object-meaning and object-centred display. The focus was on "uniqueness," nostalgia, and connoisseurship. Many museums were managed by historical societies with minimal funding. After 1950, gradual increases in government funding began, bringing with them the beginning of professionalization in local museums. *Main interpretive theme: the myth of the pioneer.*
2. *Controlling the Past* (Age of Description/Management: 1973-1985): This period was characterized by exhibits that made greater use of texts and story-lines or vignettes to accompany collections, a move away from a belief that collections could "speak-for-themselves." The focus was on the professionalization of museum operations – environmental controls, computerized inventories and improved classification of collections, and others. Increased government funding drove a process of professionalization, accreditation and regulation. More museums moved from being managed by historical societies to being managed by municipalities. *Main interpretive theme: professionalization and technological progress.*
3. *Revising the Past* (Age of Analysis: 1985- present): During this period museums began to be influenced by the "new" social history, by broadening definitions of heritage, and by postmodern critiques of museum collections and narratives. There was greater concern about presenting historical narratives in a larger social and cultural context. Concerns emerged about the representativeness of collections. Some deaccessioning of collections<sup>31</sup> occurred, as did growth in attention to contemporary collecting. There was an increased focus on networking and collaboration. *Main interpretive theme: pluralism, deconstruction and networks* (Tivy, 1993).

The conservatism and sheer weight of tradition and inertia in local museums meant that traditional collecting and interpretive practices were hard to throw off. There were also more pragmatic

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<sup>31</sup> This is the process by which museums systematically remove objects from the collection. Because collections are donated to be held in the public trust, this process is subject to careful professional and ethical scrutiny.

reasons. Collections in most local museums were pre-industrial and focused on material culture - the proverbial butter churn and family rocker. These objects were significantly easier to collect and to present or interpret than intangible forms of heritage such as oral histories, local songs and dialect, or community customs. As the 1970s and 1980s progressed more attention was directed to shaping storylines in exhibitions, but themes still tended to focus on the early settlement period. They “told of local success and ingenuity, relying on extracted nostalgic, filiopietistic, and civic sentiments from the objects collected and displayed ... museums were places for amusement and escape, they validated culture, they educated, they served to maintain stability” (Tivy, 1993, 4).

By the mid- to late-1980s social historians and museologists began to challenge and deconstruct the pioneer myth, and to expose the complexity and the anxieties of the local past - histories that did not always have happy endings. Alcohol and temperance, gender roles and women’s suffrage, workers and unions, disease, infant mortality, and other themes began to be treated in exhibitions and public programs (Tivy, 1994). These exhibitions increasingly relied more on oral and documentary sources rather than on material collections. However, exhibits aimed at subverting the pioneer myth were at best moderately popular with museum visitors, whose motivation was often tied to their own desire for escape.

However, the changing social and cultural context for community museums was impossible to shut out:

As the 1990s progressed some museums began to see that their influence no longer resided primarily in the storage areas or exhibit halls but rather in the potential to become outward seeking, proactive centres for community cultural and heritage development. With smaller and more flexible organizational structures and shorter institutional histories, community museums were potentially the site of dynamic experiments in new museum models and purposes (Baeker, May, Tivy, 1992, 123).

## 2.4.2 Changing Purposes: Museums for Whom?

### The New Museology

The broad museum critique known as “new museology” turns museum purposes outward toward the service of society and its development. It also challenges core presumptions: What do collections represent? What messages do they construct, and for whom? Museums are acknowledged to be inherently political. Traditional collections and interpretive practices claimed neutrality but in fact reflected the cultural interests and traditions of a small segment of the Canadian population (Wilhelm, 1998).

A good deal of the early new museological critique emerged from academics with an interest in museums but who studied them from external perspectives - anthropology, sociology, cultural studies. Many practitioners remained - and continue to remain - sceptical about the relevance of this analysis to their day-to-day responsibilities; most found the critique too foreign and jargon-laden to make much sense in the context of their working lives. A valuable point of entry to the new theorizing is provided by examining a series of recurring questions or “problematiques” that can be found in the museum literature, and in debates about organizational and professional practice, for a century or more:

- *What is a museum?* debates about the essence of the institution and its purposes;
- *Are museums about objects or ideas?* debates about whether museums are defined fundamentally by the collections they hold or by the knowledge represented in and accessible through these collections;
- *Who owns the museum?* questions of cultural democracy and about whose history and culture the museum should represent; and
- *Customer service or public service?* the economics of museums and the relationship between market forces and public interests (Teather, 1992).

A second means of understanding the new museology, and for connecting these ideas to broader cultural critiques, is Sherman and Rogoff’s (1994) framing of four broad concepts that together encompass museums’ most important relationships. The first is the notion of *objects and systems for naming and classifying these collections*. The second is the *relationship between these objects*

*and classification systems and an externally constructed discursive field, such as the “nation,” the “community,” or the larger “culture” which the objects are said to signify or symbolize. By representing these larger communities of people or of values, the museum participates in the construction of these concepts, and the historical shifts they undergo. The museum does this in the name of the third concept, that of the public or audience it claims to serve, and in terms of the public domain in which it claims to operate. How the audience or public receives the displays and meanings that are offered in turn constitutes a fourth aspect of museum discourse and practice (1994, xi).*

## **A Deepening Critique**

It is useful to differentiate among several stages through which the new museology has evolved. Banner (1994) draws parallels between feminist scholarship and museum critiques over twenty years:

[In feminist scholarship the] first phase involved an emphasis on documenting both discrimination and liberation. The second phase was one of identifying separate female traditions and cultures. The third stage, which has emerged in the last several years, has been both more integrative and oppositional. as feminist scholars have moved to question the theoretical bases of all the disciplines and to include men much more directly as a subject of study under the rubric of ‘gender’ (1994, 40).

If these phases are mapped onto an evolving museum critique, the first phase might be dated to the late 1960s and early 1970s, the period of “democratization and decentralization” in the National Museum Policy. During this period, museums, like other “helping” liberal institutions, were acknowledged to represent a set of specific norms and interests in the society. Difference was recognized but the critique remained within a liberal scheme of “empowering minority voices” by the centre. The context was still an appeal to the social utility of “tolerating” difference and “sustaining social cohesion”. Wolfe (1992), in a critique of Taylor (1992), maintains that the latter continues to argue for diversity and pluralism from a liberal premise of social utility and cultural enrichment, rather *from the fact* of society’s diversity.

The second phase of evolution, a continuation of the first, focused on how the unique cultural traditions of previously unrepresented groups could be recorded and analyzed. Different standards

and interpretive schemes for judging and classifying collections were advocated, schemes that challenged traditional distinctions: for example, distinctions between Western European “high art” traditions and less valued “craft” or “folk” traditions. In ethnographic museums, Western technological society and culture - the “we” - was challenged as the point of reference for evaluating non-white, non-Western cultures - “the other”, “they” (Sullivan, 1994). But the perspective remained essentially revisionist, still based on assumptions regarding coherent historical narratives that could be intuited from collections and the meaning connected to them (Banner, 1994).

In feminist scholarship, the two early periods of revisionist work gave way to a third stage that challenged the entire theoretical and methodological base of all disciplines of study, and proposed entirely new systems of understanding. In museums the third phase is characterized by an end to the notion of coherent communities and identities represented in material evidence, a perspective that challenges all conventionally understood notions of cultural authority and authenticity (Banner, 1994). Here, all texts are subject to intense and critical scrutiny, scrutiny that assumes a dense, complex social context and interpretive frame. Questions are raised regarding the authority of any single interpretation of cultural value; all views are contingent, contextual, and subjective. A vertical view of ascending historical change is replaced by a more horizontal, interconnected, interdependent and pluralist cultural system (Sullivan, 1994).

Here multiple ways of knowing, explaining and being in the world are the expected and accepted norm. These perspectives reject the premise that museums can ever be a place of one-way communication in which facts, values and skills possessed by the privileged profession inside the institution can lay claim to be superior to the facts, values and skills possessed by those outside it. They point to an understanding of museum purposes and functions that are fundamentally *dialogue-based*. Here is the museum equivalent of transactive planning in complex cultural systems of diverse norms and beliefs.

Sullivan (1995) examines the role of museums in interpreting diversity. He begins by defining museums as “ritual places in which society makes visible what they value”. In interpreting diversity museums should strive to help visitors come to see that “they too are culture bearers, and, in that, more alike than different from the ‘Other’ they meet in the museum’s exhibits (Sullivan, 1995, 12). Visitors should leave sensing that the exotic is merely the unfamiliar, that “they, too, have cultural rituals, heritage, fetishes, art traditions, technology” (1995, 6). Exhibitions must not aim to be

comprehensive or definitive but rather must be case studies and thematic. Case studies focus on a range of cultural adaptations to diverse environmental settings, including contemporary western societies. Thematic case studies “could focus on diverse cultural traditions” solutions to common human concerns.” All of this occurs in the context of promoting understanding of the interdependence and interconnectedness of cultural and biological diversity: “the focus should be consistently ecological, including both the pragmatic relationship to the environment - economic, technological, as well as, deeper ecological relationships - spiritual, aesthetic, mythic, psychic, ideological”(1995, 10).

At this point in the museum critique we face a dilemma, one which Banner acknowledges in the context of feminist scholarship:

... The problem with [this] position is that any notion of historical agency - of male complicity in women's oppression, or of the notion of women's opposition itself - is nearly lost. ... Once the concept of patriarchy is lost, I fear for the future of women's studies, because within language lies an ultimate power - the power of naming and identifying. If we are persuaded to modify our terms to achieve greater complexity and variety, we will lose the original reformist thrust of our discourse. It is no accident that, in a time of conservative reaction to the feminist movement, some of our central terms such as 'patriarchy' and 'feminism' are under attack (Banner, 1994, 44).

In relinquishing cultural authority, must the museum also relinquish the ability to “name” and challenge dominant power relations and systemic structures of discrimination? Sullivan (1995) believes not. He argues that museums must look for ways of working that honour both the authority and point of view of the cultural participant/visitor, and the authority of the professional cultural interpreter, documenter or scholar. Institutions must engage visitors in this dilemma, and help them “to understand why these two distinct ways of knowing can sometimes be in conflict and yet both be essentially correct” (1995, 6). Transparency regarding these issues is central to the challenge of thinking through how museums of the 21<sup>st</sup> century can approach the interpretation of human diversity.

Museums must act as “moral educators [who] speak with confidence and competence on such ethical issues as gender and race equity” (Sullivan, 1994, 100).

As educational institutions [they] are necessarily agents of change, not only changing the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of our individual visitors, but also affecting the moral ecology of the communities that [they] serve. To the extent that one race or gender dominates museums' governance, policies, practices, and collections museums are ... racist and sexist institutions. ... It is not that we do not care but that we lack systematic ways to assess and to evaluate our flaws in order to direct cumulative change in our activities (ibid., 101).

Systemic bias in museum operations can take six forms, each of which requires explicit criteria to assess its presence and degree:

1. *Invisibility*: the omission of certain groups;
2. *Stereotyping*: assigning traditional and rigid roles or attributes to a group;
3. *Imbalance selectivity*: perpetuating bias by presenting only one interpretation;
4. *Unreality*: avoiding controversial issues and/or not qualifying historically biased situation based on contemporary values;
5. *Fragmentation isolation*: separating issues related to minorities from the main body of text/exhibits/instructional materials; and
6. *Linguistic bias*: using discriminatory language - e.g. masculine terms and pronouns (ibid., 102).

Galla (1993) also argues that museums must embrace more explicit and normative theorizing. For him this is what distinguishes post-colonial museum critiques from less definitive and explicit postmodern critiques. Explicit critiques must be linked to performance measures or indicators for assessing institutional practice. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) Policy Statement on Museums and Cultural Diversity (1998) establishes priorities for museums in reassessing their roles in the context of broad principles and commitments to cultural diversity. "The structure of the document reflects these two levels of goals, both in specific areas of museum operation and in the broad impact of the museum on its local culture(s). The statement links goals with a set of actions and performance indicators with which to assess ... change" (Wilhelm, 1998, 11).



### 2.4.3 From Function-Driven to Mission-Driven Organizations

Many have commented on the huge gap between the analytical frameworks and assumptions of new museology and professional and operational realities in museums (Hauenschild, 1988; Galla, 1993). Galla (1993) argues that museums have difficulty *practicing* cultural democracy: “we are still a long way from mainstreaming the ideas in professional practice and training” (1993, 7). In part this gap between new purposes and professional practices has been deliberate. One of the failings of the “old museology” was its preoccupation with museum functions and methods (Weil, 1988). The shift from *functional* to purpose- or *mission-driven* organizations constitutes a major rethinking of who and what museums are.

Two decades ago ICOM revised its definition of a museum to reflect this shift. The old definition placed the focus on museum functions: “a museum exists to collect, preserve, exhibit...”. The revised definition: “a museum is a non-profitmaking, permanent institution *in the service of society and its development* that collects, preserves...” (quoted in Weil, 1988, 35, italics added). The Canadian-based International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM) proposes a still broader view: “Many museums collect, conserve, exhibit, but they remain separate from the present economic, social and cultural context, avoiding the mission of participating in the development of the societies they serve” (1988, 36).

At the centre of any evaluation of organizational performance must be a clear understanding of organizational purpose (Weil, 1994). Weil proposes four criteria as the basis of assessing “quality” of museum operations:

1. *Purposiveness*: having a clear sense of what purposes external to themselves museums are seeking to accomplish;
2. *Capability*: commanding the means required to accomplish those purposes;
3. *Effectiveness*: being demonstrably able to accomplish those purposes; and,
4. *Efficiency*: accomplishing those purposes in a maximally economic way.

The sequence is deliberate. Competence must be demonstrated in one before moving on to the next. Weil proposes a weighting system to signal relative significance: 35 points for purposiveness, 30 points for capability, 25 points for effectiveness, and 10 points for efficiency.

Remedies for weaknesses in fulfilling the first and second criteria require more organizational adjustment than do those in the third or fourth.

Managing mission-driven organizations means adopting a *whole system* perspective. Evaluation and assessment of performance becomes ongoing and integrated with the planning and management cycles, cycles that involve perspectives drawn from outside as well as inside the organization (Baeker, 1998). Continuous change and development are natural features in any organization. However, the retention of, and growth in, organizational identity balances the acceptance of continuous change in mission-based organizations. One feature of organizational health is internal recognition of where in its life cycle the organization is. It follows from this perspective that organizational health cannot be described without paying attention to how organizations manage change over time. Organizational health is a journey, not a destination; meaningful assessment occurs over time rather than as isolated snapshots (ibid., 1998).

These perspectives represent a wholesale change from an ethos of reactive administration, to more dynamic and proactive management directed toward larger public interests. New management practice encourages organizations that are more open, democratic, and self-critical; ones that encourage risk-taking, learning and continuous evaluation (Jackson, 1992). Janes (1995) calls for management frameworks for museums that emphasize “more trust and less control, more diversity and less uniformity, more differentiation and less systemization” (ibid., 43). Here organizational structures are more fluid and adaptable to enhance their ability to respond to instability and change.

Koke (1995) summarizes much of the new museum management theory by contrasting a *hierarchical approach* - focusing on the internal organization and based on an expectation of a stable environment, and a *collaborative approach* - emphasizing the organization’s relationship to a dynamic external environment (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Internally and Externally Oriented Management Systems**

Adapted from Lynch (1993)

	<b>Internal Corporation Stable Environments</b>	<b>External Corporation Dynamic Environments</b>
<b>Dimensions of Management Structure</b>	<b>Hierarchical Approach</b>	<b>Collaborative Approach</b>
<b>Authority:</b>		
Guidelines	Policies, procedures, rules	Standards of behavior, values driven
Leader role	Guides work unit	Builds mutual trust, support and cohesion
Influence	From leader to group	From work unit to its members
Direction	Leader directs work unit	Work unit directs its members
<b>Decision making:</b>		
Interpreted as	Precise	Guidelines for work
Binds individual	To leader's decision	To work unit's decision
Power for implementation	Leader or organization	Work unit and its cohesion
Enforced by pressure	From leader and organization	Within work unit
<b>Communication:</b>		
Listening	To leader's ideas	To work unit's ideas
Sensitivity	Toward leader	Among work unit members
Directionality	Downward by instruction/advice	Within work unit
<b>Roles are:</b>	Fixed or constant	Flexible, situational
<b>Planning and Evaluation:</b>	Leaders	Work unit

Building stronger external relations and more meaningful community partnerships requires museums to recognize two things (Koke, 1995). First, collaborative approaches and structures must represent more than new language for old processes and assumptions; they must be built on deeper shifts in assumptions about how knowledge is created and applied in a pluralist and postmodern world. Second, collaboration, like charity, must begin at home; museums cannot build new mechanisms for community partnerships while retaining antiquated internal organizational structure and decision-making processes.

Lavine (1992) urges that museums not underestimate the difficulty of reform, for virtually every aspect of museum work and organizational structure will need to be reconsidered - including the allocation of resources. If institutions are to take on new roles and responsibilities, a shift of resources and priorities will be required. Museums, like all organizations, have been better at taking on new responsibilities than retiring old ones. Traditional collections-driven institutions, especially ones with a large number of artifacts to care for, have evolved structures to support those needs. If active engagement with communities is to become central to an institution's work, it will not happen by adding these activities at the margins, but by fundamentally reorganizing all areas of the museum.

## **3.0 A Framework for Cultural Planning in Canada**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The literature review suggests that a convergence of interest has emerged among three fields: local cultural development, planning and community development, and museums. As is the case with many “systems” at the end of the century, each of these fields is engaged in a process of self-examination and renewal.

Postmodernism shatters illusion of unitary public interests and undermines traditional sources of moral and professional authority. All three fields are also being forced to confront the reduced power of the post-war welfare state on which they had grown dependent. Each is searching for a new balance of public-, private-, and Third-sector responsibilities, and more effective methods and strategies to support community-based problem solving and decision-making in communities.

The balance of the dissertation will focus on organizational change strategies needed in local museums if they are to take on increased responsibility in cultural planning.

Before turning to these issues this chapter synthesizes insights from the literature review into a preliminary set of assumptions or points of reference for the emerging cultural planning approach in Canada. It does this on three levels (Beaulieu, 1994):

- *Macro level* - addresses overarching theoretical assumptions and political commitments;
- *Meso level* - addressing questions of governance and capacity building; and,
- *Micro level* - examples of strategically important activities or initiatives.

## 3.2 Macro Level - Theoretical Assumptions and Political Commitments

### a) Mapping Concepts, Boundaries and Dimensions of Cultural Planning

Core concepts in cultural planning - culture, identity, and diversity - are inherently “slippery” and elusive. Given this reality, a first priority in any planning process must be for specific actors or stakeholders, in specific jurisdictions, at a specific moment in time, to clarify for themselves how they will define these terms.

### Cultural Planning

Many different definitions and understandings of cultural planning have been found to exist in other jurisdictions. A core characteristic shared by all is the concern with *how the identification, monitoring and utilization of cultural resources contribute to the integrated development of place*. It is the focus *on place* that distinguishes cultural planning from the sectoral approaches favoured by cultural policy.

All definitions of cultural planning include recognition of the need for plans to address the full spectrum of economic, cultural, social, educational, environmental, political and symbolic dimensions of cities and civic life. All approaches also emphasize planning activity that cuts across the divides between the public-, private- and voluntary sectors, different institutional concerns, types of knowledge and professional disciplines. The literature has identified many barriers to successful implementation of cultural planning approaches. Notwithstanding these difficulties Bianchini's (1997) framing of the *intent* of cultural planning approaches remains useful: “(using the approach) cultural planners and policy makers, artists and/or cultural managers become ‘the gatekeepers’ between the sphere of cultural production - the world of ideas and of production of meaning - and any area of policy-making” (1997, 85).

In embracing a cultural planning approach we must face what has been deemed the “utilitarian paradox” in cultural policy and planning (Council of Europe, 1996). Cultural planning invites communities to embrace a much wider definition of cultural resources and activities, and to view these resources as essential to many dimensions of community development. The paradox is that

the more this perspective is embraced the more it advances a utilitarian or instrumental view of culture, a perspective that is deeply at odds with liberal humanist assumptions about the inherent importance and self-justifying value of cultural activity and expression. The literature suggests that these assumptions continue to maintain a powerful hold.

### **The “Object” of Cultural Planning: Culture versus Cultural Resources**

Williams (1976) describes “culture” as one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. The World Commission on Culture and Development came to the following conclusion: “Our biggest problem in cultural policy is not ... lack of resources, lack of will, lack of coordination or even lack of policy coordination to date. It is rather, a misconstrual or only partial formulation and recognition of the policy object itself: culture” (UNESCO, 1995). And more concretely: “... cultural policy as a field lacks conceptual clarity; it has neither a unified theoretical framework, nor enough indicators, based on data gathered on an inter-disciplinary, historical and comparative basis. Hence new knowledge is a precondition for progress in policy-making. No progress will be made on the latter without progress on the former” (UNESCO, 1998).

One useful distinction is that between culture defined in broad anthropological or ethnographic (“E-culture”) terms as the unique ways of life of a community or social group, and the more limited “arts and humanities” (“H-culture”) definition relating to specific forms of creative expression (Petersen, 1991). The World Commission on Culture and Development distinguishes two domains in cultural policy related to this distinction: first, culture as a system of meaning - *the signified*, and second, culture as the signifier - those symbols and symbolic processes from which meaning is derived (UNESCO, 1995).

Grossberg (1993) offers a useful and encompassing definition that emphasizes culture as a signifying system through which social order is communicated, reproduced and experienced. Distinguishing the two domains of culture is not to suggest that a binary relationship exists between *the signifier* - the text, painting, image, tradition, and *the signified* - meaning, culture, identity. It is certainly not to reify cultural symbols as having a self-proclaimed aura of uniqueness about them. The postmodern cultural critique rejects both these assumptions. Rather, it is to claim that these symbols, processes, actions, and products are referent to *something* else - that a tension exists between the symbol and a larger context of some kind.

Cultural planning must find a mid-ground between defining “culture” too broadly - as in “ways of life”, or too narrowly - “the arts”. A middle ground suggests that the substantive focus of cultural planning be with those symbols and symbolic processes - cultural resources - through which we communicate and reproduce larger social realities. While an ultimate *end* of cultural planning may relate to shared systems of meaning, the only means available to us to affect that development is through interaction with these symbols and symbolic processes. Matarasso and Landry (1998) speak of the value of “marking the edges” of cultural policy or planning.

One of the first tasks in any cultural planning process must therefore be to define the scope and range of cultural resources and activities that will be addressed by the plan. Bianchini and Santacatterina (1997) mapping of cultural resources remains a useful point of reference: i.e.,

- the arts, media and heritage;
- the cultures of youth, ethnic minorities, and other communities of interest;
- local traditions, including archaeology, local dialects and rituals;
- local and external perceptions of a place, as expressed in jokes, songs, literature, myths, tourist guides, media coverage and conventional wisdom;
- topography, and the qualities of the natural and built environment, including public spaces;
- the diversity and quality of leisure, cultural, drinking, eating and entertainment facilities;
- the repertoire of local products and skills in the crafts, manufacturing and services.

## **b) Cultural Rights and Political Interests**

The broad liberal consensus regarding the value of the arts and culture established in most Western democracies in the postwar period is eroding (Matarasso and Landry, 1998). As past claims of neutrality and universality are challenged, and as more specific and particularistic views of the interests served by arts and cultural production gain ground, a broader debate regarding the purpose and role of the arts and culture must be engaged. Several analysts have provided useful points of reference for this debate.

Delgado (1998) defines cultural policy succinctly as “the means by which we achieve social goals through arts and cultural activity”. Bennett (1998) elaborating on this same point, defining cultural policy and cultural policy studies as “the many and diverse ways in which government seeks to



influence cultural activity - a historically distinctive set of concerns and relationships through which cultural resources are managed in ways that are calculated to regulate ways of life and the relationship between them with a view to, in so doing, *acting on the social* in a particular manner” (1998, 2. italics added). And more specifically:

By ‘acting on the social’ I do not mean ‘society’ ... the concept of the social that is at issue is that constituted by the relations between, on the one hand, a hermetically constructed realm of national conducts and identities as defined by national politics and the notions of citizenship and sovereignty which accompany them. and, on the other, the increasing seepage of transnational ways of mapping social relationships - as diasporic communities, for example - into these national constructions of the social (1998, 6).

Cultural planning must acknowledge the normative nature of decision-making. There are two senses in which decisions are normative:

This is not merely to say that normative criteria will inevitably intervene in the difficult choices that have to be made in allocating resources between competing ends. Cultural policies are also normative in the more thoroughgoing sense that support for the development of particular cultures or ways of life can never be entirely even-handed to the extent that it also involves a struggle against other cultures or forms of life. ... The terms ‘culture’ and ‘development,’ it needs to be recalled, were first put together in the context of Western programs of cultural assimilation which aspired to manage some ways of life out of existence. These are not, then, and cannot be neutral terms: whenever the question of culture is in play and whenever it is connected to policy, compellingly vital issues concerning how the relationships between different human ways of living will be managed are always at stake (Bennett, 1998, 9).

Theorizing a set of public interests served by cultural planning should begin from an assumption of culture as a fundamental human right - cultural rights. Cultural rights can in turn be seen as being rooted in two concepts: the *right to social justice* and the *right to cultural identity* (Bowen, 1997). Theorizing both these elements of cultural rights must move beyond traditional liberal formulations of these concepts.

Liberal formulations of justice have been limited by a focus on material goods and social position,

one that places an emphasis on having over doing (Young, 1990). Power and advantage here are understood as a *substance or commodity*, a perspective that ignores more fluid and dynamic forms of oppression; inequities in decision-making systems, in the division of labour, and in culture production. Where social group differences exist to privilege some groups over others, social justice requires that these differences be explicitly acknowledged and redressed. Cultural imperialism is a specific and powerful form of oppression. Young points to the political significance of efforts by disadvantaged groups to use cultural production as a means of defining a positive identity for themselves in opposition to the dominant culture (1990).

Fraser (1995) extends this analysis, examining the relationship between *redistributive justice* and the *struggle for recognition*. Redistributive justice has been the dominant focus of twentieth-century struggles for social justice. It focuses on socio-economic inequities, disparities in basic physical and material needs - income, property, access to paid work, education, health care and leisure time, and more starkly in rates of morbidity and life expectancy. This materialist view of inequity has in recent years broadened to encompass the struggle for recognition - "the paradigmatic form of political conflict in the late twentieth century" (1995, 68). The struggle is rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. Examples include:

- *Cultural domination*: being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own;
- *Non-recognition*: being rendered invisible via the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretive practices of one's culture; and
- *Disrespect*: being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions (1995, 71).

The remedy for cultural injustices is not the redistribution of material advantage, but some form of cultural or symbolic change.

Cultural justice does not require a choice between the two formulations of justice - both are essential - but rather managing tensions between them, and establishing strategies for overcoming these conflicts. Fraser terms these tensions the "redistributive-recognition" dilemma. This is rooted in the seemingly contradictory goals of abolishing difference and rendering people more equal in the case of redistributive justice and promoting group difference in the justice of recognition. Many groups in the society are subject to both forms of injustice and require assistance in responding to

both; this entails both claiming and denying their specificity. Gender and race are cited as examples of “bivalent collectives” in which the two axes of injustice intersect and reinforce each other.

Fraser distinguishes between strategies of *affirmation* and *transformation*. Affirmative remedies for injustice are remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements, *without* disturbing the underlying framework that generates them. Transformative remedies are those aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework. The essence of the contrast is end-state outcomes versus the processes that produce them. The distinction is *not* gradual versus apocalyptic change (1995, 82). Figure 4 illustrates the distinction.

**Figure 4: Redistributive-Recognition Dilemmas**

	Affirmation	Transformation
Redistribution	<p><i>the liberal welfare state:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• surface reallocation of existing goods to existing groups; supports group differentiation; can generate misrecognition.</li> </ul>	<p><i>socialism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deep restructuring of relations of production: blurs group differentiation; can help remedy some forms of misrecognition.</li> </ul>
Recognition	<p><i>mainstream multiculturalism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• surface reallocations of response to existing identities of existing groups; supports group recognition.</li> </ul>	<p><i>deconstruction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deep restructuring of relations of recognition: blurs group differentiation.</li> </ul>

The differences between gay identity politics and “Queer theory” illustrate the distinction between mainstream multiculturalism and deconstruction. Affirmative remedies for homophobia and heterosexism are characteristic of the former - for example, granting same sex partners the same rights and freedoms as heterosexual couples. Queer theory, by contrast, seeks to deconstruct the homo-hetero dichotomy. The transformative aim of the latter is not to solidify gay identity, but instead to deconstruct the homo-hetero dichotomy so as to destabilize all fixed sexual identities. Fraser concludes that ultimately the combination of socialism and deconstruction provides the only means of escaping the “vicious cycle of mutually reinforcing cultural and economic subordination. Our best efforts to redress these inequities via the combination of the liberal welfare state plus mainstream multiculturalism are generating perverse effects [like backlashes against both]. Only

by looking to alternative conceptions of redistribution and recognition can we meet the requirements of justice for all” (1995, 93).

But caution is needed before moving too quickly to deconstruct existing identities. Groups have not had equal access to recognition: they do not engage in cultural or political processes from equal positions of strength:

[Thus the notion] that cultural exchange, indeed culture in general, should be conceptualized as a conversation, a conversation in which the previously marginalized are invited to participate. But ... from having been constructed as void and lack, and from having been forbidden to speak, we are now expected to join in equal conversation ... Before new cultural conversations can be engaged past injustices and inequities must be addressed (Massey, 1991, 63).

Postmodernism denies any notion of essentialism in cultural identity; identity is viewed as multiple, contingent and fluid. Yet for some communities it may be *precisely* those more traditionally defined forms of identity - race, ethnicity, gender - that provide the starting point for recognition and empowerment.

While acknowledging the inevitably political nature of cultural policy or planning decisions Amendola (1997) resists embracing any *pre-determined* answer to normative cultural dilemmas. Cultural plans will always involve specific choices and a balancing or equilibrium between different “pulls”: between *homogeneity and fragmentation*, between *modernization and tradition*, between *localism and cosmopolitanism* (1998). Young (1990) makes a similar point arguing more broadly that principles of equity and justice cannot exist independent of the context in which they will be applied: they “must contain substantive premises about social life, which are usually derived, explicitly or implicitly, from the actual social conditions in which the theorizing takes place” (1990, 4). While we may have principles to work with, we cannot know the answers in advance. While rational discourse is useful, it must be directed toward clarifying the meaning of concepts and ideas in specific contexts, not toward building systematic theory.

### **3.3 Meso Level - Governance and Capacity Building**

#### **a) System Governance**

##### **Local Government Roles: Integration *and* Democratization**

As the scope of issues addressed by local cultural planning expands the demands placed on local municipalities will increase. Canadian municipalities vary tremendously in size and sophistication. The Municipal Association of British Columbia's (MABC) (1997) mapping of municipal responsibilities in local cultural development provides a foundation for understanding this evolving role. Local government can act:

- *As funder* - providing project funding, grants in aid, annual operating support;
- *As facilities manager* - either managing municipally owned facilities, supporting facilities at "arm's length", or providing indirect support for facility development, e.g. forgiving of property tax or providing zoning exemptions;
- *As enabler* - to be a catalyst or facilitator of local cultural activity; and,
- *As advocate and supporter* (MABC, 1997).

The three types of municipal cultural plans identified are also a useful point of reference (MABC, 1997):

- *Single issue plans* - addressing one cultural issue, such as heritage building conservation;
- *Broader community planning processes* - integrating cultural policies or planning statement into other city planning documents; for example, Official Plans, Community Services Plans, Local Economic Development Strategies; and,
- *Comprehensive cultural planning* – plans incorporating all elements of local cultural development.

The role of local government in arts and cultural development is complicated in Canada by the strong commitment to the arm's length principle in the arts and cultural sector<sup>32</sup>. Originally intended to keep government out of decisions regarding the merits of individual works of art, the principle over time was extended into a rationale for protecting a much wider range of cultural decisions from the political process. As the scope of issues addressed by cultural policies and plans at all levels of government has expanded, the legitimacy of the principle has been steadily eroded. It is difficult to argue that cultural issues are central to the health and well being of communities, and then to insist they remain isolated from larger social and political contexts and systems of decision-making. "It is difficult to envisage any other area of public life which could demand such independence of action" (Matarasso and Landry, 1998, 6).

In seeking to clarify the role of local government in cultural planning the perspective and approach adopted by the Greater London Council (GLC) provides useful guidance. In return for financial or other forms of intervention the GLC extracted specific policy-based outcomes; for example, expectations related to minority interests, employment equity or specific content programming. *Democratic accountability replaced patronage and subsidy as the central frame of reference* (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986). The state remained at arm's length from the day-to-day operations of cultural institutions and producers, but extracted expectations regarding broader social benefits.

The challenge of evolving new models of local cultural governance is well summarized in what the Council of Europe identify as the two pre-requisites for "bringing culture in from the margins of governance": the enhancement of the powers of the city administrator vis-à-vis those of the state; and the simultaneous coordination and democratization of planning functions and processes (1996). The first is needed in order to bring cultural issues "inside" local government, and to facilitate networks across the various departments of local government. The second is needed to ensure that cultural planning goals and directions are more democratically determined, and reflect a more representative cross-section of community interests and needs.

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<sup>32</sup> The principle, imported to Canada by the Massey-Levesque Commission from the British Arts Council, became the model for the Canada Council.

## **Linked Policy and Planning Domains**

Mercer and Bennett (1998) have identified four linked policy or planning domains that are useful in helping to map different facets of local cultural planning and the relationships among various stakeholders. See Figure 5. The central point is that inadequate attention has been paid to connections and linkages across these four domains. Government policies or plans - the first domain - have meaning only if they are translated into policies governing outcomes in specific cultural institutions - the second domain, and in the cultural industries - the fourth domain. Cultural policies and plans must exist also in relation to a set of social goals or intentions linked to the organizations and associations of civil society - the third domain.

Mercer and Bennett's premise is that government's role must be one of monitoring these linkages against a more precisely defined set of policy intentions and outcomes. Planners and policy makers "(require) meaningful indices for culture and development that can help set targets at local, national and international levels, while cultural managers (must) define goals, market products, and demonstrate accountability through performance measurement and evaluation" (Mercer and Bennett, 1998, 26). The question of the need for more thoughtful and rigorously defined performance measures and cultural indicators is taken up below.

**Figure 5: Linked Policy and Planning Domains**

<b>Policy Domain</b>	<b>Focus of Policy Concerns</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p>The <i>policies of government itself</i> – whether at national, state or provincial or local levels.</p>	<p>The larger public interests served by cultural production and dissemination, and the strategies used to achieve these ends.</p>	<p>Levels of resource allocation; the requirement that cultural institutions comply with access and equity objectives; regulation of media ownership, among others.</p>
<p>Policies <i>within cultural institutions</i> themselves as they organize their activities to take account of public interests expressed in public policy.</p>	<p>The actual cultural outcomes sought by cultural policy in the first domain translated into the delivery of cultural goods and services and the facilitation of cultural activities or involvement.</p>	<p>Policies related to education and outreach programs, access for minority groups, strategies relating to attracting cultural tourism, among others.</p>
<p>How the formal policies of government and of cultural institutions are shaped and influenced by the <i>organizations and associations of civil society</i>.</p>	<p>How the individuals and social groups that constitute civil society contribute to and benefit from cultural production and dissemination.</p>	<p>Needs and aspirations from specific ethno-racial or cultural communities related to access and equity in cultural institutions; parents' and citizens' groups concerned with moral standards and codes of classification for television, film and video, among others.</p>
<p>Outcomes related to the <i>quality and quantity of cultural goods and services</i> or involvement they give rise to, as well as the manner of their distribution to and across different groups of users and participants.</p>	<p>The impact of different policies and measures on patterns of distribution of cultural good and services, as well as exploring the qualitative dimension of how people experience, interpret and value the cultures in which they participate. "Users" can be conceived of as consumers, audiences, publics and communities.</p>	<p>The contribution of cultural development to local employment and wealth creation, to levels of civic engagement and cohesion, among others.</p>

Adapted from: Mercer and Bennett (1998).



## **Performance Measures and Cultural Indicators**

The call for more rigorously defined performance measures and cultural indicators has been identified as a priority in many jurisdictions (Mercer and Bennett, 1998; UNESCO, 1998; Hocky, 1997; Dwyer and Frankel, 1997). In the United States Dwyer (1999) cites the following reasons for the interest in measures and cultural indicators:

- The desire of many in the arts to gain the public's support by illuminating the role, comprehensibility, and pervasiveness of the arts in society;
- The belief that modeling the techniques of the business sector - or government's techniques based on the business sector approach – will gain attention and recognition for the value of the arts and cultural sector of the economy;
- The belief that optimal decision-making about resource allocation *really does* require data, including information about assets and the use of assets, i.e. participation that is comparable across communities and over time;
- Motivation based on the need to build common ground for defining and valuing a very broad range of activities as arts and culture in the light of our increasingly diverse culture, i.e. indicators as a path into the discussion about broadening cultural participation; and,
- Motivation based on the use of indicators as the “hook” for more rigorous theory building in the field (1999).

More attention to indicators in the cultural field is part of a larger trend of directing greater attention to the actual *outcomes* achieved through public policy and public investment.

Outcome measurement and social auditing are the way of the future. ... Outcome measurement shifts the focus from activities to results, from how a program operates to the good it accomplishes... Social auditing, while a term open to differing definitions, is generally considered to include some means of accounting for social results of public expenditures. It is a concept that acknowledges that social achievements are not measured well by either money spent or money saved (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, 1998, 26).

Growing attention to outcome measures and indicators in the cultural field has also been met with

concern that these efforts not “fall victim to the neo-conservative ideology that seeks to turn every social good into a commodity. Cultural policy and planning cannot remain just an “adjunct to economic policy ... but must instead seek to provide an independent, contestable policy perspective” (Volkerling, 1998, 4).<sup>33</sup> In order to resist the drift to market rationality Volkerling (1998) identifies four nodes or dimensions around which cultural policies or plans can be oriented: the *policies of time*, the *policies of place*, the *policies of difference*, and the *policies of meaning community*. Each dimension is analyzed using contemporary cultural theory, with implications drawn for both economic and social policy.<sup>34</sup>

## **b) Capacity Building in Local Cultural Development**

### **Requirements of Healthy Cultural Systems**

The following requirements of healthy cultural institutions and larger cultural systems have been identified and serve as useful points of reference in local cultural planning and development (summarized from Evans and Jones, 1997):

- Encourage and reward strength rather than manage weakness;
- Clarify what constitutes organizational health in mission-driven organizations, across all operational areas and in relation to community needs;
- Reject both “growth” and “permanence” as inherently desirable; abandon the mental model that associated growth with success and the assumption that once an arts organization came into existence it should be in business forever;
- Celebrate a diversity of forms of cultural expression and embrace a wide range of organizational forms for creating and distributing this work; break out of the straight- jacket of the standard “one-size-fits-all not-for-profit model.”
- Emphasize organizational identity and resilience rather than equilibrium and stasis as desirable organizational goals;
- Develop the ability for continuous learning within the organization and in relation to its environment;

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<sup>33</sup> Volkerling argues that this is essential to avoid the way in which social policy in New Zealand has been “reduced from a means of ensuring ‘participation and belonging in the community’ to a mere ‘minimum safety net’ to sustain those who are prevented from participating in the market economy” (ibid., 11).

- Promote generative, not adaptive, learning - merely adapting or reacting to the environment is not enough: institutions must be able to generate fundamentally new visions and alternatives;
- Recognize the existence and validity of discontinuous, as well as incremental, change;
- Focus on “gradients of advancement” and critical junctures in organizational life, see organizational health measured over time rather than in isolated snapshots;
- Broaden the range of learning opportunities based on an understanding of the relationships among internal parts of the organization, and between the organization and its various audiences and communities; and
- Reconnect “the arts” to wider community concerns.

### **The Cultural Production Chain**

“Supply-side” versus “demand-side” cultural plans and strategies are giving way to the notion of a cultural “production chain”. The production chain has been used to analyze the key stages or elements in the overall system of cultural production, distribution and consumption. The aim is to identify different kinds of intervention that could be made at various points in the production chain, with the goal of making the system work better and deliver better results (Jacobs. 1997).

The production chain model shifts some of the assumptions about how and why a government could become involved in cultural production. The “supply-side” or subsidy/protection model assumed that state intervention was essential to ensure production and develop a talent base of creators. The production chain assumes that creative expression and cultural audiences interested in experiencing/consuming this expression *will exist* in some form or another, and that governments can choose to intervene in that system to deliver more and better results and greater public benefit than would be otherwise achieved:

If the chain (or the ‘web’, more accurately) does exist in some form regardless of what role government plays, it does make it easier to then ask what role the government *should* play. ... In deciding whether there is anything to do the onus of persuasion rests on being able to make the compelling case as to how a particular intervention by government would add value - economically, socially or culturally - to what would be available otherwise. It

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<sup>34</sup> These nodes might also serve as a useful point of reference to guide a multidimensional approach to cultural indicators

throws a much sharper focus on the intended outcomes of particular actions taken by government. because (theoretically) it is about deciding to go into the marketplace to add value ... ” (Jacobs, 1997, 24, italics added)

The production chain focus on cultural production, distribution and consumption also helps offset the focus on specific art forms or disciplines that has dominated cultural policy making.

## **Cultural Information and Research Infrastructures**

Implementing cultural planning approaches requires a strengthened information and knowledge base to support decision-making. Existing weaknesses in cultural research and cultural research infrastructures internationally can be attributed to a number of factors:

- The relative immaturity of cultural policy and its lack of conceptual clarity as an interdisciplinary area of study and research;
- The low priority traditionally accorded to research funding by established cultural policy agencies;
- The lack of research by the crucial agency of local government in cultural policy and development, which is in part influenced by the national focus of much cultural policy and cultural policy research;
- The lack of resources for systematic research by the agencies of civil society, such as non-governmental organizations;
- The weak linkages forged between universities and the broader cultural sectors in the development and resourcing of research agendas; and
- Inequalities in international research capacities (Kleberg, 1998)<sup>35</sup>.

These weaknesses are being offset by an expanding number of cultural research networks linking cultural researchers, public policy makers, and cultural workers and practitioners<sup>36</sup>. Emerging

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<sup>35</sup>Support for cultural research and cultural research infrastructure has also been undermined by the sector’s history of defining itself in discipline-specific terms, a tradition that undermined opportunities to tackle problems in more strategic terms. The limited research and policy capacity that did exist in the sector has been undermined over the past decade by government downsizing.

<sup>36</sup>The Canadian Cultural Research Network (CCRN) held its founding conference in June 1998 in Ottawa. In the United States studies of cultural research needs have recently been undertaken with substantial funding provided by the Pew Charitable Trust (Dwyer and Frankel, 1997) and the Rockefeller Foundation (Hocky,

cultural research networks are being driven not simply by the need for periodic “stock-taking” but rather by the need for new learning-based governance and decision-making systems that enable the participation of a wider range of individuals and organizations across the public-, private- and voluntary sectors (Rosell, 1999). In this regard Mercer and Bennett (1998) argue that strengthening cultural research as a basis for decision-making will be as much a matter of *new research relations* as it is new research content.

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1998). Cultural research networks have existed in Europe for more than a decade. Culturelink, established in the mid-1980's, is responsible for undertaking important groundbreaking work in the field. CIRCLE has also played an important leadership role, undertaking and/or facilitating a series of major research studies for the Council of Europe. At the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development held in Stockholm in 1998 UNESCO was instructed to draft guidelines and provide leadership in coordinating international cooperation in cultural research (UNESCO, 1998).

### **3.4 Micro Level - Specific Activities or Initiatives**

On the basis of the literature review a number of specific activities of potential strategic importance have been identified relevant to advancing cultural planning approaches in Canada.

#### **Cultural Mapping**

Cultural mapping is a process that identifies and records an area's indigenous cultural resources for the purposes of social, economic and cultural development (UNESCO, 1998). It is a means of becoming "more attentive to the complex uses and negotiations of cultural resources ... which characterize the cultural field" (Mercer and Bennett, 1998, 17). Cultural mapping covers tangible cultural institutions and resources, but also embraces such intangibles as sense of place and social values. "Subjective experiences, varied social values and multiple readings and interpretations can be accommodated in cultural maps, as can more utilitarian cultural inventories ... The identified values of place and culture can provide the foundation for cultural tourism planning and eco-tourism strategies, thematic architecture planning and cultural industries development" (ibid.)

Many innovative examples of cultural mapping have emerged out of close links with local environmental groups and planning related to the conservation of natural and cultural environments (Council of Europe, 1996). More specifically plans have begun to advocate more integrated approaches to the built environment, urban design and placemaking. Some jurisdictions have moved to establish cultural strategies that link the identification of land-based cultural resources and community histories and narratives, to contemporary creative expression and new digital forms of cultural production (ibid.). Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which allow the recording of many "layers" of information about a place, are being used to support cultural mapping (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 1998). Museums have been specifically called upon to play leadership roles building stronger links between arts and cultural organizations and activity on the one hand, and land use planning and cultural resource management on the other (Dreeszen, 1994).

In developing agendas for cultural mapping Mercer and Bennett (1998) call for attention to be paid to the following issues.

- The fact that traditional understandings of cultural resources and cultural infrastructure act to obscure many features of the cultural domain.
- In developing a broader and more inclusive approach it must be acknowledged that that cultural resources “are not just commodities but also sets of relations and systems of classification. That is to say we need an active and *use-oriented* definition of cultural resources, accounting for the ways in which people and communities interact with and negotiate relationships with them” (1998).

Cultural mapping is an activity that offers opportunities for collaboration among academic institutions - which bring knowledge of conceptual frameworks and methodologies, communities - which bring the necessary local knowledge and networks, with support from both public - and private-sectors - which bring the powers and resources for implementation (1998, 16).

### **Focal Practice: Planning *Through* Cultural Resources**

One of the claims made for cultural planning is that it can provide insights into cities as *cultural* rather than simply functional entities (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993). At a collective or system-wide level cultural planning is concerned with a more systematic approach to the identification and use of cultural resources. But practices are also needed that engage the individual and deepen understanding of the cultural dimension of civic life. Here we might say that cultural planning is less about the planning *of* cultural resources than it is planning *through* cultural resources, cultural planning as civil learning.

One of the premises of this dissertation is that museums offer contexts in which the cultural dimension of community life can be engaged. The new museology points to a broader engagement with the contemporary cultural needs of diverse communities as central to museum purposes. Higgs (1988) provides a bridge between the museum and broader planning contexts in his analysis of the role of culture in community autonomy. The analysis draws heavily on Borgmann’s (1984) analysis of the “device paradigm” that characterises the way technology patterns modern life:

... Devices induce the radical separation of means and ends by shattering traditional engagement with things-in-the-world. A ‘thing’ is something with which we engage not only in the object itself but in that thing’s environment. A ‘device,’ alternately, is composed of machinery and attendant commodities. The modern technological system

strives to enhance satisfaction through the provision of commodities, and the devices themselves are rendered progressively more pervasive and less conspicuous (1988, 10).

At the heart of Borgmann's thinking is the notion of *focal concern*. In order to challenge the fetters of the technological paradigm, individuals must involve themselves in engaging activities that expose the sharp distinction between focal things and devices. Focal points are needed as a means of overcoming the subject-object split and as a means of revealing the complex and abstract forces that lie beneath surface realities and conventional language:

[Focal points] become an entry point into the matrix of social interactions from which all other points are accessible ... they present the means for observing abstractions in their concrete realizations in the social order. They expand the possibility of understanding the operation of society and also of the deeper texture of the specific concepts themselves ... focal practice is a means of making visible that which is usually invisible. The most powerful forces in our lives are the ones that inevitably escape scrutiny and criticism (1988, 27).

Higgs describes two kinds of focal practice, both of which are relevant to cultural planning. The first is the *collective* practice - community events and specific shared experiences and phenomenon that can contribute to an understanding of the deeper context of community life. But equally strong attention is paid to *individual* focal practice. Here, the emphasis is on the commonplace things that reside in everyday life.

... the garden, music, and the culture of the table. These are common activities that permeate daily life and to assert a powerful orienting role for them is to make a strong claim. Traditionally focal things have been regarded as large cultural edifices, the Greek temple or the medieval cathedral. These enormous physical structures provided a place for [some] people in a community to gather and celebrate ultimate concerns in a structured setting. Heidegger viewed technology as the modern force that destroyed the focal concerns of past ages. In order to regain the power previously held by great works of art he turns to simple things to uncover their manifold presentation (1988, 175).

Museums can be forums for both individual and collective focal practice. Beneath both lies the need for visitors and residents, as Sullivan (1995) put it, "(to come to see) that they too are culture



bearers, and, in that, more alike than different from the 'Other' they meet in the museum's exhibits" (1995, 6). Sullivan described a number of exhibit forms that helped to uncover these insights. Another form of exhibit practice relevant to "piercing" surface appearances and assumptions to reveal more of the cultural dimension of community life is that of "reflexive exhibitions". These are exhibits that use humour, irony, parody and juxtaposition to help cast doubt in the mind of the visitor about museum pretensions to knowledge, "truth", and objectivity. In deliberately setting out to challenge the museum's traditional authority the exhibit opens up a discourse with the visitor through which they are invited to examine their own assumptions about power, authority and ideology (Duclos, 1993). These exhibitions seek deliberately to expose the filters and biases that have governed the collections and interpretative practices of the museum:

[This] makes conscious what has been unconscious, explicit what has remained implicit, problematic what has been unquestioningly accepted. It does this in order that we might critically engage ourselves in a more principled pursuit of self-knowledge. The entire museum enterprise should be guided by this notion - of promoting a more critical self-examination of itself - so that we, as visitors, scholars, students, artists may begin to do the same with equal enthusiasm (1993, 9).

Duclos' analysis of reflexive exhibitions draws heavily on the work of Hutcheon (1989) who analyzes postmodern interpretative practices. Hutcheon argues that in the context of rising political and cultural consciousness it is *where these two intersect* that we may find some of the greatest opportunities for transformation.

## **PART II: RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **4.0 Research Method**

#### **4.1 Primary Research Question**

The literature review began by exploring two fields: local cultural development, and planning and community development. Traditional theory and practice in both is challenged by a series of factors ranging from radically changed epistemological assumptions, shifting demographic and political realities, and pragmatic matters of resource constraints. I argue that each field has insights and strengths needed by the other. The emerging cultural planning approach is a place where this synergy can be explored.

The literature also demonstrates that local museums are potential institutional settings in which new cultural planning approaches can be practised and championed. The hypothesis is that museums have potentially important roles to play in cultural planning. Realizing this potential will require two things. First, a significant reframing of museum purposes linked to new understandings of culture and community-based cultural planning. This premise is consistent with the view that planning is less about technocratic problem solving than it is about conceptualization, problem framing and values clarification (Innes, 1990).

Second, museums will need to evolve new organizational and professional practices consistent with these new purposes. More specifically, museums cannot take on new roles while retaining antiquated internal organizational structure and decision-making processes. The literature suggests that the principles and practices of *organizational learning* can support both the reframing of museum and broader cultural planning purposes, and the evolution of organizational and professional practices.

My central research question is:

***How can organizational and professional practices in museums change to address new understandings of culture and community-based cultural planning?***

## 4.2 Research Orientation

The research falls broadly under the tradition of participatory action research. This research rejects the observer-observed dualism erected by positivism; the assumed disinterest of the observer is rejected, along with the passivity of the participant or practitioner (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Three assumptions underlie participatory action research:

- Late twentieth century democracies should empower all citizens, not just privileged elites;
- Liberal social practice can never be morally or politically disinterested; and
- The managerial separation of conception – research, from execution – practice, is psychologically, socially, and economically inefficient (1994).

The research assumes there are indivisible links among knowledge, methodology, and human interests. It emphasizes individual and group reflection as central both to deepening consciousness and serving emancipatory ends. Participatory action research assumes the pursuit of democratic forms of communication that, in turn, prefigure social change. These emancipatory intentions exist in tension with constructivist or postmodern traditions that assume that the social world is a constructed and interpreted, more than a literal, world, and is always under symbolic construction - and deconstruction. The constructivist tradition places the focus on the *process* of the work by identifying, among others, the following core issues:

- The relationship between what is observed - behaviors, rituals, meanings - and the larger cultural, historical, and organizational contexts within which the observations are made - the substance;
- The relationships among the observer, the observed, and the setting - the observer;
- The issue of perspective or points of view, whether the observer's or the members'/participants' are used to render an interpretation of the data - the interpretation;
- The role of the reader in the final product - the audience; and,
- The issue of representational, rhetorical, or authorial style used by the author to render the description and/or interpretation - the style (Altheide and Johnson, 1994, 489).

Lather (1991) explores the challenges or tensions as well as the possibilities that flow from linking constructivist or postmodern and critical research perspectives. The opportunities rest on the following assumptions:

- *The failure of positivism*: positivism and instrumental reason - our faith in immutable and universal laws that explain causality and predict behaviors - cannot address human complexity;
- *The value-laden nature of inquiry*: knowledge is perspective and culture-bound; ideology is thus a central force in human affairs, the medium through which consciousness and meaningfulness operate in everyday life; “scholarship that makes its own ideological assumptions part of its argument arises as a new contender for legitimacy;”
- *The possibilities of critical social science*: critical reason provides an alternative to instrumental reason by exposing the underlying structures related to historical formation and power and providing people with the perspectives and tools they need to challenge inequities;
- *The politics of empowerment*: research must empower those involved by analyzing the causes of powerlessness and acting - individually and collectively - to change those conditions;
- *The challenges of postmodernism*: postmodernism represents “an epochal shift in thinking about how we think,” a shift away from a world found “out there” - objective, knowable and factual - towards a “constructed” world in which knowledge is contested and partial, the interplay of language, power and meaning (1991, 3-5).

Reconciling constructivist and critical research traditions raises a number of significant challenges for the researcher. The first is the relationship between theory and data. The constructivist worldview assumes that theory follows from data, not vice versa: efforts are made to minimize researcher-defined or imposed interpretation. In conventional critical research traditions the researcher - “the emancipator” - starts with a commitment to challenging entrenched power relations through *a priori* critical theory. Lather seeks research methods that enable the researcher to navigate between these two seemingly contradictory perspectives.<sup>37</sup> These research methods are “rooted in the intersection between people’s self-understanding and the researcher’s efforts to provide a change-enhancing context” (1991, 65). Through individual and group reflection and critique, participants come to see contradictions and reveal assumptions that had lain hidden or submerged.

A second tension relates to how one acknowledges the personal needs and intentions of social actors - without reducing all accounts or explanations of social reality to these terms, while simultaneously acknowledging the deep structures of power that shape human experience and perceptions - without imposing *a priori* theory.

Finally, linking the two research traditions requires different approaches to questions of validity in research. Four potential sources of validity exist:

- *Triangulation of data sources*: ensuring data are drawn from a variety of sources;
- *Testing construct validity*: a deliberate and systematized reflection on the theoretical foundations and traditions from which constructs in the research emerge;
- *The reconsideration of face validity*: achieved through recycling description, emerging analysis and conclusions back to participants; and
- *Catalytic validity*: a process by which research is used to re-orient, focus and energize participants towards knowing reality differently in order to transform it, a process Freire terms “conscientization” (1991).

A key issue in participatory action research relates to the role of the researcher. The classic typology of naturalistic research roles outlined four modes through which observers may gather data moving from greatest to least levels of participation (cited in Adler and Adler, 1994):

- The complete participant;
- The participant-as-observer;
- The observer-as-participant; and
- The complete observer.

The trend in qualitative research has been toward greater involvement, even membership, roles. Three membership roles now appear to dominate, again moving from greater to lesser levels of participation and involvement:

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<sup>37</sup> Sullivan (1994) identifies the same tension as central to museums interpreting cultural diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- The complete-member-researcher;
- The active-member-researcher; and
- The peripheral-member-researcher (Adler and Adler, 1994).

This research falls into the middle category of active-member-researcher. I sought to establish a meaningful level interaction and relationships with participants in the research. This was important in order to gain insight into personal and interpersonal dynamics involved in any process of organizational change. This shaped the choice of research tools described below.

## 4.3 Core Data Sources

### The Case Study as Research Method

The research takes the form of a qualitative case study. Three types of qualitative cases can be distinguished from the standpoint of the motivation of the researcher (Stake, 1994). These are offered less as functional models than as heuristic devices that enable the researcher to reflect on motivation and perspective:

- *Intrinsic case studies* in which research is undertaken because one wants better understanding of a particular case;
- *Instrumental case studies* in which a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or the refinement of a theory; and
- *Collective case studies* in which researchers study a number of cases jointly in order to inquire into a broader phenomenon, population or general condition.

The approach to this case is a mix of intrinsic and instrumental. The danger in instrumental approaches to cases is that the researcher's desire to create theory or define causation distracts from noting features that are important for understanding the case itself (Stake, 1994, 238). My hope is to gain a depth of insight into a single case. The aim is to achieve what Geertz (1973) called "thick description," analysis that focuses on the complexities and uniqueness of the primary case study.

Focusing on one case makes possible relationships of trust with participants. Building relationships provides the researcher with access to personal reflections and narratives that can be an important source of insight. Analysts of organizational change argue that stronger descriptive narratives and personal testimonies related to organizational life are needed as much as, if not more than, rigorous theoretical analysis (Van Maanen, 1988; Krug, 1996).

The use of an individual case study for research is not without risk. In the absence of comparative data a shift in the nature of the case may occur without the knowledge of the researcher (Yin, 1984). Questions can also be raised about the transferability of findings and conclusions. In the current research there is no pretense that findings will produce "models" or "strategies" applicable in all contexts. Rather, I envision a set of flexible insights and principles that may be adapted in

different contexts. Comparisons can nonetheless be useful as a source of insight and as a means of testing the relevance of findings. In this case I “test” the relevance of findings in two communities of comparable size and circumstances to that of the primary case.

The major conceptual responsibilities of a qualitative case researcher are summarized as:

- Bounding the case, and conceptualizing the object of study;
- Selecting phenomena, themes or issues - that is, the research questions - to emphasize;
- Seeking patterns of data to develop the issues;
- Triangulating key observations and bases for interpretation;
- Selecting alternative interpretations to pursue; and
- Developing assertions or generalizations about the case (Stake, 1994, 244).

How the case is reported - or how the story is told - is also an important dimension of case studies. Cases can serve as a source of constructivist knowledge generation between researcher and reader. Seven presentation styles can be identified: realistic, impressionistic, confessional, critical, formal, literary, and jointly told (Van Maanen, 1988). Whichever style is chosen, the researcher must make judgments regarding what issues, events, problems, relationships are important and deserving of attention in reporting. There are advantages to allowing portions of the case to “tell their own story,” less mediated by the researcher’s analysis. Narratives and testimonies from participants can act as catalysts for readers, and can extend their own memories of events and stimulate reflection.

## **Participant Observation**

As noted, the research here falls into the middle ground of active-member-researcher. Consequently, the case makes use of *participant observation*. The definition of participant observation is the source of some controversy, but a distinction is generally drawn between participant and non-participant observation. The former refers to observation carried out when the researcher is playing an established participant role. The distinction between the two is not especially helpful, since it may imply that the non-participant observer plays no recognized role. The following issues can serve to distinguish levels of participant observation:



- Whether the researcher is known to be a researcher by those being studied, or only by some, or by none;
- How much, and what, is known about the research by whom;
- What sorts of activities are and are not engaged in by the researcher in the field, and how this locates her or him in relation to the various concepts and group membership used by participants; and
- What the orientation of the researcher is; how completely he or she consciously adopts the orientation of insider or outsider (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994).

In this research:

- I was always known in the case as a researcher;
- There was full disclosure regarding all aspects of the research to all participants;
- I interacted using repeat interviews with key participants, small group meetings, and on-site observation<sup>38</sup>; and,
- (As noted) I assumed an orientation of active-member-researcher.

Consistent with this orientation, specific *observational techniques* were utilized in the research. All interviews and small group meetings were recorded and transcribed. Capturing what was said in this way freed me from detailed note-taking and allowed me to focus in meetings on recording descriptions and impressions of participants, their interactions, routines, rituals, interpretations (Adler and Adler, 1994).

Repeat interviews provide an opportunity to “feed back” earlier discussion and to deepen insight for both participants and researcher, and can serve as a check of descriptive and interpretive validity. Unlike more public forums, individual interviews provide an opportunity for study participant to speak about issues frankly and in confidence. Semi-structured interviews were informed by identified research questions but remained flexible and responsive to individuals and their concerns. All interviews were informed by *appreciative inquiry*, a dialogue and interview technique that is described in more detail below.

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<sup>38</sup> These research tools are described in more detail below.

Small group meetings interspersed with interviews provided a collective context for reflecting, an opportunity for researcher and participants to observe, listen and reflect on a range of issues. They provided forums to acknowledge differences, to work toward shared understandings, and to build useful constructs and theories. Meetings also provided a means of contrasting “public” positions taken by team members with personal views expressed in interviews.

Triangulation in the research - what participants said, what I observed, and what insights could be drawn from relevant literature - was the main source of validation in the research. Reliability was tested through the conducting of participant observation repeatedly and systematically over time.

### **Stages of Observation and Analysis**

Adler and Adler (1994) describe how observation evolves as research proceeds. Initially, observations are primarily *descriptive*. Unfocused and general in scope, they are usually based on broad questions and provide a base from which the researcher can branch out in myriad future directions. After some time during which the researcher becomes familiar with research settings and dynamics, a shift occurs to more *focused observations* in which the researcher directs his or her attention to a deeper and narrower portion of people, behaviors, times, spaces, feelings, structures and/or processes.

Clearer research questions and problems that require more selected observations emerge from this narrowing. At this point researchers focus on establishing and refining the characteristics of and relations among the elements they have previously selected as objects of study. Observational data gathering continues until researchers reach theoretical saturation (Glazer and Strauss, 1967). This is the point at which the generic features of their new findings consistently replicate earlier ones. “Overall the stages of observation form a funnel, progressively narrowing and directing researchers’ attention deeper into the elements of the setting that have emerged as theoretically and/or empirically essential” (Adler and Adler, 1994, 381).

## **4.4 Detailed Research Methods and Data Sources**

### **4.4.1 First Phase Data Collection**

#### **a) Selection of Case Study**

In selecting a community and an institution with which to work I was guided by the following criteria:

- Proximity to Toronto;
- Interest on the part of key stakeholders;
- Access to decision-makers;
- A community with a diversity of local cultural activity; and
- A local museum with an interest in assuming broader responsibilities for culture and cultural development in the community.

I considered several communities. One was Kitchener. I learned of an apparently successful cultural planning process in Kitchener while completing my doctoral course work at the University of Waterloo. The planning process had been conducted using a community visioning exercise, had generated considerable support and commitment from both the community and the municipality, and had resulted in several very concrete actions that linked larger planning principles to specific community projects. The missing element here was a local museum that sought to play a broadened role related to local cultural development. Most of the local museums in Kitchener are historic house or historic site museums, with quite specific collections and interpretive mandates.

The second choice was Aurora. This community north of Toronto is undergoing rapid growth. Here there was no formal, municipally endorsed cultural planning function. However, the local historical society had embarked on a process to rethink its mandate in the light of a changing community, and a different set of understandings of local culture and heritage issues. The historical society managed a small local history museum. I had met one of the board members of the historical society at a public hearing during the provincial heritage policy review I conducted for the Government of Ontario in the late 1980's. I was impressed with this person's thoughtfulness and commitment to understanding local heritage issues in a larger context.

The third community I considered was Peterborough. During the same provincial heritage policy review, I had met the Manager of the local museum, the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA). He too impressed me as someone with a broad vision of heritage and cultural issues at the local level. The PCMA had been granted an expanded mandate from the municipality as the Culture and Heritage Division (CHD) of the City of Peterborough. The “catch” was that these responsibilities were to be taken up with no additional resources. This would clearly require change in organizational activity and orientation.

Peterborough seemed to provide an opportunity to explore the two-part nature of my research question. Here was a local museum trying to take on additional responsibilities and trying to think differently about local cultural planning and development.

## **b) Document Review**

The document review to establish the early history of the museum included:

- Two histories of the museum that describe its evolution from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 1980s;
- Minutes from PCMA board meetings beginning in the early 1990s;
- Minutes from Culture and Heritage Board (CHB) meetings from 1995 to the present;
- Founding by-laws and other mandating documents surrounding the establishment of the CHD; and
- A range of municipal planning documents - Corporate Strategic Plans (1988, 1995), Update of the Master Plan for Parks and Recreation (1989), Community Economic Development Strategy - Peterborough 20/20 (1996-7).

Findings are set out in *Chapter 5.1: Snapshot of the Peterborough Case*, *Chapter 5.2: Early History of the Museum*, and *Chapter 5.3: Formation of the Culture and Heritage Division*.

### **c) Dialogue With Museum Manager**

Two start-up discussions were held with the Manager responsible for the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA) in January 1996. Prior to the first meeting I confirmed in writing the overall research design<sup>39</sup> and secured his agreement to participate. The interviews took place two weeks apart in Peterborough, and each lasted approximately 90 minutes. They were unstructured discussions aimed to allow the Manager to identify issues and concerns from his own perspective. The interviews helped broaden the context for the case study beyond that provided by the document review. These initial discussions evolved in recurring dialogues with the Manager that continued, on a monthly basis and mostly by phone, throughout the research.

Findings also inform *Chapter 5.3: Formation of the Culture and Heritage Division*.

### **d) Focus Group and Creation of the Core Learning Team**

Engaging others in the institution began with a focus group in February 1996 attended by full-time and part-time staff, student interns, and three board members - a total of fifteen people. The Manager organized and facilitated the meeting. He identified the following goals for the meeting:

- To strengthen involvement;
- To assess institutional changes; and
- To review, assess and prioritize divisional goals.

As a structure for the meeting the Manager used an altered Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Constraints (SWOC) process. To “personalize” the process he asked people to reflect on the things in the organization that they were *most proud of*, those they were *most embarrassed by*, those they *dreamed about* accomplishing, and those they *feared the most*.

Based on the meeting and discussions with participants, the Manager confirmed a core learning team that consisted of four full-time staff and three Board members.

Findings are set out in *Chapter 5.4: Focus Group Findings*.

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<sup>39</sup> The research design had first been approved by the Office of Human Research.

## e) Initial Interviews With Learning Team

Interviews with individual team members were conducted in March 1996. Each interview lasted 45 minutes to one hour. The interview design drew on appreciative inquiry, an organizational learning method that originally emerged as a critique of conventional action research methods (Cooperrider, 1990). Traditional action research made use of logical positivist assumptions, assumptions that lock us into a “rear-view world”, and to research methods that tend to (re)create the social realities they purport to be examining (1990, 54). Appreciative inquiry falls into a more constructivist or postmodern paradigm.

The conventional focus in action research, and the dominant frame of reference in most planning and organizational change processes, is on *resolving problems* rather than generating new theory and new images of reality. The “problem with problem-solving” is that it is inherently conservative and limiting. It focuses on deficits rather than on strengths, and its analytical approach promotes a fragmented view of the world. “The problem is not just that we have methods of problem-solving, we’ve gone further, and said as a root metaphor - ‘the world is a problem-to-be-solved’” (Cooperrider, 1995, 12). Cooperrider argues that *questions are fateful*. If we ask about problems we find problems. If we focus on the best of what is, what the life-giving forces are in the organization, we can witness a “heliotropic effect” - the organization evolves toward those images, as a plant turns toward the sun. The practices of appreciative inquiry are intended to help focus *strategic intent* and to replace the more rational assumptions of gap analysis, goal formulation, feasibility, and so on that characterize traditional strategic planning models. They also value hope and emotion, indispensable elements of building commitment and innovation (1995).

There are three parts to appreciative inquiry:

- Discovering the best of what is;
- Understanding what creates the best of what is: and
- Amplifying the things - people, processes, values - that embody the best of what is.

These were translated into the following set of interview questions.

**Figure 6: Initial Interview Questions**

1. *Tell me about yourself - your background, current role, interests, other involvement.*
2. *I'm excited about the potential of the new Divisional Structure and Mandate. But first I want to begin by getting some of your thoughts about the museum as it is exists now.*
  - What are its strengths?
  - What about it makes you the most proud? When have you felt the most fulfilled, the most satisfied? What have been the most exceptional moments?
  - What is the museum's major contribution to the community?
3. *Let's turn to the future. Can you tell me what it is about the new Division that makes you the most hopeful? The most excited? Where is the most potential for change?*
4. *Since the mandate of the Division is serving the community I'd like us to talk about Peterborough.*
  - What defines the community? What are its characteristics? What makes it unique?
  - What are its strengths? What is it that could be built on?
  - What would you say are its weaknesses or limitations? What issues need addressing?
5. *When we talk about the culture of Peterborough:*
  - What does this word mean to you?
  - What contributions does culture make to community life?
  - Are there some values that you think describe this culture?
6. *I want you to dream a bit for me.*
  - What is your vision for the Division?
  - What role do you see it playing 20 years from now?
  - What needs to occur in the next 2-3 years to prepare for this future?
  - What changes in the organization would have the biggest impact in realizing this future?
7. *Can we sum up? What themes have emerged for you? Is there anything else you'd like to say?*

## **f) Creation of the Team “Story”**

After the interviews, each team member constructed a story expressing their hopes - and concerns - regarding the Division. The Manager consolidated these into an overall team story. The statements serve to benchmark a set of ideas and perspectives. The team story, with appended individual team members’ stories, is set out in Appendix C.

Findings from e) and f) are set out in *Chapter 5.5: Team Interviews and Creation of the Team Story*.

## **4.4.2 Second Phase Data Collection**

### **a) The Learning Forum**

#### **Background**

The Learning Forum brought six teams from museums across Canada together in Toronto June 6-9, 1996. The Forum was part of a pilot project of the Canadian Museums Human Resource Strategy (1995) which explored organizational learning and change in Canadian museums. I had been involved in various capacities over many years with the Canadian Museums Association and its work on human resource development.<sup>40</sup> The opportunity to involve the Peterborough team in the Learning Forum arose as I was beginning my research. It provided the team with access to resources and expertise that would not otherwise have been available. The Canadian Museums Association retained a consultant with expertise in organizational learning. She was responsible for overall design of the Forum, for facilitating the Forum, for teaching or introducing various organizational learning disciplines or techniques, and for completing an evaluation of the event.

Prior to the Learning Forum, a participant from another museum eloquently expressed their hopes for the project:

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<sup>40</sup> I chaired the Museum Labour Force Study (1989), which was the first comprehensive analysis of the museum workforce.



I hope this project will encourage museums of all kinds and sizes to seriously reflect on what they're doing, how they're doing it, and who they're doing it for, with the hope that this will result in enhancing the value of museums within our society. Our work is really about providing greater meaning and value to the people we serve. I hope that we challenge traditional practices, to keep or modify those which serve our purpose, and to get rid of those that don't. I would be pleased if this project encourages this process of *organizational self-reflection*. I would be even more encouraged if this project helps museums to work together on this and to share our successes and challenges (Janes, 1995a, italics added).

## Learning Forum Design

Museums, like most organizations, exchange information and ideas on specific museum practices - educational programs, marketing plans, etc. This exchange tends to occur between individuals in specific functional areas, such as directors, educators, or marketers. Museums have considerably less experience with organizations learning from one another *as systems*. Organizational learning was understood for purposes of the Learning Forum to mean "the intentional use of learning resources at the individual, group and system level to continuously transform the organization in a direction that is increasingly satisfying to its stakeholders" (Dixon, 1994, 56).<sup>41</sup>

The design of the Forum was based on the following organizational learning principles (Dixon, 1994).

***Teams/Organizations as the Unit of Learning:*** The practices of organizations are not simply the sum of members' individual competence; there is also competence and knowledge that is a product of the collective. For an organization to learn new *system level* competencies, it must "learn to learn" as a collective - as a unit.

***Organizational Assumptions are Limiting:*** An organization's ability to be effective is limited by its assumptions. Groups are often unaware of the assumptions they hold or of the ways those assumptions serve to limit their practice. It is often possible for "outsiders" to identify assumptions that a group holds. These assumptions are reflected in:

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<sup>41</sup> Nancy Dixon, of The George Washington University, also served as the consultant to the project.

- The group's actions;
- Its interactions;
- The way they frame the problems they encounter; and
- The language they choose to describe their dilemmas.

Thus, it is possible for one group to serve as a mirror for another group, even when the mirroring group has not itself experienced the problems the other group is facing.

***Co-Inquiry*** - Learning across organizations is most effective when all parties are in a learning role. When some groups - or individuals - are identified as “knowledgeable experts” and others are labeled as learners in need of assistance, there is a tendency on both sides to hide mistakes and ignorance. In co-inquiry, all parties acknowledge that they are blind to their own assumptions and are in need of the help of others to see what they cannot see for themselves. Everyone is in need of support to face the difficult path of change.

***Collective Intelligence*** - Organizational learning assumes that the world is knowable by ordinary people and that their knowing can be collectively and meaningfully organized in order to address the serious organizational issues that they face. When people of good will think together, they can create new and powerful solutions that, as individuals, they could not have constructed on their own.

***Learning Occurs Over Time*** - System change happens over long periods of time because learning, especially system learning, occurs slowly.

***Collaboration and Alliances*** - Organizations have much to learn from one another. They must find ways to collaborate, especially in a time of scarce resources. Organizations are, in the larger scheme of things, all connected. When they seek common ground rather than differences they are able to support and sustain each other.

The agenda for the three-day event required teams to work in four different configurations:

- *Plenary* - all teams meeting together;
- *Museum Teams* - teams meeting by themselves to advance their individual work;
- *Paired Teams* - two teams meeting together to learn with and from each other; and
- *Mixed Teams* - groups who come together based on shared interests.

Activities at the Learning Forum reflected the collective learning principles. Figure 7 links elements of the Learning Forum design to the principles. Figure 8 provides an overview of the Learning Forum agenda.

Additional details on the Forum are set out in *Chapter 6.1: Organizational Learning Practices*.

**Figure 7: Learning Principles and Learning Forum Design**

<b>Learning Principles</b>	<b>Design Elements</b>
<b>Teams/Organizations as the Unit of Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teams invited to participate rather than individuals</li> <li>• Activities at the Learning Forum primarily team-based</li> <li>• Time for teams to work on own issues</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Assumptions are Limiting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paired team reflections</li> <li>• Appreciative inquiry</li> </ul>
<b>Co-Inquiry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paired team reflections</li> </ul>
<b>Collective Intelligence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration and Alliances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community dialogue to build a support system for change</li> <li>• Eurythmy</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Occurs Over Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three day Forum with follow-up</li> </ul>

	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>SUNDAY</b>
<b>MORNING</b>		<p>9-9:45 P- Discussion of Appreciative Inquiry            9:45-10:00 PT Notes to self            10:00-10:15 Break            10:15-11:45 PT- Paired Interviews            11:45-12:45 - Lunch</p>	<p>9:00-9:30 - Demonstration of Paired Reflection            9:30-10:20 PT- Paired Team Reflection- Round 1            10:20-10:35 -- Break            10:35-11:30 PT - Paired Team Reflection - Round 2            11:30-12:30 MT - Teams Meet Individually            12:30-1:30 Lunch</p>	<p>9:00-9:45 P- Preparation for Continuing to Learn Together            9:45:10:45 - Individual interviews on learning            10:45:11:45 - Eurythmy &amp; Break            11:45-12:15 - Team Reflection on Learning            12:15-1:00 Lunch</p>
<b>AFTERNOON</b>		<p>12:45-1:15 MT - Prepare feedback on interviews            1:15- 2:15 PT - Provide themes            2:15-3:15-Break &amp; Eurythmy            3:15-4:15 - MT - Teams Meet Individually            4:15-5:00 - Community Dialogue</p>	<p>1:30-2:30 P- Decisions on Monitoring Our Learning            2:30-3:30 -Eurythmy &amp; Break            3:30-5:30 PT Paired Team Reflection - Round 1 &amp; 2            5:30-6:00 - Community Dialogue</p>	<p>1:00-2:00 -Report Out            2:00 3:00 - Closing Circle</p>
<b>EVENING</b>	<p>6:00-7:00 MIX- Dinner            7:00-7:30 Introduction of people and work            7:30-7:50 MT            7:50-8:50 Team Stories Postscript            8:50-9:30 Community Dialogue</p>			

**Figure 8: Learning Forum Design**

## **Peterborough Team's Experience**

The Peterborough team's response to the Learning Forum is described in two parts. First, the substantive insights gained into their task - assessing challenges and charting strategy for implementing the Division's new mandate. Second, the insights gained into team dynamics and different ways of thinking and learning together.

Findings are set out in *Chapter 6.2: Peterborough Team Findings*

### **b) Post Learning Forum Interactions With Core Learning Team**

#### **Second Interviews with Team Members**

In early July 1996, several weeks after the Learning Forum, I conducted repeat interviews with team members. The purpose of the interviews was to collect feedback on the impact of the Learning Forum. Questions were again framed in the spirit of appreciative inquiry, and encouraged team members to imagine positive possibilities.

#### **Figure 9: Second Interviews with Core Learning Team**

1. *What was the most memorable or exceptional moment for you at the Learning Forum?*
2. *What new insights did you gain about the team's task? How would you describe the focus of the team's work?*
3. *What personal insights did you gain about yourself and or your relationship to the team?*
4. *Have there been positive changes in personal interactions and team dynamics as a result of the Forum?*

Findings are set out in *Chapter 7.1: Second Interviews with Team Members*.

### **c) Team Retreat**

A one-day team retreat or planning session was organized away from work in late July 1996. In an effort to encourage more shared leadership, the Manager asked two team members to plan and coordinate the retreat. By the end of this retreat, these members hoped that the team would have:

- A shared vision of the Division;
- A shared vision of culture and heritage;
- A critical path, plus a method for recording and evaluating progress; and,
- Exciting ideas.

A clarification of outcomes and a series of proposals for focusing the work of the team through a number of specific tasks emerged out of the meeting. These were divided up and team members committed to advancing the work of the team over the summer months. The team decided to report on the results of their work to date to the Culture and Heritage Board (CHB) early in the fall.

Findings are found in *Chapter 7.2: Team Retreat*.

### **d) Presentation to the Culture and Heritage Board**

The team met early in September, approximately two weeks before the Board meeting, to discuss strategy and to decide what issues should be addressed in the presentation.

The team reported to the board on the following issues:

- An update on the team's work to date;
- A draft definition of culture and heritage;
- A proposal regarding the use of appreciative inquiry for engaging more stakeholders;
- A proposal for a Divisional logo and a special event to build profile; and
- The results of some initial efforts to administratively distinguish the work of the PCMA and CHD.

At the meeting the board's extremely hostile reaction to the team's presentation was a surprise to everyone, and was a turning point in the research.

*Chapter 7.3: Presentation to the Culture and Heritage Board* summarizes findings.

#### **e) Follow-Up With the Team**

The team met a number of times in the months following the CHB meeting and continued their individual work on tasks identified at the team retreat. During the next period of research I did not meet with the team as a whole but remained in touch through periodic phone calls to team members and the Museum Manager.

Findings are described in *Chapter 7.4: Follow-Up Team Activity*.

#### **f) Summary of Second Phase Data Collection and Secondary Research Questions**

Findings from the second phase of data collection identified a series of barriers to change in the organization. These were formulated into a series of three more focused research questions. The first has to do with barriers to a reframing of *museum purposes* as they relate to cultural planning. The second has to do with *leadership needs and requirements*. The third has to do with the structures and dynamics of *local cultural governance*.

Conclusions are set out in *Chapter 7.6: Summary of Second Phase Data Collection*.

### **4.4.3 Third Phase Data Collection**

#### **a) Literature Review on Barriers to Change**

A focused literature review on these secondary research questions was undertaken to inform the final phase of data collection.

The results of this literature review are set out in *Chapter 8.1: Museum Ideologies and Belief Patterns*, *Chapter 8.2: Leadership Theory*, and *Chapter 8.3: A Systems View of Cultural Governance*.



## **b) Final Data Collection**

### **The Learning History**

The next phase of research made use of an organizational tool called *a Learning History* (Kleiner and Roth, 1998). The Learning History is based on the assumption that people in organizations act collectively, but they learn individually. This is the central premise – and frustration – of organizational learning. The frustration exists because managers have few tools with which to capture institutional experience and disseminate its lessons in ways so that the past can be processed and translated into more effective action. A Learning History is a written narrative of an organization's change processes, a modern version of an ancient practice of community storytelling. It is presented in two columns. Relevant events are described in the right-hand column, as much as possible in the words of individuals in the organization. People are quoted directly, but their identity is not provided. The exception in this story is the Manager of the Division whose identity was impossible to disguise.

The left-hand column contains analysis and commentary by the “learning historian,” a knowledgeable outsider – in this case the researcher. The outsider identifies recurring themes in the narrative, cites ideas from relevant literature, poses questions about assumptions, and raises issues that may lie beneath the surface in the narrative. The Peterborough Story (Appendix D) summarizes the organizational change process in the PCMA/CHD during the period of the research. It provides a tool for capturing data and analysis and feeding it back to the team as a means of building shared understandings. The Peterborough Story served as the basis for final interviews with team members.

### **Final Interviews with Learning Team Members**

Interviews were conducted with the four full-time staff and one of the original three board members that formed the original learning team.<sup>42</sup> There were two parts to the interviews:

The first part sought responses to the Peterborough Story. People were first asked what part or parts of the Peterborough Story had struck them as most important or meaningful. They were then asked to reflect on:

- when the team had been at its best;
- when the Division had been at its best; and,
- when they as individuals had been at their best.

In order not to filter out negative impressions of the process, people were also asked to identify the most difficult or frustrating moment, and anything that might have been done to avoid those frustrations; and,

The second part of the interview focused on the secondary research issues.

- The first, addressing questions related to *museum and cultural planning purposes*, made use of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) matrix regarding ideological paradigms and belief systems.
- The second, addressing *professional practices*, used Starhawk's (1987) mapping of leadership roles to examine recurring leadership tensions.
- The third, addressing *cultural governance structures* and dynamics, used Fielding and Couture's (1998) systems view of local governance.

The materials used to support questions on these secondary research themes are set out in Appendix E.

Interviews ranged in length from one to two and one-half hour. The following research questions were used.

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<sup>42</sup> The other two had left the Board and chose not to participate.

## **Figure 10: Final Interview Questions**

### **Section I – Response to the Learning History**

Can you reflect in general terms for me about the issues or themes that emerged in the Peterborough Story that seemed the most meaningful or important?

In the spirit of appreciative inquiry, what is the most positive or inspirational memory you have of the process we went through together as a team?

- i. When was the team at its best?
- ii. What, in your mind, is the most important accomplishment of the division over the period covered by the story? When was the Division at its best?
- iii. When were you personally at your best?

The process we went through together was not an entirely positive one. What about it was frustrating and what might, in retrospect, have we done differently?

### **Section II - Research Themes**

There are three broad areas that the findings of the research focus on related to museums and community cultural planning.

- i. *New Purposes* - this attachment asks you to reflect on four ideological paradigms or belief patterns related to museums and cultural development.

New purposes require new professional practices and new organizational and governance structures; thus:

- ii. *Leadership Needs and Requirements*; and
- iii. *Planning and Governance Structures*.

There is one diagram or model for each of these topics. Accompanying each diagram is an introductory page that provides a brief description of the model and poses several questions. There are obviously no “right” or “wrong” answers here. The point of i. and ii. in particular is that any organization needs a balance of perspectives.

Findings are described in *Chapter 9.1: Final Interviews with Learning Team Members*.

### **Testing Findings in Two Communities**

Research findings to date were tested in two other community settings. The point of this testing was not to “prove” the validity of findings but, as exploratory research, to test the relevance of specific findings from the Peterborough case in communities of comparable size and circumstances. Basic criteria for the selection of the other community settings included:

- Proximity to Toronto;
- Communities of similar age, size and demographic make-up; and
- Communities with demonstrated commitments to culture and heritage.

It was unlikely that I would find communities with identical situations to Peterborough. As a result I chose to return to the two communities I had considered for the primary case study. Kitchener provided an opportunity to test findings relevant to local cultural planning. In particular it provided an opportunity to seek input from another municipal administrator and planner. Aurora provided an opportunity to test findings related to the change process in a local community museum.

I made contact by phone with individuals in both communities, explained the nature of the research, and followed up with a written statement describing the case study and research. A week prior to the interview, I forwarded materials containing the key interview questions (Appendix F).

Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Findings are found in *Chapter 9.3: Testing Findings in Two Communities*.

### **Final Interview with Museum Manager**

The final dialogue with the Manager was also unstructured. I asked him to reflect on the team meeting and then on the research as a whole.

Findings are described in *Chapter 9.4: Final Dialogue with Museum Manager*.

## **Final Team Meeting**

A summary of the results of individual interviews was sent to team members prior to the final meeting<sup>43</sup>. The only expectation stated was that the meeting was an opportunity to review the interview results, discuss the implications for the Division, and bring closure to the research. Three full-time staff members attended; the fourth was away dealing with a serious family illness. One of the original board members, the same one with whom I had conducted that final interview, attended.

I opened the meeting, in the spirit of appreciative inquiry, by asking people to identify the most positive or hopeful facet of the interview results. I invited feedback on any facet of the research

Findings are described in *Chapter 9.5: Final Team Meeting*.

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<sup>43</sup> These results were incorporated into the final version of the Peterborough Story.

## **PART III: FIRST PHASE DATA COLLECTION**

### **5.0 *Baseline Data***

#### **5.1 Snapshot of Peterborough and Case Study**

The following portrait of the community and the case study was composed on the basis of the literature review and start-up interviews with the Museum Manager.

Peterborough's population is approximately 68,000.<sup>44</sup> The city has an aging population, slightly older than the national average: 18-20% of the population is over the age of 60 years compared to 5-10% nationally. This figure is expected to rise and a good deal of planning is premised on the expectation that the city will become a popular retirement community. The population is predominantly white Anglo-Saxon, and primarily Protestant in denomination, although there is a strong Catholic minority. First Nations in the area include the Iroquois, Mississauga, Huron and the Ojibway.

In 1825 Peter Robinson, the brother of then Attorney General Sir John Beverly Robinson, led early settlement in the area and gave the city and county its name. Robinson arranged the mass emigration and settlement of 2000 poor Irish from County Cork as part of a British Government Assistance Program. Lumber was the major 19<sup>th</sup> century local industry. By 1892 General Electric had started a factory in Peterborough. In 1900 and 1919 respectively the American Cereal Company, later known as Quaker Oats, which still operates in the city, and Westclox also opened factories.

The demographics of Peterborough for many years made it a "typical" Canadian community used extensively in public opinion polling and market testing. Like many communities, it is struggling to manage a transition from a dying manufacturing base to new forms of employment and wealth creation: there is over 1 million square feet of vacant industrial space in the city. The city is in the heart of the Kawartha tourism area and tourism forms an increasingly important source of economic development. Peterborough is also home to Trent University and Sir Sandford Fleming College. The city also has a strong tradition of progressive planning practice. It was one of the first

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<sup>44</sup> According to the 1991 census.

cities in Ontario to establish a Local Roundtable on Environment and Development, as well as one of the earliest healthy communities projects in the province.

The city has a lively local arts and cultural scene. An inventory of local cultural activity completed in 1995 identified 134 non-profit arts, heritage and cultural organizations and 185 businesses engaged in for profit cultural activity – music sellers, dance studios, video production, art suppliers, local media.

The Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA) is one of these institutions. It is a medium-sized, municipally owned and operated community museum with an annual audience of approximately 35,000. At the time of the initiation of the research it had a paid staff complement of 4.3 full time equivalents (FTE) and approximately 170 volunteers who collectively contribute over 12,000 hours annually. Its annual budget is approximately \$230,000. Like many small museums, the PCMA had suffered major cutbacks. Since 1993 the organization has faced a 33% reduction in staff, a 20% reduction in operating budget, and a 74% cut in capital budget.

The PCMA is highly respected in the museum community. It came to national attention in 1991 for its leadership in working with the Curve Lake First Nation to re-bury Native skeletal and related grave materials that had been excavated decades before and deposited in the museum. The museum's education programs have been recognized by the Ontario Library Association and by the Ontario Museum Association. The institution played a leadership role in establishing the Sir Sandford Fleming Museum Management and Curatorship Program, an imaginative partnership that provides students with valuable work experience, and provides the institution with invaluable human resources.

In 1995 the financial picture for the institution was worsening as a result of municipal downsizing. The Manager of the PCMA sought and was granted a new mandate for the organization as the Culture and Heritage Division for the city, under which it assumed cultural responsibilities that were previously held by the Recreation and Culture Division. The move was in part defensive: the Manager feared that the museum would be seen as a "marginal service," vulnerable to elimination or budget reductions that would force it to reduce its hours and move to being a part-time operation. More positively, the expanded mandate also represented a proactive attempt to expand the museum's role and visibility, which were already considerable, in the community.

I learned of the developments in Peterborough in late 1995 when my research proposal was still taking shape. I contacted the Manager of the Culture and Heritage Division in early 1996 to discuss the possible use of the PCMA/CHD as my primary case study. The timing coincided with the Manager's efforts to draw the staff and board of the Division into a more extensive dialogue about the organization's future.



## 5.2 Early History of the Museum

The PCMA was established in 1967, part of a national-wide burst of museum development. However, its roots are much older. The first mention of a museum in Peterborough was made in the context of the formation of a Mechanics Institute in the late 1840s (Doherty, 1995).<sup>45</sup> The first actual museum facility in Peterborough was the Victoria Museum, which was established in honor of the Queen's Silver Jubilee and officially dedicated in 1897.

Over the next fifty years the museum collection changed locations many times, moving through long periods of dormancy and neglect, and repeatedly rescued by the strong leadership of a few dedicated volunteers. By the early 1960s, pressure was mounting to establish adequate facilities for the collection. In the words of the President of the Peterborough District Historical and Art Museum Foundation who owned the collection at this time, a proper building was needed to "display the fine collection of historical articles left by pioneers of this territory" (Doherty, 1995, 19).

The new facility opened in 1967. From the beginning, the PCMA displayed a strong community orientation. Its second Director sought to make the museum "an inviting cultural centre ... by inviting various community groups to share in museum life" (Wilcox, 1987, 20). Other arts and cultural groups were encouraged to make use of the facility: local choirs and string quartets used the site, a film series was launched and television programming was used to stimulate community interest. From the late 1970s into the 1980s, a strong focus was placed on strengthening professional standards, a development that is consistent with the passage of the 1981 Community Museum Policy for Ontario. Exhibitions and programs during this period continued to focus primarily on the story of early settlement, but efforts were made to broaden this focus. In 1982, an exhibit entitled "Peterborough's Industrial History" traced the story of the city's early industrial heritage. In 1989, "Ordinary Women ... Everyday Lives" examined the challenges of researching women's history in Peterborough from 1850 to 1940.

In 1983, the museum's Statement of Intent or mission was: "To collect artifacts to illustrate the natural history, history, growth and development (including the scientific, educational and other

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<sup>45</sup> The earliest items in the PCMA collection date from this period.

cultural aspects) of the City of Peterborough and of Peterborough County, and of the Trent-Severn Waterway.” In 1985 the museum suffered a serious blow to its reputation when the then Manager resigned amidst controversy regarding deaccessioning, the removal of objects from the collection. This incident damaged the institution’s reputation locally and in the provincial museum community.

An update of the Master Plan for Parks and Recreation (Marsh, 1989) recommended capital expansion for the PCMA and called for the development of a cultural policy for Peterborough. Various strategic planning processes through the late 1980s and early 1990s called for upgrading of what were seen as inadequate physical facilities. Other operating improvements noted in minutes and planning documents included more proactive collecting policies designed to fill “holes” in the collection and stronger storylines in exhibitions. The institution continued to struggle with only moderate levels of community support. A note in a strategic planning exercise in 1988 illustrates this fact: “there is little community involvement in the museum and little museum involvement in the community.” Further, “recent efforts to attract a new audience have alienated the traditional audience.” The institution was called on to become “more of a team player” with other local heritage and cultural groups, and to play a stronger leadership/facilitation role.

In 1988, soon after the arrival of the current Manager, the Board of Museum Management adopted the following mission statement: “The PCMA shall preserve, present and promote the heritage and culture of Peterborough and area and shall also provide other significant heritage programs.” The final clause, “and other significant heritage programs,” was controversial, as it signaled a movement to extend outside of the facility and out of the more narrowly conceived collections and facility-based understanding of the museum. A five-year strategic plan focused on improved operating standards and building stronger museum programs. The institution’s staff was active - in both a professional capacity and as volunteers - in a range of community groups and activities. This involvement, together with improved operating policies in the institution, succeeded in rebuilding the museum’s legitimacy following the deaccessioning incident.

By the early 1990s fiscal pressures were mounting. Provincial funding remained static and the institution found itself increasingly reliant on the municipality for support. This was a problem because, in the words of a planning document, the institution saw itself largely “outside the municipal political and administrative orbit.” *Figure 11 and Figure 12* illustrate the PCMA organizational structure and its relation to City Council and the City Administration.

Figure 11: PCMA Organizational Chart (1990)



**Organizational Chart  
Community Services  
Museum and Archives Division**

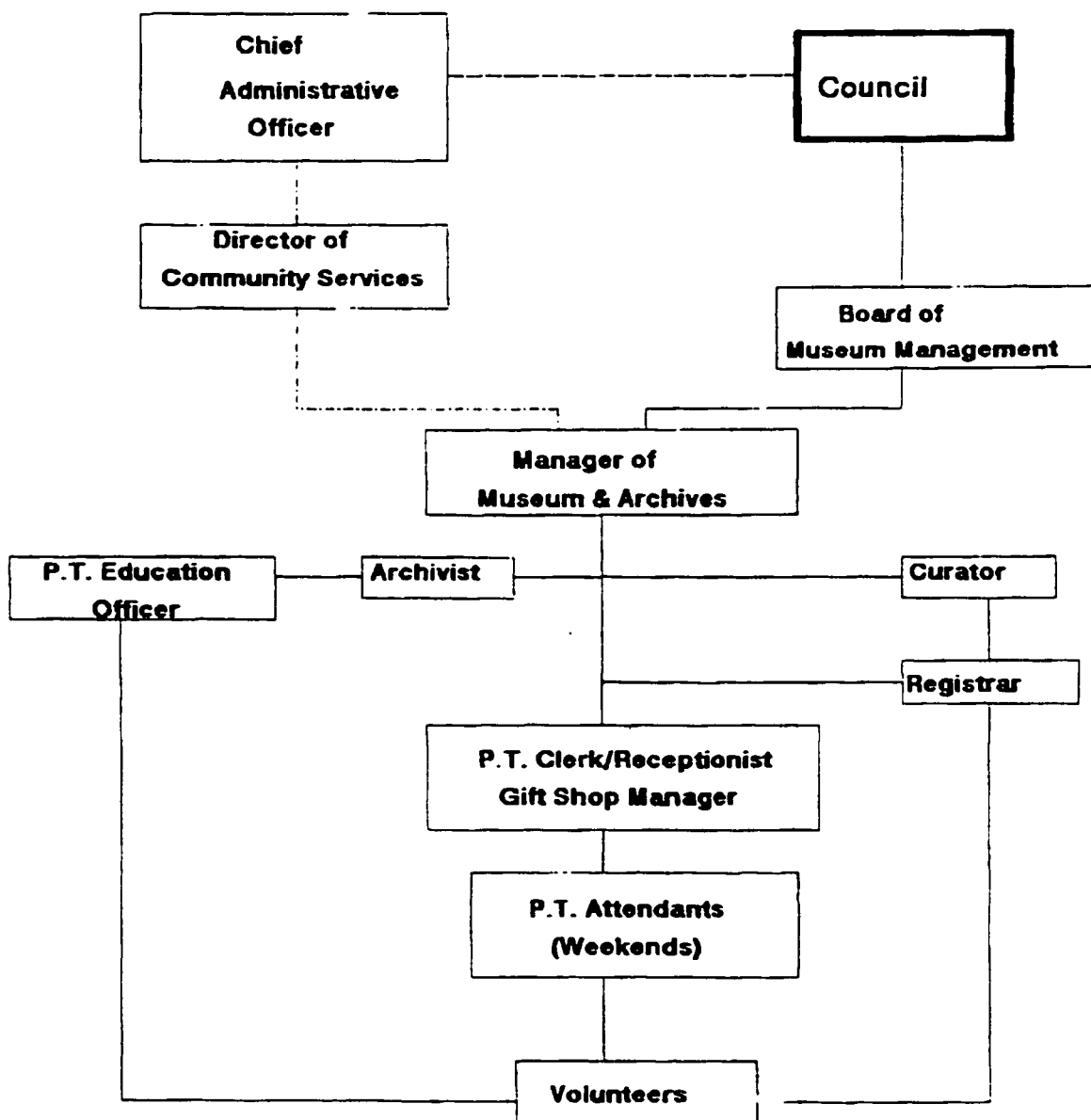
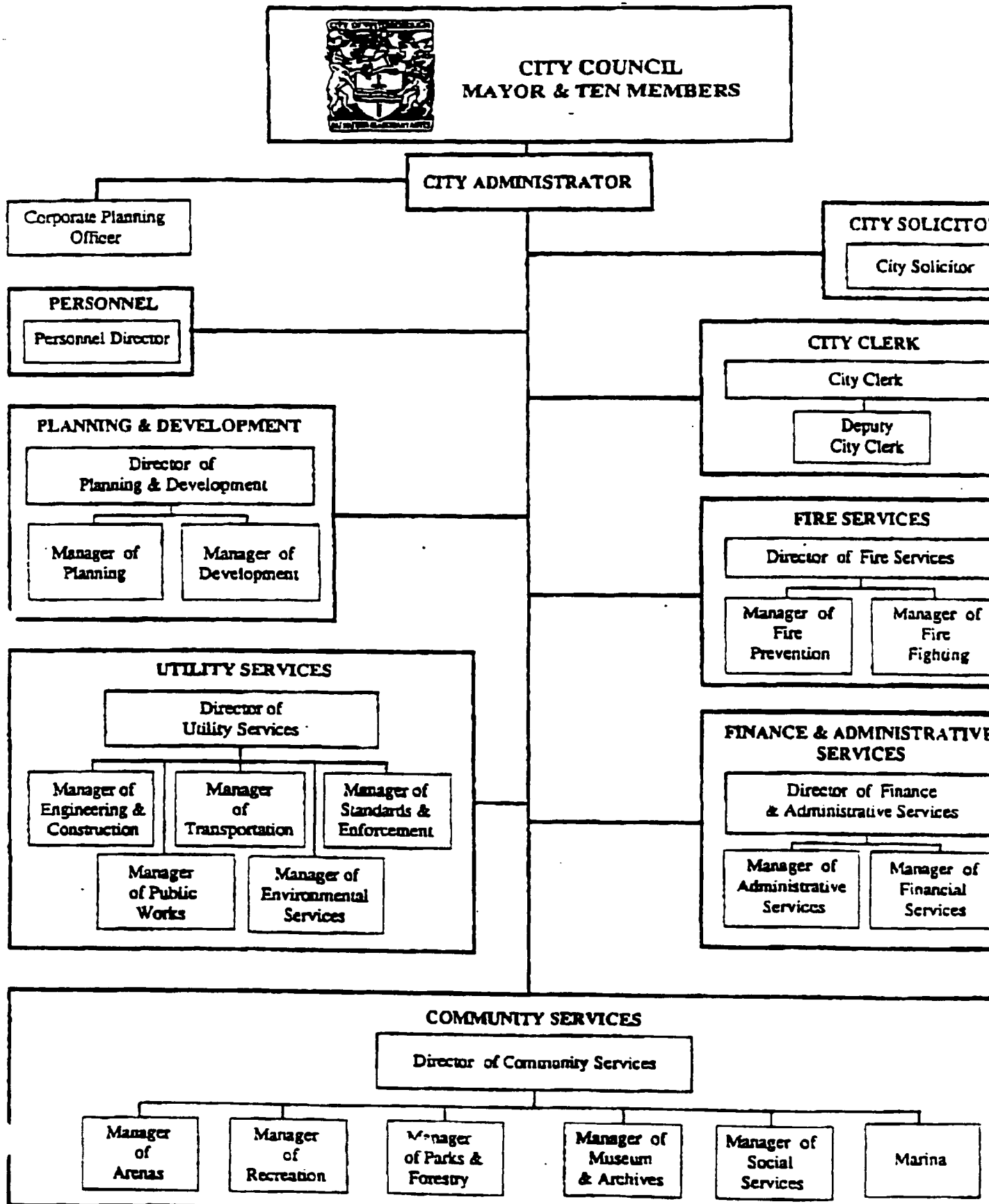


Figure 12: City Council and City Administration (1989)



A planning exercise in 1992 identified familiar themes: poor facilities, “lack of recognition at City Hall,” “lack of a bridge” with other local heritage groups, “weak communication between board and staff, poor staff communication.” The institution was seen by staff as “a victim of our own success” - the level of activity had grown was unsustainable given available human and financial resources.

Commitments were made “to improve relations with the mayor and council” and to address internal staffing problems: “inadequate support staff, personality conflicts, unclear reporting relationships, the absence of daily and weekly communication, must also be resolved.” The institution was called upon to broaden its “leadership in heritage/culture policy and development in the community” and achieve greater financial and administrative distance from the City. “In becoming an independent entity ... the advantages outweigh disadvantages ... if support from City Council continued.”

A new mission statement was ratified based on a call for a “clearer vision of the institution’s primary role and function in the community”. It declared: “As an integral part of the collective memory of the community, the PCMA shall preserve, present and promote the heritage and culture of Peterborough and area, and also provide other significant heritage programs for the education and enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.” When the proposed mission was brought to the Board, the minutes record the Manager stating “while the existing mission statement is a concise statement of what we do, it does not adequately reflect *why we do it* and why we do it is important.”

The Culture and Heritage Division was established in December 1994 (additional detail is provided below). Between 1995 and 1997, the Division played a leadership role in attempts to purchase a nationally significant local photographic collection. More than \$250,000 was raised in a relatively short period of time, a considerable achievement given that the museum had little previous fundraising experience or infrastructure. The Manager felt that the campaign played a significant role in raising the profile of the museum and the Division in the larger community, and strengthened the network of contacts with other culture and heritage organizations. In 1996, the institution secured designation as a Category A institution for the purposes of receiving significant

national collections such as the local photography collection.<sup>46</sup> The Manager's lead role in the fundraising campaign caused him to shift many day-to-day responsibilities to other staff. Despite already heavy workloads, staff stepped in and took on additional management roles internally, and assumed responsibility for some of the Manager's external responsibilities to liaise collaborate with local culture and heritage groups. Even before the establishment of the CHD, the Policies and Procedures Manual of the PCMA signaled recognition of an institutional responsibility for providing leadership in regard to local cultural and heritage issues that lay outside the formal mandate of the institution.

Permanent exhibitions continued to emphasize early settlement themes. However, temporary exhibits and programs during this period sought to broaden the range of community issues and stories. Many exhibitions remained collections-based, with themes selected primarily on the basis of available collections. But other more thematic- or issue-based - exhibitions were also mounted, several in partnership with local community groups. Two examples were "Once Upon a Watershed," which celebrated the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and "Seasons of Darkness: Celebrations of Light," which explored how different cultures celebrate the winter solstice period.

The repatriation of First Nations burial materials was viewed by the Manager as institutional activity "at its finest." The process took 33 months and 8 meetings between representatives of the museum and the Curve Lake Band to develop a mutually acceptable repatriation process for these remains. The museum made casts of the objects for the purposes of future research. The Band arranged burial services. The Band credits the repatriation with supporting the re-emergence and re-establishment of native cultural traditions. The Chair of the Museum Advisory Board commented: "to give a little is to receive a great deal. Perhaps if, as a society, we were to worry a little less about the consequences of such giving, we might find that respect and generosity have a way of perpetuating themselves" (Tivy, 1994, 16).

To accompany the repatriation process, the museum produced a temporary exhibit, "Time of Healing - Time of Change." in the summer of 1992. Far removed from typical treatments of First Nations in local history museums that situate First Nations solely in the context of pre-European

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<sup>46</sup> The designation grants the institution eligibility for federal funding to purchase nationally significant collections.

settlement, this exhibit looked at the history and contemporary life of four First Nations communities in the Peterborough area. The exhibit was developed collaboratively with the local band, drew on key concepts of cultural survival and adaptation in the face of oppression, and was based on native testimony and writings. It carefully detailed the history of these groups to the present, chronicling the impacts of disease, land treaties and the Indian Act legislation. The exhibition provided a context for understanding the challenges facing these First Nations groups today. "Time of Healing - Time of Change" served as the impetus for a community theatrical presentation that examined the relationship between Native people and the land. It also provided the basis for a curriculum unit for museum education programs developed by the museum in conjunction with the local school board (Tivy, 26, 1994).

### **5.3 Formation of the Culture and Heritage Division**

This account of the formation of the Culture and Heritage Division (CHD) was composed on the basis of the review of minutes of the Board of Museum Management, early minutes of CHD, and interviews with the Museum Manager.

By late 1994, despite its many achievements, the Manager believed that the museum was seen as “a marginal service, a prime candidate for significant further reduction.” He described the establishment of CHD as “a strategy to build a protective buffer around the museum, while at the same time relating it better to the city’s priorities.”

The Manager recognized the need to shift his perspective from the interests of the museum as a narrowly defined entity to the interests of the municipality as a whole. Until that time culture and heritage issues had received relatively little attention from the municipality. Issues of culture and heritage were not addressed in any Official Plan during the 1980s and early 1990s; the sole exception to this rule was local architectural conservation as it effected land use planning. However, by 1994 municipal interest in culture and heritage was growing due to the city’s interest in strengthening local tourism (McLeod, 1996). Municipal councilors and staff recognized that the community’s appeal to seniors as a retirement home, and to tourists as a travel destination, was to a considerable extent a product of the unique local character of the region’s built heritage and the “K-factor,” or Kawartha factor. These natural and cultural resources were seen as an essential component of economic renewal strategies aimed at attracting new residents and businesses.

Local culture and heritage groups had previously tried to make the case for culture and heritage resources as essential components to community development. The influence of these arguments was undercut, the Manager believed, by a failure to make the economic case strongly enough and by the failure to actively engage the business community. Many in positions of authority at city hall saw the local cultural community as a marginal group, part of the “pink brigade” of fringe artists and intellectuals, many of whom had links to Trent University.

Although the catalyst for the new mandate was the need to protect museum resources, the Manager also saw compelling reasons for the museum to take on broader cultural planning responsibilities in the community. The institution was already “inside” municipal government, as a line department



reporting to the Director of Community Services. Two-thirds of community museums in Ontario are directly owned and operated by municipalities; on average 70% of their funding comes from municipal government. Their status inside government distinguishes these local museums from other local cultural institutions such as most art galleries and local libraries, which have strong traditions of independent “arm’s length” boards and governance models.

The Manager felt that if the PCMA - and other community museums - were to realize their potential to play expanded roles, they would first need to overcome “a failure of leadership (that resulted from) misdirected professionalism ... an insular mindset.” The mandate of the CHD had been taking shape in the Manager’s mind for several years. He had been actively involved in museum and heritage issues both provincially and nationally as President of the Ontario Museum Association. He participated in the Ontario Heritage Policy Review, and subsequently was a member of a Minister’s Advisory Committee responsible for drafting proposals for a new Ontario Heritage Act. Both the Policy Review and the new legislation sought to extend the municipal role in heritage conservation, proposing the establishment of advisory bodies to municipal councils with broad heritage planning responsibilities. The organizational structure, resource requirements and reporting relationships of these advisory bodies were the subject of considerable discussion. His participation in these discussions was one reason that the Manager felt he was able to move quickly when the opportunity arose to establish the CHD. A strong relationship with the Director of Community Services had also strengthened the Manager’s hand during this change process.

A Culture and Heritage Board (CHB) was to serve as the governing structure for the Division. The Manager described the Board as playing a role between the city and the community, with a need to work in a “top-down” or in an authoritative way when necessary, but also able to facilitate “bottom-up” community input and support. The CHB also needed to work inside municipal structures to resolve political and administrative issues that affect culture and heritage, and outside to support more community-based cultural development. The Manager was strongly critical of municipal leaders. The levers of power were still held by an older generation of politicians and administrators who worked in “traditional, hierarchical ways” and who had difficulty understanding “abstract” issues like culture and heritage. A former Director of Planning who had taken the lead in an integrated planning process several years before had been replaced by “someone whose idea of a corporate plan was the city budget.” As fiscal pressures grew, the Manager felt that these traditional ways of thinking reasserted themselves, a situation that increased the vulnerability of the museum.

Since the Division had been established quickly, little consultation had occurred with the then Board of Museum Management, the basis of the future CHB. There had been little opportunity for the Board to fully digest the implications of the changes. No discussion occurred with staff. The Divisional Role, Structure, Responsibilities and Long Term Goals were drafted by the Manager, in consultation with the Director of Community Services, and adopted by Council in the form of Municipal By-law 95-10. The by-law identified three broad categories of responsibilities.

The first area was the Division's responsibility for *managing and operating the PCMA*. The second was "to act as a resource to municipal council and to all municipal departments and divisions on culture and heritage matters ... and [to undertake] the development, implementation, and evaluation of plans, policies and programs to guide culture and heritage development in Peterborough." In the Manager's mind, this included day-to-day problem solving, and "helping to rationalize the delivery of cultural programs and services," among other functions. A third cluster of responsibilities related to *advancing community-based cultural development*. The responsibilities identified included: communication and coordination, conserving community heritage resources, providing advisory support, encouraging celebrations, recognizing excellence, and building community awareness.

The mandate included a series of long-term goals. These were a mix of general, open-ended goal statements - "broadening public recognition of culture and heritage; rationalizing and integrating culture and heritage into broader municipal planning" - and more specific activities - "developing [separate] arts and heritage policies; resolving a comprehensive and equitable grants program." The CHB consisted of the Board of Museum Management - 5 community representatives and one alderman appointment, an additional alderman appointment, and organizational representation from the Peterborough Historical Society (PHS), the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC), the Art Gallery of Peterborough (AGP), and the Peterborough Arts Umbrella (PAU).

No definition of "culture" or "heritage" appeared in the mandate. At the first board meeting after the establishment of the Division, the Manager led an exercise aimed at "mapping" all culture and heritage organizations on a political spectrum from "left to right." Most contemporary arts organizations were located "left" of centre, local heritage groups were approximately in the middle of the spectrum, and "mainstream" cultural institutions such as a Showplace, a new performing arts

facility committed to programming commercially popular plays and musicals, sat to the right of centre.

The Manager noted that “multiculturalism has been left out since most multicultural groups already deal directly with the Recreation Department. And adding this element would simply complicate matters.”

At the first meeting after the new mandate had been confirmed the minutes record the CHB asking the Manager “to inform the Board exactly what their new role would be”. The question conveys a sense of frustration and resentment, a feeling that the group had been left out of important discussions regarding the future of the institution. This theme recurs throughout the case.

The challenge for the Division from the Manager’s perspective was “to determine how the institution could realize the potential of the mandate ... [and] how to lever change in the staff and Board that would make this possible.” He acknowledged that “much of the community’s perception of the institution is tied up with my leadership ... I have to draw-out other staff and Board members to play a more prominent role.”

## 5.4 Focus Group Findings

Full-time and part-time staff, student interns, and three board members attended the focus group - a total of fifteen people. The Manager organized and facilitated the meeting that was aimed at exploring the challenges and opportunities facing the PCMA/CHD in light of its extended community mandate. He asked people to reflect on the things in the organization that they were *most proud of*, those they were *most embarrassed by*, those they *dreamed about accomplishing*, and those they *feared the most*.

The following were among the important themes that emerged from the meeting:

- Complaints about the inadequate facility;
- Complaints about low levels of community support;
- Concerns and anxiety about work overload;
- Board members' confusion about their new roles in the Division;
- Some guarded excitement about the potential of the Division;
- Leadership tensions resulting from the strong role played by the Manager that appeared to discourage others from participating;
- Complaints about poor internal communication; and
- Pride and emotional commitment to the work of the museum.

It was clear that while there were many hopes and fears there was *no shared vision* of the "business" of the Division, nor any clear sense of how this vision would be operationalized in the face of already overextended human and financial resources.

Two messages figured most prominently. The first had to do with an over-committed staff:

- "I'm not sure how much further I can go without falling over the edge."
- "We're tired."
- "I can't do what I'm supposed to do now ... how do we let things go, especially things we like, in order to take on new tasks?"

The second impression, equally as strong, was people's feelings of pride and emotional commitment to the work of the museum and to one another. The Manager used a process he compared to a Native Healing Circle at the close of the meeting. Strong emotions were expressed, tears were shed and there was a close feeling of community in the room.

Based on the meeting and discussions with participants, the Manager confirmed a core learning team that consisted of four full-time staff and three Board members.

## **5.5 Team Interviews and Creation of the Team Story**

### **Interviews**

Interviews with individual team members lasted 45 minutes to one hour. Interview questions drew on appreciative inquiry, a research and organizational change methodology that seeks to reverse the normal focus on identifying and resolving *problems* and focus more on generating new images of reality.

Many of the themes that emerged in the focus group re-emerged in the interviews, but these were often expressed in more frank and detailed terms.

### **Question 1:**

*I'm excited about the potential of the new Divisional Structure and Mandate. But first I want to begin by getting some of your thoughts about the museum as it is exists now.*

- What are its strengths?
- What about it makes you the most proud? When have you felt the most fulfilled, the most satisfied? What have been the most exceptional moments?
- What is the museum's major contribution to the community?

### **Findings:**

The primary strength of the museum was unanimously felt to be the dedication and commitment of staff. However, this emotional commitment to the organization seemed to have both positive and negative repercussions. The picture is of an extremely dedicated group of professionals who are highly committed to their work. However, this professional dedication seems to be directly linked to the second part of the picture, that of an overextended staff, several of who seem perpetually on the edge of burnout.

- “This is something I’ve done better than anything in my life.”
- “The city has such a bargain ... everyone gives 120% ... we’re a tight team ... god forbid anyone should leave.”
- “I need to slow down ... [the pace] is not sustainable ... I need to get more people involved.”

## **Question 2:**

*Let's turn to the future. Can you tell me what it is about the new Division that makes you the most hopeful? The most excited? Where is the most potential for change?*

## **Findings:**

There was no shared sense of either the purposes of the new Division nor of the operational implications of taking on the new CHD mandate. One person felt that the museum was already doing the work of the Division. Uncertainty was expressed about how the museum operation related to the Division. There were strong messages about the organization’s resources being already over-committed, even before the organization took on the new Divisional responsibilities. But there were also expressions of excitement and some creative ideas about how the Division might work:

- “We’re doing it already ... it just gives us the seal of approval.”
- “How do we let some things go to take on others?”
- “I’m not sure where I fit in.”
- “I don’t think the museum’s business should be so tied up with the Division ... we get too tied up at board meetings with the museum and other groups get shortchanged ... we need to separate functions ... we need a CHD Administrator.”
- “The culture and heritage community is like a body without a head ... but the museum can’t be the head ... we need new decision-making structures ... our minds are so geared to traditional structures ... it’s hard for people to give up power.”
- “[It should work] like a network with nerve cells ... I hope we’re leaders in cultural change ... our primary purpose should be to be a voice for the culture and heritage organizations.”

### **Question 3:**

*Since the mandate of the Division is serving the community I'd like us to talk about Peterborough.*

- What defines the community? What are its characteristics? What makes it unique?
- What are its strengths? What is it that could be built on?
- What would you say are its weaknesses or limitations? What issues need addressing?

### **Findings:**

There were strong messages from every team member about tensions in the community - tensions between "town and gown" - the city and Trent University - between an "old guard" of long-standing Peterborough families and almost everyone else, and between blue collar and white collar workers and their families. There were strong feelings of dissatisfaction with the conservatism of the community and the influence wielded by a small faction of "old families." There was recognition that the museum played a role in reinforcing this conservative community character by perpetuating the early settlement narrative. However, there was also recognition that the museum was walking a careful line between not alienating its traditional constituency while reaching out to other parts of the community:

- "I had no idea about small town attitudes before moving here ... the bigotry, prejudice and small-mindedness was a shock."
- "An old guard ... the museum doesn't help with this ... our stories are mostly about the old guard ... we need to connect to the current life in Peterborough ... for example Native artists ... I like the idea of the museum as a cultural centre linking arts and heritage, not separating them in different institutions."
- "This is a community of contrasts ... ultra conservatives and ultra progressives."



#### **Question 4:**

*When we talk about the culture of Peterborough:*

- What does this word mean to you?
- What contributions does culture make to community life?
- Are there some values that you think describe this culture?

#### **Findings:**

No clear or consistent picture of “culture” or “heritage” was evident among the team members. There was a general sense that definitions were broadening and a feeling that changes would be needed. But there was little clarity, and certainly no shared vision, about what the implications of these shifts might be.

- “The vision of culture and heritage is broadening ... I think it’s partly a generational thing.”
- “We need to speak to new interests and needs ... move beyond the traditional history.”
- “The cultural elite drive the current system and structures ... our challenge is how to build a program that better reflects the actual community ... there will be resistance to politicizing culture ... Peterborough needs to be pushed ... little steps but in the right direction.”

#### **Question 5:**

*I want you to dream a bit for me.*

- What is your vision for the Division?
- What role do you see it playing 20 years from now?
- What needs to occur in the next 2-3 years to prepare for this future?
- What changes in the organization would have the biggest impact in realizing this future?

No clear future vision emerged from any of the interviews. It seemed difficult for people to look into the future in the face of all the immediate pressures in their daily lives.

Tensions related to the leadership style of the Manager, tensions that had emerged in the focus group, were reiterated more forcefully in the interviews. There were criticisms that his strength as a leader sometimes discouraged participation and involvement by others, and that he did not communicate and share information well. The paradox was that the Manager was a superb facilitator and communicator in small group meetings, as witnessed during the focus group. It was the day-to-day communication and commitment to engaging others in the work of the institution that were missed by the staff and the Board. The Manager was aware of these tensions, and expressed frustration that he and the organization could not seem to get beyond them:

- “If I manage the process I’m accused of being manipulative. If I don’t, things don’t get done.”

The Manager also expressed his willingness to face these issues.

- “As the primary architect of the Division ... I take considerable pride in the infrastructure that exists for the new division but am still concerned about the level of community involvement and support. I am also faced with two nagging questions: how long we can sustain our current level of activity; and - perhaps most importantly - how much will this infrastructure protect us in the next round of municipal cuts expected in 1997? Ironically, my personal vulnerability does not stem from either of the above but rather from stepping back and letting go. This is a big step but a crucial one. I’m looking forward to this project as a vehicle to both share and test that vision.”

### **Creation of the Team Story**

Following the interviews, each team member constructed a story expressing their hopes - and concerns - regarding the Division. These contributions were consolidated by the Manager into an overall team story. The statements serve to benchmark a set of ideas and perspectives. The team story, with appended individual team members’ stories, is set out in Appendix C.

The following issues and challenges emerged in the team story.

- What *is* the relationship between the institution (PCMA) and the Division?
- Can the staff and resources of the PCMA actually be the implementation arm of the Division, or is the PCMA simply one client organization among other clients of the Division?
- If the two are to be integrated how do the broadened Divisional responsibilities relate to the more traditional collections and facilities of the institution? How will priorities be determined?
- How does a broadened view of culture and heritage in the community affect expectations in the institution, and in the Division?
- Is another governance structure needed to more effectively broker partnerships and facilitate community-based cultural activity?
- How can the work of the CHB be re-oriented from its current focus on museum issues to a broader planning function for culture and heritage?
- How can culture and heritage issues be integrated more effectively into municipal planning and decision-making?
- How can capacity be built to realize the potential of both the PCMA and the CHD?

Ironically, the identification and profiling of these issues fell victim to *precisely* what appreciative inquiry was intended to avoid. Namely, the focus was on identifying problems or barriers standing in the way of realizing the potential of the Division, rather than on what that potential was and how that potential might be animated. The focus was largely structural and bureaucratic, and reflected to some degree the immediate and pressing concerns of the Manager. Escape from the “world-as-a-problem” paradigm proved more difficult than initially imagined.

## **5.6 Summary of First Phase Data Collection**

The first phase of data collection sought to establish baseline data relevant to the central research question and the two requirements for museums assuming broadened roles in cultural planning.

- The first relates to *museum and broader cultural planning purposes*. More specifically it sought to determine how culture and heritage issues in the community - the “objects” of cultural planning - were seen and understood.
- The second relates to the *organizational and professional practices* needed to realize broadened cultural planning responsibilities.

### **5.6.1 Museum and Cultural Planning Purposes**

#### **a) Fragments But No Whole**

The understanding of community cultural issues in Peterborough is broadening but remains fragmented and conflicted. The 1995 inventory of local cultural organizations signaled this changing picture. The list reflects a broadening of the constituency beyond traditionally not-for-profit, “pre-electronic” arts and heritage groups. However, the inventory still remains dominated by European cultural traditions and practices.

#### **b) Functions versus Missions**

The lack of clarity about culture and heritage issues in the context of the new Divisional mandate is perhaps not surprising. However, there seems to be a deeper, more longstanding identity crisis, one present in PCMA before the creation of the Division. The PCMA, like many museums in the late 1990s, seems to be caught between two images - or two mental maps - of itself. The first is the traditional museum paradigm that defines itself in functional terms - a collections-based institution dedicated to communicating a “neutral” account of the history of the community. The second is a resource that serves the contemporary cultural needs of a diverse community. The first is a museum about objects, the second a museum about people and about larger public interests.

The Community Museum Policy for Ontario (Government of Ontario, 1982), with its focus on the practical aspects of managing and interpreting material culture, acted to reinforce the earlier operating model. The Manager believed that the Policy had served a useful role in the early 1980s in leveraging improved operating standards. Now he believed it had become more a shackle than a support, and actually discouraged local museums from adopting a larger view of heritage and culture issues in communities.

The transition from an organization oriented and structured on the basis of collections and internal museum functions, to one animated by a commitment to serve the contemporary cultural needs of a diverse community, is an enormous challenge for the PCMA, as for all museums.

**c) “Community Orientation”**

A key factor that appears to act against this shift is one of the dominant “stories” people told themselves about where they work: namely, that the PCMA is one of the most “community-oriented” museums in the province. This is true in terms of the leadership role played by the institution in supporting and fostering community partnerships and joint initiatives. However, this more general community development role might just as easily have been provided, if the will existed, by most other community groups or organizations. The activity did not flow from a rethinking of *the museum’s* role or relationship to the community, what it would mean for *the museum* to serve the personal and civic needs of a diverse community in Peterborough today in new ways.

**d) What Heritage? Whose Culture?**

There is frequent reference made to “growing community support” and “reaching out to new audiences;” yet little concrete evidence is offered to substantiate these claims. Positive accounts of growing relevance and expanded community service are quickly offset by an acknowledgment that “the community has little interest in the museum, and the museum little interest in the community.” The history of the institution demonstrates a consistently narrow base of support in the community.

PCMA had taken significant steps to step outside the focus on early settlement that continues to represent the institution's primary identity. The repatriation initiative and the themes of temporary

exhibitions - such as the AIDS exhibition – reflect an institution attempting to move into the third “Revising the Past” paradigm of collecting and interpretive practices (Tivy, 1995). Team members also seem to understand clearly how traditional collecting and interpretive practices perpetuate the influence and cultural authority of Peterborough’s “old guard.”

However, the organization seems continually drawn back to Tivy’s earlier “Rescuing and Controlling the Past” paradigms. Permanent exhibitions and core school programs remain closely tied to the “pioneer” narrative and early settlement. A telling symbol of this is found in the museum brochure. This is arguably one of the most widely used and visible communications tools of the organization and it is telling that illustrations are drawn entirely from 19<sup>th</sup> century collections and themes.<sup>47</sup> The museum sees itself trying to walk a careful line between not alienating its traditional audience and reaching out to new audiences.

The Manager’s observation that the work with First Nations had given him a “more visceral and meaningful” sense of culture than he had experienced before is also revealing. A paradox in museums today is that the museum workforce, who continue to be overwhelmingly drawn from the dominant culture, is less likely to have as direct an *experience* of culture as are minority groups such as First Nations. For these groups culture remains central to their identity and survival as distinct communities. Sullivan’s (1995) desire to see museums help all visitors, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, see that “they too are culture bearers”, each with unique habits and frames of reference, might be seen to apply equally to those working in museums as those visiting them.

Despite the emergence of the new museology, traditional museum practices and frames of reference continue to maintain a strong hold. The implications of this are significant. The premise that emerged from the literature review was that local museums could provide forums in which pressing issues of culture and diversity in communities could be explored. The evidence suggests that the challenges and barriers to museums playing these roles are more significant than was imagined.

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<sup>47</sup> The history of Peterborough told in the permanent exhibition also stops in the first decade of the twentieth century.

## **5.6.2 Organizational and Professional Practices**

### **a) The Pro's and Con's of Dedication and Commitment**

The staff is a dedicated group of professionals. However, this dedication appears directly related to their state of being constantly overextended, perpetually on the edge of burnout. McDaniel and Thorne (1994) believe the majority of American arts organizations operate at levels of activity 45-50% above the human and financial resources available to sustain them, a major factor in the chronic instability experienced by arts organizations.

There is either reluctance or an inability on the part of staff in the museum to make choices and define priorities. But neither is it clear what process would be used to make choices even if the will existed to try. The reputation of the museum and its past performance seem to drive staff to continuously reach for higher levels of achievement.

On one level, the staff seems to be a "tight team" committed to one another. However, complaints were made about poor communication, of people working in isolation, and of personality conflicts that seem to lie just beneath the surface.

### **b) Leadership Tensions and Demands**

The organization unquestionably benefits from the Manager's astute strategic and political instincts. His ability to move quickly to establish the Division when the opportunity arose is an example of these leadership qualities. He appears to bring museological vision to the PCMA having played a lead role in the repatriation process and as a strong advocate of temporary exhibitions addressing contemporary themes. Staff credits him with strengthening professional standards, and with helping to re-establish the institution's credibility after the deaccessioning incident in the 1980s. He gives the organization a high profile in the community, and is steadily building credibility within municipal government.

Offsetting these leadership strengths is the difficulty the Manager has communicating and engaging with others in a way that builds shared commitments to action. The Division was established with almost no consultation with staff or with members of the Museum Board of Management. In part

this was the result of a need to move quickly to capitalize on the opportunity that arose. However, a year after the new structure was in place, relatively little attention had been paid to involving others in examining how the new Divisional mandate would be interpreted and operationalized. The result was a lack of buy-in on the part of those responsible for implementing these new responsibilities.

The Manager acknowledges his shortcomings in communicating and sharing information - especially lateral communication, in delegating responsibilities, and in engaging others in decision-making. These qualities acted against building relationships and feelings of trust in the organization and the broader community. But these shortcomings were arguably the flip side of his astute problem-solving and strategic insights. These were *exactly* what were called for at City Hall, where traditional hierarchical structures and management styles prevailed. This tension is often experienced by middle managers in large bureaucratic agencies who “experience the dissonance between the hierarchical, rational, positivist forms of bureaucracy, and the hierarchical, ambiguous and interactive reality of organizations within, and as part of, a larger social environment” (Labonte, 1990, 66).

### **5.6.3 Local Cultural Governance**

The capacity of the PCMA/CHD to take on broadened planning responsibilities rests not just with staff but with the structure of the CHB, and with the Division's location within municipal government. The Board represents a hybrid governance model: its structure and composition positions it with one foot “inside” and one “outside” the formal political and administrative decision-making channels of the municipality. It is an advisory body only; a final decision on any issue rests with city administrators and council. The Board is a mix of political appointments and community representatives. Its status prevents the Board from taking vocal advocacy positions that might oppose municipal decisions. On the other hand the structure enables it to work to affect change inside the system.

The Manager faces a difficult job trying to raise the profile and broaden understanding of cultural issues within municipal government. The conservative and technocratic traditions of local government, noted as an obstacle to cultural planning approaches in other jurisdictions, appear to hold true for Peterborough. Local government officials seemed to accept the legitimacy of some level of support for local cultural *facilities* - museums, art galleries, and libraries; many of these



facilities receive some level of sustaining funding from the city. Local heritage conservation issues, especially those dealing with the built environment, also seem to be accepted as an inevitable part of municipal land use planning. The city's growing interest in cultural tourism as a source of local economic development has helped to significantly raise the profile of local cultural issues.

Some in positions of power at the City are not merely indifferent but antagonistic toward some elements of the local cultural community. There is acceptance if groups restrict themselves to "safe" or comfortable issues - such as the community's early history. Efforts to engage with more contemporary civic issues are more suspect. The resistance on the part of conservative local politicians to a politicization of cultural planning, a reality noted in other jurisdictions (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993), again seems to hold true in Peterborough.

## **PART IV: SECOND PHASE DATA COLLECTION**

### **6.0 The Learning Forum**

The Learning Forum brought six teams from museums across Canada together in Toronto June 6-9, 1996 to explore organizational learning and change in Canadian museums.

The agenda for the three-day event required teams to work in four different configurations:

- *Plenary* - all teams meeting together;
- *Museum Teams* - teams meeting by themselves to advance their individual work;
- *Paired Teams* - two teams meeting together to learn with and from each other; and
- *Mixed Teams* - groups who come together based on shared interests.

### **6.1 Organizational Learning Practices**

During the course of the Forum, teams made use of a series of organizational learning practices. Each practice is described below, followed by a general account of its use at the Forum. Responses to the practice from all six teams are then provided. A more focused analysis of the Peterborough team's experience follows in the next section.

*Community Dialogue* - The purpose of a community dialogue is to understand the perspective that others hold. In a typical group discussion participants find themselves working hard to win the argument or to be as persuasive as possible. Dialogue has a different focus: to create shared meaning. Three community dialogues were held, on the first evening, late in the afternoon on the second day, and on the morning of the last day. Each took place in plenary session involving the group as a whole. Prior to the first community dialogue, the following guidelines were provided:

- Speak the truth of your experience;
- Listen with your heart;
- Slow things down so more may happen; and
- Notice your inner voices.

*Thursday evening.* The topic of the first dialogue was specified as “change in museums” and it lasted approximately 20 minutes. A broad range of ideas about change was expressed during the dialogue, and there were many periods of silence. The dialogue was followed by ten minutes of group reflection. Both in the reflection period and in comments on subsequent days, participants said they had felt uncomfortable in the first dialogue and had questioned its worth. Some felt awkward speaking personally and “from the heart” with a group of people they had just met. One participant said they felt a high level of cynicism about new processes, and were skeptical about new jargon that hides “business as usual” behaviour. Concern was expressed about how the Forum would need to balance opportunities for individual teams to focus on the “nuts and bolts” issues they were confronting in their institutions, while also allowing time for organizational learning practices aimed at testing new ways of thinking and interacting.

*Saturday afternoon.* No topic was specified for the second dialogue. One or two comments were made at the outset, and these were followed by a request from one participant for information from another participant about that museum's practices. The rest of the dialogue time was spent in this kind of exchange. In the reflection period that followed some participants questioned whether a dialogue had really occurred. Other participants defended the information exchange, insisting that it had been of interest and practical value to them. Some participants felt that not having a specific topic had left them unsure of how to proceed. There was a general feeling of dissatisfaction in the room.

*Sunday morning.* The third community dialogue on the morning of the last day addressed the topic of “community.” Guidelines for the dialogue were reiterated. Participants expressed a wide range of ideas during the dialogue - from feelings they had about loss of community, to times when community had great meaning for them. In the reflection period following the dialogue, it was apparent that many people had been deeply moved by what had been expressed. There was a sense of closeness and relationship in the room. Comments and written feedback indicated that the community dialogues had a strong impact on many - though not all - participants. The dialogues seemed to create a sense of community and support that allowed people to be more candid with each other and therefore more open to new ideas and support.

***Paired Team Reflection*** - In paired team reflection, each team has the opportunity to hold up a mirror so they can “see themselves as others see them.” Each team holds a regular work session

for about 30 minutes while their partner team sits quietly and observes the first team in action. The partner team then offers reflections on the ideas expressed, what they had actually observed in the team's interaction and, most difficult, what tacit assumptions they could identify that might be blocking the team's progress. Finally, the work team responds to the reflection and identifies what they found helpful. The two teams then switch roles and repeat the process. The process is one of co-inquiry because each team is both a learner and a helper.

In preparation for the paired reflection sessions, the consultant demonstrated the process with two volunteer groups, one of whom had been briefed beforehand. Although the "observing team" provided the "working team" with non-judgmental feedback, the reflections were more *about observable group process* than they were about the more difficult matter of revealing tacit assumptions. Subsequent paired team reflections during the Learning Forum also focused more on group process than on deeper assumptions. There was also a tendency for discussions to move into more general information exchange after the initial reflections were offered. In spite of these obstacles, most teams found the paired reflections helpful. Many were able to reframe some of their issues in beneficial ways.

***Individual Team Work*** - During the Learning Forum it was important for teams to have time to meet by themselves, to advance their own work, to assimilate what they were learning, and to plan how to use these ideas when they returned to their institutions. There were three periods set aside for the teams to meet. Some teams made additional time available by scheduling meetings over meals. For teams that were well launched on their task, the amount of time set aside for individual team work was enough. Newer teams still in the process of defining their task expressed frustration about not having enough time to actually "get down to work."

***Appreciative Inquiry*** - For appreciative inquiry, two teams were paired to allow an individual from each team to interview an individual from the other team. Each interview lasted an hour and used a structured format. Each team then met to develop themes across the interviews that they had conducted. Finally, each team met with their paired team to provide feedback on the themes they had heard. The teams were asked to give feedback that identified for their partner team the "life-giving" forces of that team, what gave it "energy and meaning." Using appreciative inquiry at the beginning of the Learning Forum was helpful in that the one-on-one interviews opened up dialogue and provided a non-critical way for the teams to have their first in-depth interaction.

Several teams noted that the experience of looking for themes in the interviews had an impact in and of itself. As in the paired team reflections, the opportunity to look closely at another museum engendered perspective in a way that had not been anticipated. Appreciative inquiry seemed to be, for many participants, the most valuable of the “practices” of organizational learning introduced at the Learning Forum. Several teams expressed the intention to use it in their work when they returned home.

**Best Practices** - Many of the museums represented at the Learning Forum had outstanding successes that would have been helpful and of interest to other institutions. These topics did not need to be highly significant events, but could be a new technique that others might find helpful, a successful team experience, or a collaboration that went very well - all would qualify for “best practice.” Much of this kind of exchange occurred informally over meals, coffee, and other breaks. This type of interaction had not been emphasized in the design of the Forum and its absence was noted as a criticism.

- “The one thing you should have known is that if you put forty museum people together they will want to talk about museums.”

**Eurythmy** - In order for collective learning to occur, a shared sense of community must exist among learners. One of the ways in which community can be built is through physical movement. Eurythmy, as developed by Rudolf Steiner, is the art of harmonious movement to the sounds of speech that incorporates mood, colour, and story. As a group, we can practice concentration, co-ordination and awareness of others by moving together.

Given that most of the Learning Forum was cognitive, the intent of this exercise was to help build a community among the forty participants through a physical medium. Three forty-five minute Eurythmy sessions were conducted. The first was held on Friday afternoon, and was attended by almost all of the participants. The second session on Saturday was attended by twenty-eight of the participants, as was the final session on Sunday. The group leader for Eurythmy was able to incorporate several of the concepts from other parts of the Learning Forum into the sessions - e.g. breaking down barriers between individuals, learning to trust, and “slowing down to speed-up.” The participants who engaged in the last two Eurythmy sessions seemed to feel that it had enhanced their experience of the Learning Forum. However, many opted out after the first day and Eurythmy was the subject of considerable comment and derision.

## **6.2 Peterborough Team Findings**

Feedback was collected at the end of the Learning Forum at the individual and team level. Participants were placed into pairs and were asked to interview each other for forty-five minutes using appreciative inquiry. These interviews served two purposes. First, it was an opportunity for each participant to reflect on the experience they had in the three days and find the meaning in it for themselves. Past experience has shown that individuals often go into such interviews unsure of what they had learned and that much of the meaning is constructed during the interview experience. The interviewer's interests and questions work to clarify and deepen the experience of the interviewee. The second purpose of the interview was to collect the responses to provide a record of what people had learned.

The second set of data was collected as team insights. On the last day of the Forum, teams were asked to reflect together on the following questions:

- What progress has your team made on its task?
- What insights have you gained about yourself as a team that will help you in the future?
- What have you learned about learning from other organizations?

Teams reported on their group reflections to the other teams in a plenary session. As with the individual interviews, the purpose of the reflection was to provide time for the teams to jointly construct meaning for themselves about the experience. Thus, both the individual and team reflection periods were learning experiences for the participants as well as data collection for the research.

The Forum was a significant and provocative event for the Peterborough team. Some members of the team found it frustrating, others profoundly moving; no one was indifferent. The following areas of team learning, expressed in the words of team members, mirror the three categories of outcomes identified above.

### **a) Progress on the Team's Work**

People gained valuable insights into challenges related to operationalizing the “new” mandate of the CHD. After two years of the CHD’s existence, the Learning Forum was the first focused opportunity for staff and board members to discuss issues and challenges that the Division faces:

- “I wasn’t interested in the structural issues before but now I understand these are important.”
- “We got past the chalk board ... we have a clearer sense of where we want to go.”
- “We’ve begun to delineate roles.”
- “We’ve got to find a concrete project to demonstrate the potential of the Division structure to more people.”

Although all team members found the session valuable and productive, the Manager expressed disappointment that more progress was not made in advancing the team’s work:

- “I’m frustrated we didn’t get further on our task this weekend.”

The Manager had begun the event with a clearer sense of the Division and of the team’s task than the other members of the team. He seemed to underestimate the time required for others to come to his level of understanding. Some tension also existed between the Manager’s desire to “get on with the job” and the time needed for the team to get to know one another and learn how they would work together.

### **b) Insights About Working Together as a Team**

The team came to know one another better over the three days. More specifically, staff members and board members came to know each other better. Team members found this satisfying in and of itself, but also felt that it improved the group’s effectiveness. The link between personal relationships and team performance seemed to surprise - and please - several team members:

- “We’ve built up a lot of trust here this weekend, I feel like we’re a team now.”
- “I hadn’t spent 10 minutes with any of you before... now I feel I know you.”

Overall, the team seemed to grasp the intention of the Learning Forum, which was to model new ways of working and learning rather than to problem-solve around specific organizational issues. Finding new ways of thinking and working together was seen as a valuable community development tool that could be taken back to Peterborough and applied as part of the Division's mandate.

- "We've learned new ways of working together ... skills we can use in the division ... and in the community ... [these] skills can be used with other staff and the board."
- "We've learned more about ourselves and our process of interacting."
- "The purpose of the weekend was not to complete the task but to learn how to tackle the task."
- "The point ... is how we learn not what information is acquired ... we should have learning across organizational boundaries with any organization in the community - banks, other community organizations - as well as other museums."

The team found *appreciative inquiry* the most useful and potentially relevant organizational learning tool. *Community dialogue* was uncomfortable for some team members, but it was meaningful and emotional for others. *Paired team reflections* caused some powerful, and not always comfortable, insights to surface. Feedback from other teams reinforced many of the problems identified in the First Phase of Data Collection related to team dynamics, lateral communication and leadership style. The fact that these issues were identified so quickly by other teams provoked some powerful learning.

In two separate pairings, the Peterborough team was criticized for its working style, which was seen as hyperactive, tolerant of little or no silence, and characterized by people "competing for air time:"

- "There's good energy on the team but the hyperness may be closing down thinking about alternatives."
- "Does there have to be as much anxiety as there is? ... Don't you guys get together much. There seems like a lot of catching up to do."

The Peterborough team commented on what appeared to be the "calmness" of the working style of another team.



In one paired team reflection session, the Manager and two other (male) members of the team hotly debated issues related to bureaucratic issues of administrative and decision-making structures within municipal government. A female member of the observing team commented that the male voices on the team were dominating and drowning out a female voice on the Peterborough team who was trying to move the discussion in the direction of more positive images of the Division's potential:

- “The team meeting was really a conversation between two people debating bureaucratic procedures.”
- “[The Manager] draws people back to politics and structures ... this must be dealt with but you're letting this drown-out other voices and other issues ... such as the potential for building new community partnerships.”

Previous themes reemerged regarding poor communication and a leadership style on the part of the Manager that seemed to discourage others from taking on new roles:

- “There are team members who seem able and eager to take on additional responsibilities but aren't being asked.”
- “Need to rotate the leadership from [the Manager] ...but the team is protective of [him].”
- “There is vertical communication between team members and [the Manager] but little horizontal communication among team members.”

Feedback from one team crystallized many of the difficulties related to the Peterborough team's working style. It also drew a connection to the Division's larger role in the community:

- “We [the observing team] work on principles of community development - one is that power grows when you give it away; we have to step back and let others in the community take ownership ... this seems [an] important principle for the Peterborough team itself - it might also be a useful principle for thinking about the CHD's role in the community.”

The most powerful learning during the Learning Forum occurred on Sunday morning when the team was working on its own. The Manager acknowledged the problem with his leadership style. He did so in a way that was the first acknowledgment of vulnerability or self-doubt.

- “This weekend has been painful for me ...you’ve all been very gentle ... I’ve been an obstacle in our process because ... I’ve been so close to it ... I wonder if my leadership style is appropriate for the evolution of the organization in the next stage.”

It evoked a strong, immediate and emotional response. People expressed immediate admiration and support:

- “We would never have gotten here without [the Manager] ... but your leadership style does leave you alone at the top.”
- “It’s painful for the creator to let go of their creation.”
- “One set of skills have gotten us this far, all of us may need a mix of more skills in the future.”

There were tears in many eyes and a tremendous feeling of openness and trust in the room. This was reduced when the Manager, in what seemed an effort to reassert control, said one reason he was not able to establish closer personal relationships with any of them was because “I might have to fire you one day.” This reduced, but did not destroy, the sense of trust and community in the group.

## **7.0 Post Learning Forum Interactions with the Learning Team**

### **7.1 Second Interviews With Team Members**

The second interviews with team members took place approximately two weeks after the Learning Forum. The interviews sought feedback on the impact of the Learning Forum on two broad issues: the team's understanding of its task – addressing the expanded mandate of the Division; and on personal and interpersonal dynamics. Questions were again framed in the spirit of appreciative inquiry, encouraging team members to imagine positive possibilities.

#### **Questions:**

1. What were the most memorable or exceptional moments for you at the Learning Forum?
2. What insights did you gain about the team's task? How would you describe the focus of the team's work?
3. What personal insights did you gain about yourself or your relationship to the team?
4. Have there been positive changes in personal interactions and team dynamics as a result of the Forum?

#### **Findings Regarding the Team's Task:**

Question 2 elicited the following responses.

The Division was born out of the strategic vision of the Manager. By the end of the Forum there had emerged the beginnings of a shared vision of the Division and how it might function. There was also increased optimism about the Division's future.

Staff still expressed worries about workload but there was also optimism and excitement at the prospect of new Divisional responsibilities. Some welcomed the opportunity to expand their work with other cultural organizations. One staff member in addition to the Manager also welcomed the opportunity to expand their involvement with other municipal departments. There was recognition that the organization must move to develop the skills and strategies needed to involve more people in the work of the Division - rather than taking on everything themselves.

- “I feel more hopeful ... there is an opportunity to expand participation to include more organizations ... I have a better sense of why [CHD] exists.”
- “I’ll happily take on more Divisional responsibilities ... we need to involve [museum] staff more outside their specific responsibilities ... in Board liaison and the bigger picture ... we also need to formalize everyone’s Divisional roles more.”

One team member continued to express concern and skepticism about the capacity of the organization to take on broadened responsibilities. This person raised the issue of professional ethics, especially with regard to museum collections and traditional custodial responsibilities. duties they feared would be sacrificed in the new, more externally focused Division.

- “I’m still uncertain about our task ... we’ve basically been doing the work of the Division, now we have the title for it ... the rest of us are not involved at the board level, that’s [the Manager’s] arena ... we’re too busy at our own jobs now ... we can’t take on more ... how do we establish priorities ... maybe this is the task ... we have to make some tough choices, what’s the process for doing this? ... do I neglect exhibitions over collections? ... there are ethical issues here.”

It was becoming clear the Division operated in two very different contexts - one inside municipal government and in the community; different skill sets and approaches were needed for each. The City demanded quick response time, pragmatic problem solving, “watching your back.” The community work had more to do with consensual decision-making, sacrificing short-term efficiency for building longer-term relationships of trust and shared commitment. These were among the characteristics of equity planning that Dreeszen (1994) identified as essential to the future of cultural planning.

- “Consensual management may be ok in the museum but you can’t operate that way at City Hall.”
- “We need to be working better inside the City and outside in the community ... the [Peterborough] Arts Umbrella can take on part of the external role.”

It also became apparent during the interviews that the Manager's source of professional identity was shifting away from the museum and toward the municipality. Paradoxically, many of the skills and competencies that served him well there - strategic insight, astute short-term problem-solving, highly tuned political instincts - were the very qualities that were the source of some of the interpersonal tensions in the museum and in the larger community. Even team members who were critical of some aspects of his leadership style, acknowledged and admired his skills and effectiveness in the municipal arena.

- “[The Manager] is shrewd ... he is not like the dinosaurs at city hall ... but he can work with them ... his gender is right and he's very bright ... that's where he gets his satisfaction ... he's a political guy ... he's sensitive too ... he's always been very sensitive to the Native community, to the whole race relations stuff ... he's really good at that sort of thing ... he's interested in the right stuff. He's politically bang on and he can play the game.”

### **Findings Regarding Personal and Interpersonal Dynamics**

Responses to questions 1, 3 and 4 ran together, all relating to personal interactions and team dynamics.

There had been substantial progress made at the Forum in advancing the team's understanding of its work and the challenges before the Division. However, it was immediately clear there had been a “cooling” of enthusiasm and willingness to address some of the difficult personal and interpersonal dynamics raised at the Forum. The most vivid memory people had about the Forum had to do with these issues. But the response for most members of the team was to “put the lid on” difficult emotional issues.

One team member indicated that there had been no follow-up discussion of these issues at the staff meeting immediately following the Forum. Two members reported on a discussion in the car on the way home after the Forum in which they agreed not to let too much time pass before the team came together. The fear - as it turned out, an accurate one - was that the team would lose momentum and the willingness to confront these issues.

- “There was a lot of pent-up emotion, a lot of intensity ... I’m not sure this was healthy ... the personal issues didn’t get raised at our staff meeting after ... the criticisms of [the Manager] I’m not sure were fair ... he felt badly.”
- “I took exception to the criticism that saw our team’s intensity as negative ... it was really passion ... their interaction didn’t seem real to me.”

At the same time, there was a reiteration of the need to work together differently.

- “It’s true we need to work harder at communicating.... especially horizontal communication ... we’ve committed to having more staff meetings ... I suggested we establish a binder that contains all the materials for the Culture and Heritage Board that would be available to staff.”
- “Giving power away ... each team member needs to take on some responsibilities ... people began to relate to one another more, not just to [the Manager], this is important, we started talking about this and need to continue.”
- “[the Manager] saw that his leadership style may not be what was needed ... I’d been frustrated ... [another staff member] was frustrated ... was it all genuine ... I have a sense we’re lapsing back into old roles.”

The Manager was struggling with criticism and seemed genuinely committed to changing his management style. But he found it difficult to break old habits. He felt there was an important distinction between leadership in direction setting - something that could be shared, and management decisions involving issues such as resource allocation - things that could not. He also said he believed staff *themselves* had to take greater responsibility for addressing organizational dynamics.

- “The communication issues are real ... but staff themselves have to take more responsibility for this ... I’m still a believer in a ‘need to know’ policy on information sharing. I know my staff well ... not all of them are ready for some of this ... I’ve been delegating more responsibility ... but it’s still my responsibility to allocate resources ... leadership is a shared responsibility but management is not.”

## **7.2 Team Retreat**

The goals identified for the retreat were that by the end of the day the team would have:

- A shared vision of the Division;
- A shared vision of culture and heritage;
- A critical path, plus a method for recording and evaluating progress;
- Exciting ideas; and,
- Sunburn.

Most of the morning was spent on the first two goals, what the group called the “big picture ... the vision stuff.”

### **Goal 1: A Shared Vision of the Division**

Considerable time was spent discussing administrative and governance structures. One or two members, including the Manager, dominated the discussion. The primary issue was the feasibility of the Division simultaneously forming both part of the administrative and political infrastructure of municipal government and a representative body for community interests. A tension was acknowledged between the short-term problem solving and conflict-resolution mode of the municipality, and the need for strong external advocacy.

Several members pushed for a resolution of these tensions in structural terms. The Manager and several others took a more pragmatic view, arguing that the Division had a flexible structure that was able to manage these tensions. It allowed the organization to work inside the municipality when that was effective, while remaining a vehicle to mobilize a collective voice in the community when that was needed.

- “I remember something I read about municipal cultural policies which was the need to balance the benefits of arm’s length relationship to government with the need to work inside city structures better. This is what I was trying to create with the Division. The participation of the art gallery or the historical society in the Division doesn’t mean they can’t continue to take

independent stands on some issues ... but we also have the potential to speak with a collective voice when it's in our interests... my attitude is always 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' ... understand the tensions, the paradoxes you're managing but accept they'll never be completely resolved."

The team wrestled with how to define outcome measures for demonstrating the "product" or benefits that the museum delivered to the Division. Museum measures such as attendance figures, the numbers of school tours and others were relatively straightforward, but this view of museum performance is revealing in itself. The measures mentioned are really *outputs* - an accounting of activities the institution delivers, rather than *outcomes* - the impacts or public benefits resulting from those activities.

If "success" for the museum was difficult to assess, it was even less clear what constituted "success" for the Division, and how it might be accounted for. Many of the outcomes delivered by the Division were intangible – political problem solving inside government and alliance building in the community.

- "Recording and tracking Divisional activity is harder to record than attendance figures ... we need to find some way to report annually on Divisional accomplishments."
- "Politics are a recurring theme here ... political outcomes are what the CHD delivers ... much of this is solving problems for the city ... if important issues come to Council in other areas they always take it under advisement and refer it to staff for study and sober second thought ... in the past when cultural issues came to Council they were either seen as too marginal to warrant study or Council didn't seem to have confidence staff could provide sound advice ... we can be valuable problem solvers but it means playing politics on several levels ... if we can prove our value we can maybe justify additional resources."

The question of Divisional reporting was linked to a discussion about the larger need to report on cultural activities and resources throughout the community. It was suggested that one function of CHD could be to establish a consistent format and template for reporting on all cultural activity - and to serve as a channel for funneling that information to the city.



The relationship between the museum and the Division was also discussed at length. The Manager agreed that the Division needed to have a higher profile, but cautioned against abandoning or even reducing a separate identity for the museum.

- “Without the museum there is no CHD ... the city really still sees us institutionally ... connected with this building ... several years ago the Recreation Division gave up its responsibility for managing facilities to focus more on planning, facilitating and so on in the community ... they got almost entirely shut down in the last round of budget cuts. The view is ‘how much can it really cost to facilitate a few meetings?’ Also when the downsizing started it was the planners that were the first to go ... remember this is a municipality where the city budget is the corporate plan ... council makes lots of nice pronouncements about their commitment to culture and heritage ... but they would close us down in a minute if they had to.”

The composition and structure of the CHB was also discussed. The Manager felt that consideration should be given to a more “federated model” in which half the members would continue to be appointed by the municipality, while the other half would be elected at an annual community forum. Rather than people on the Board representing specific institutional interests, representation might be considered on a more functional or strategic level - cultural education, festivals and events, community-wide strategic planning, information and communications systems, advocacy, fundraising, etc.

The debate continued about whether museum staff should have their Divisional responsibilities formalized, or whether it was better to stop short of the perfect rational model. The Manager took a pragmatic view.

- “What we have is a really broad framework which I think everyone feels has some real strengths to it. It’s broad and flexible and there’s an ability to find whatever you want to find there. Rather than trying to come at it from the front-end and defining the Division in the abstract maybe it’s about becoming more aware of what activity falls into the museum and what is divisional. In part we’ll figure out the role for the Division by looking more carefully at what’s already been done on the ground.”

The Manager's leadership style was raised again as both a strength and a liability for the Division. The Manager himself sent mixed signals, both acknowledging his need to work more collaboratively, but being drawn back to more familiar ways of working.

## **Goal 2: A Shared Vision of Culture and Heritage**

Considerable time was spent in the morning discussing the meaning of concepts such as "culture," "heritage," "identity," "community" and "diversity." A lengthy discussion took place on issues of exclusion and prejudice in the community; this was the first time these issues had been raised explicitly by the team. The team agreed that as long as cultural issues remained concerned with "safe," non-controversial ideas - on early community history, on "the K-factor," on arts and culture as pleasant recreational or leisure activity, Peterborough's "old guard" remained comfortable. As soon as issues were more challenging, when they began to challenge - rather than perpetuate - community norms, resistance set in.

- "They want to celebrate who we were - not examine who we are."
- "There is really a definite line between what we can accept, things that are easily accessible or don't challenge us much or make us think more about our identity. But as soon as you take one step beyond that, people turn away."

A lengthy discussion about the museum and the Division's responsibility to "lead or follow" community norms took place.

- "Peterborough is certainly becoming a retirement community and that's shaping it. One of the negative sides of that is that people are moving to Peterborough to get away from the multiculturalism of Toronto. The perceived violence of Toronto ... to preserve the WASP thing that they grew up in when Toronto was for them."
- "What's the culture of Peterborough we're charged with perpetuating and maintaining? ... Should we be the Peterborough Museum of Cultural Intolerance? ... the Museum of Racism? ... is our role to just reflect community views ... or to challenge those views?"

The Manager described an incident several years before when a former Board of Museum Management member pushed for a policy on ethno-racial and cultural equity, one that

acknowledged the existence of racism in Peterborough. The rest of the Board, who refused to acknowledge the reality of racism, resoundingly rejected the policy.

All team members were engaged in this discussion, but the dialogue was dominated by the Manager and by the vocal Board member. The Board member pushed for stronger political stands on community issues. The Manager and several others were more cautious and agreed that the institution could not remain neutral, but did not wish to push the status quo too hard. This second group pointed to the weakness of the Social Planning Council, a Council that had been stereotyped and marginalized by Council and by the business community as “radicals and troublemakers,” a stigma that had undermined their ability to move an agenda ahead. The fear was expressed that cultural issues would get tied up in this conflict. The Manager felt the organization had to be pragmatic and watch for opportunities to push a more progressive agenda forward. He was less inclined than the more militant Board member to advocate an explicit set of principles and commitments.

- “There’s always a tension between continuity and change if you want to frame it that way, some things we want to hold onto in the community and other things we want to let go and redefine. But there is something about the Division not explicitly defining what values need to be promoted but helping engage people in a dialogue out of which might emerge a clearer sense of what those values are ... what we want to be at the heart of the community.”
- “I think the only way there is going to be consensus in the community is by forcing people to think about things. And that’s only going to happen by us holding up a mirror [to the community].”
- “But who are we to decide what the values are at the heart of the community? ... besides if we declare ourselves it gives them something to shoot at.”
- “I think there *are* some universal values that should be reflected in the way this community behaves ... like ethno-cultural tolerance and respect for diversity ... we [the Division] do not have a belief or value statement and I think it would be an interesting exercise to move towards trying to articulate what the shared beliefs are at the Board level, at the institutional level ... and so on.”

### **Goal 3: Clarification of Team Outcomes and Critical Path**

By the end of the morning the team had identified the following outcomes:

- Engage more people in the process of shaping a vision for the Division;
- Raise the public profile of the CHD;
- Identify priorities within the existing CHD mandate; and
- Deal with administrative, governance and resource allocation issues.

The team broke up into pairs, each one assigned to a different goal. Each group was to define concrete proposals to advance the goals using appreciative inquiry.

The following proposals emerged from this work.

- In order to engage more people, one group proposed a Culture and Heritage Festival be organized as a high profile event involving as many groups as possible.
- The group asked to identify Divisional priorities also suggested organizing an event, in their case a multicultural heritage festival.
- In order to raise the Division's profile it was proposed that a Divisional logo be developed that could be used by groups to promote events and signal support and encouragement from the CHD. It was also proposed that an annual award ceremony be organized that could profile the work of the Division and other local cultural groups, and double as a fundraising event.
- Several proposals were made to deal with administrative and governance issues. These included: more clearly delineating Divisional from museum roles and responsibilities; restructuring the Board by eliminating representatives from local cultural organizations and replacing them with elected representatives from the culture and heritage community; advocating for a fixed percentage of local property tax to be dedicated to the work of the Division, based on the model used for library services.

Individual team members were recruited as leads on the four proposals. The Manager offered to complete a critical path for the team based on these priorities. The team determined that a presentation should be made to the Culture and Heritage Board at its September meeting on the results of the team's work to date.

The team conducted a team dialogue at the end of the afternoon. In the dialogue, I commented that I thought the energy level had been higher in the morning when the group was dealing with “vision-level stuff” - definitions of culture, diversity, the larger “system issues” related to management and governance structures, etc. A team member said she felt just the opposite.

- “It’s funny because I felt a lot more energetic this afternoon thinking about real concrete things ... Thinking about possibilities and ways of doing things. And I know that’s me. I want to do a job and be able to see what to plan. The discussion this morning is important and meaningful but it’s still a theoretical exercise to me. It’s applying an idea that gets me excited and interested. So it’s when you started the timetable that I really started to get wakened up.”

Another team member commented that they found the one-on-one interviewing and conversation at least as stimulating as group discussions.

## **7.3 Presentation to Culture and Heritage Board**

### **Preparation**

The team met in early September to plan their presentation to the CHB. It was clear that the momentum that emerged from the retreat had been lost. The Manager had prepared a critical path that summarized the conclusions of the team retreat and established tasks, milestones and responsibilities of team members. However, people seemed to have lost the enthusiasm that was present at the retreat. Frustration was expressed about a process that seemed to have been about a great deal of talk and reflection, but little concrete action. Two staff members were dealing with serious family illnesses. Everyone was dealing with stress due to day-to-day commitments at the museum. One Board member expressed frustration about long periods between meetings, with little information or communication. When the Manager focused people on the critical path some of these anxieties and complaints were reduced, but a level of frustration remained.

The Manager offered a suggestion about one of the group's problems.

- "One of the challenges that we had as a team is that we keep trying to do it ourselves. And correct me if I'm wrong but I think the best use of our time and energy is to try to come up with a process to get other people to help do it. To involve more people in doing it ... I keep coming back to it's nice to try to solve this problem myself or for us to try to solve it but then it's only our voice and it's not the community board or the board voice for that matter."

The Manager suggested that the team use appreciative inquiry to interview a range of people who the team felt might come to see the benefits of working together in the Division. The team agreed to the proposal immediately and identified a list of people to interview, including other members of the Board. The results of these interviews were to be brought back and consolidated into a series of "provocative propositions," a second step in the appreciative inquiry process aimed at building shared vision. The interviewees would then be invited to a community meeting at which these provocative propositions - composite statements of people's ideas - would be brought forward. One team member compared this to "bringing the Learning Forum to Peterborough."

The team decided it would take a number of issues to the Board:

- An update on the team's work to date;
- A draft definition of culture and heritage;
- The proposal regarding the use of appreciative inquiry for engaging more stakeholders;
- The proposal for a Divisional logo and a special event to build profile: and
- Some initial work on distinguishing the work of the PCMA and CHD.

A team dialogue closed the meeting:

- "It's getting easier .. we're working better as a team ... I listen better."
- "We're moving from solving problems to identifying tasks."
- "We're beginning to share responsibility, not taking it all on ourselves ... we've changed from trying to figure-out everything about the Division and the Board to designing a process for figuring it out."
- "Our meetings are still too far apart ... we need to be prompted by someone between meetings ... we need to keep the momentum going."
- "I feel good about going away with concrete tasks."

### **The Culture and Heritage Board Meeting**

The Manager requested an extended meeting of the CHB to report on the team's work. A memo distributed in advance of the meeting provided an agenda and background material on the team's work.

One team member introduced the presentation by providing a clear and succinct summary of the team's work to date and the Learning Forum. Another team member made a presentation on a conceptualization of culture and heritage (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Culture and Heritage Division Definitions**

## **Culture:**

**Culture is the total way of life experienced by people. Culture is manifest through the following:**

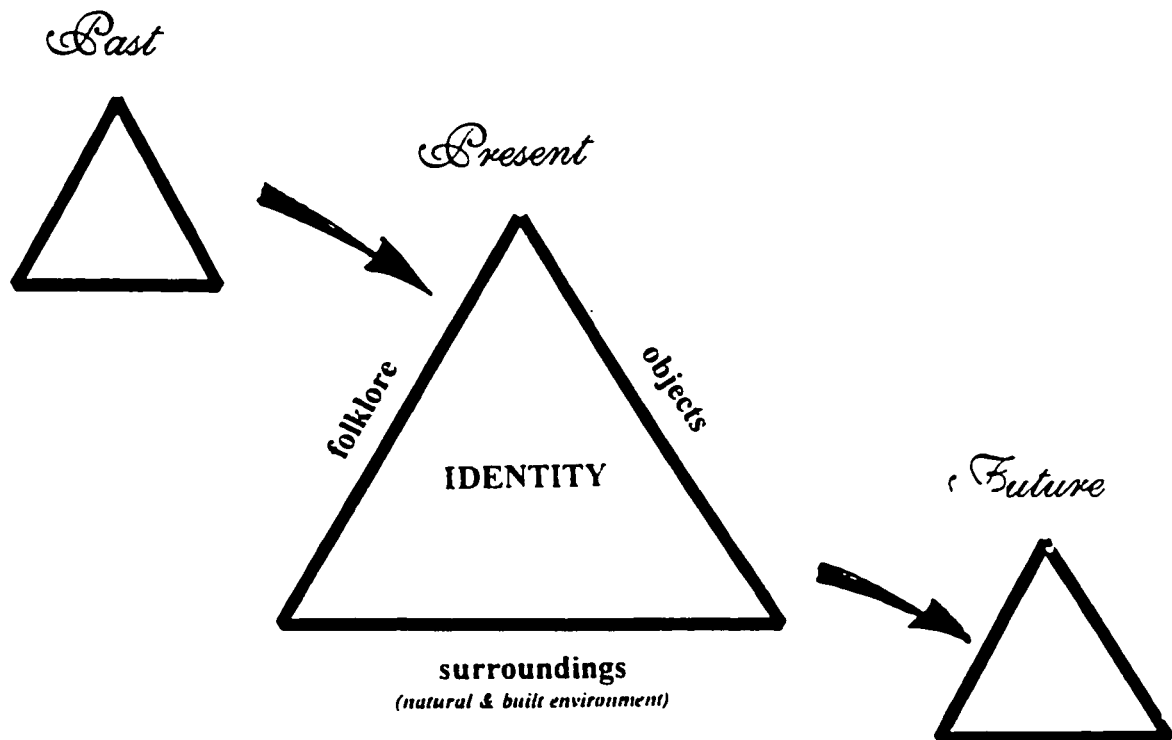
**objects** (material culture) - tangible items produced by a cultural group which reflect its values, lifestyles and technology

**folklore** (non-material culture) - non-tangible practices, mostly oral traditions which are maintained within a cultural group and include such things as teachings, tales, beliefs, superstitions, fears, prejudices and customs which are passed from one generation to the next

**surroundings** (cultural landscape) the natural and built environment in which a cultural group lives

## **Heritage:**

Heritage is made up of manifestations of culture which may be passed on from one generation to the next.





The presentation proposed that the Division adopt a statement of how it understood these terms, and the implications of these understandings, for its mandate. The presenter asked for feedback. There was no response. A second team member asked, “where do the arts fit in?” A discussion followed which involved team members and several Board members, regarding the pros and cons of making the arts a distinct category in the conceptual model. Another member of the team said they felt there should be an explicit reference made to cultural diversity. The discussion continued for fifteen minutes and was dominated by team members who demonstrated a sophisticated grasp of the “definitional dilemma” in cultural planning. With no consensus emerging, the Manager suggested that the team take the feedback, refine the definition and come back to the Board at a later date.

A second team member then distributed a handout on appreciative inquiry. Again the presentation was a sophisticated and succinct description of key principles. He proposed that appreciative inquiry be used as the basis of interviews aimed at building consensus and evolving a stronger shared vision for the Division. At this point several long-standing Board members, including the Chair, “revolted.”

- “We are putting the cart before the horse. We have accomplished nothing that in any way responds to why the Board was put forward. Why the Board was changed in the first place. ... That’s why I’ve been contacting people over the summer because I’ve felt we’ve been sitting here for two years ... we can’t even define what the Board is to our own satisfaction. If we can’t define it ourselves and we can’t find our own direction and what this Board feels is its mandate, how can we add fifty other people to the mess?”

The Manager responded defensively by arguing that a great deal had been accomplished and listing a number of successes, but he acknowledged that he may have not communicated these as clearly as he might have. The team argued that the proposed interviews would help advance the goals and mandate assigned to the Division, including the definition of priorities that they acknowledged had not really taken place. Several Board members felt they were not receiving the information they needed to do their jobs.

It became clear that much of the leadership that the museum had been providing in the community prior to the establishment of the Division continued to be seen as the work of the museum, not of the Division. For several Board members, the genuinely new activity identified in the Division’s

mandate - including development of municipal arts and municipal heritage policies - had not occurred. The Board felt that the Division was not receiving the profile and attention they should. The Board had interpreted the mandate of the Division as set out in the founding municipal by-law as a specific list of activities or tasks to be undertaken. The Manager - the architect of the Division - viewed it as a flexible framework within which specific activities would be undertaken as circumstances and opportunities arose.

Communication problems seemed compounded by a personality conflict between the Manager and the Board chair. The meeting resulted in the tabling of all the issues brought forward by the team: no decisions were reached. Everyone left the meeting frustrated. Many factors seemed to be at play here: problems of communication between the Manager and the Board; differing interpretations of Divisional priorities; and the Board's sense that it was not playing as active and high profile a role as many had hoped.

A team member thought another factor was that several of the most vocal and critical Board members were individuals who liked concrete tasks and projects. The discussion about appreciative inquiry, coming hard on the heels of an equally nebulous discussion on definitions of culture, had been too much abstraction. The team was trying to establish a stronger context for the work of the Division, but these Board members wanted to "just get on with the job." A team member reflected on the meeting:

- "The meeting was a disaster. Board members responded hostilely [sic] to the concept of conducting appreciative inquiry interviews and felt that the approach we advocated involves too much talk and not enough action. 'We already know who we are, let's just do it.' Some board members seemed resentful that they hadn't been already involved in the process every step of the way. On the whole it seemed we took a big step backwards in our task, as it seemed the most important job ahead of us now is to mend fences."

## **7.4 Follow-up Team Activity**

The team met several times through the fall of 1996 and winter of 1997 to continue work on the goals and tasks identified at the retreat, but the momentum and confidence of the group had been lost. Frustration continued to be expressed that more work could not be accomplished between meetings. Due to other commitments, no one was able to bring the time needed to move work ahead.

Paradoxically, a great deal of productive work took place over this period. The team went ahead with appreciative inquiry interviews in the belief that the best strategy was to “get on with it” and report to the Board later. Interviews were conducted with the mayor, the Chair of the Social Planning Council, the chair of the Chamber of Commerce, a representative of a recently-formed Quality of Life Coalition, and a representative of a committee struck to lead a community economic development strategy called Greater Peterborough Area (GPA) 20/20. All generated valuable insights and suggestions about the future of the community and the Division.

Appreciative inquiry was used to interview and “recruit” a steering committee for a proposed Culture and Heritage (Planning) Forum to take place in the spring. On the administrative front, solid work was done to separate Divisional and institutional functions and responsibilities. On the governance front, valuable work was done to distinguish Divisional activities in three categories: those that staff would lead; those that the Board would lead; and those that would be shared responsibilities. It became clear that the Board was not being used effectively. A lack of clarity about roles meant that too much time was being taken up with administrative matters and not enough time devoted to external advocacy, networking, or profile building, all activities that the Board was both eager and able to take on.

In June 1997 the team decided that their work as a team linked to both the experience of the Learning Forum and to my research should “go into hiatus.” Notes from the team meeting offer a rationale for this decision:

- “Members expressed growing frustration with the project, the process and the rate of progress. We’ve had virtually no contact with other groups since the Learning Forum. It was suggested that the focus for the Learning Forum should have been with different types of institutions rather than other museums. The team was reminded that we are attempting to do this through

our application of appreciative inquiry. The team felt increased pressures both internally [within the group] and externally [from the September Board meeting] to move from planning and analysis to action: from talking about it to actually doing it. It was suggested that by following a more rigid process that we've lost the flexibility to respond quickly to change in the political and economic environment and opportunities. There was general recognition that by trying to apply [organizational learning] to our task both processes suffered. The group is very product oriented and there is no sense of personal fulfillment because there is little tangible product at this stage. There was consensus that our dissipating energies be focused on the Special Events Committee and the Cultural Forum. The team should meet only to support and/or advance these projects or to honor its commitments to the project."

People had come to associate the team's work solely with the investment in reflection and organizational learning. The invitation extended at the Learning Forum in particular, and in my research more broadly, to remain reflective about the team's actual work and team dynamics had become separated from the work itself. There was little recognition that the team's investment in these learning processes had been key to analyzing need, taking action, and affecting some shifts in how they interacted as a team.

## **7.5 Recurring Dialogue With Museum Manager**

The Manager continued to build support at City Hall and in the community for the work of the Division despite continued financial pressures on all municipal departments. One reason for the growing trust and support, he believed, was that he was now seen as more of a “team player.”

The most significant development for the CHD during 1997 was the resignation of the Director of the Peterborough Public Library and the Manager’s appointment as the part-time manager. The relationship between the City and the Library Director and Library Board had grown progressively worse through the municipal budget cutting process. The Manager commented:

- “They just don’t get it, they haven’t read Politics 101 ... they’re marginalizing themselves ... winning the battle and losing the war.”

Senior staff and politicians at the City saw the Manager as someone who could manage the political arena more astutely. Paradoxically, given tensions around leadership style in the PCMA, he was also seen as someone who could manage staff in a more collaborative and democratic fashion. The Manager reported that the Library, like the museum, was organized vertically with narrow functional specializations and little ability to work cross-functionally outside these areas.

Insights gained at the PCMA were beneficial in tackling similar issues at the library. The Manager found the library’s organizational culture “closed and insular,” more focused on internal operating standards - “micro management”, than on public service and community relations - “macro management”. The Manager used appreciative inquiry to interview library staff, and believed it had helped build commitment to the need for change in the organization. Council and city administrators saw the Manager as someone with a community-oriented view of library services, a priority if the institution was to build external support and alternate sources of revenue. A strategic planning session that involved the library staff and Board identified virtually identical priorities to those of the Division - establish a higher public profile, build stronger community links, play a stronger advocacy role, improve ties with Council, and update internal policies and procedures.

In return for taking on management responsibilities at the library, the museum received additional resources from the city that allowed for the hiring of additional part-time help at the museum.

Linking the library and the CHD opened up a number of opportunities. Library staff's expertise in information technology brought valuable additional skills and perspectives to the Division. Web site support was negotiated with a local Internet service provider who contributed hardware and free Internet service to interested cultural organizations. The Manager represented the interests of a wide range of these organizations in negotiation with the service provider.

### **Divisional Results 1997-1998**

Regular phone conversations continued with the Museum Manager throughout the balance of 1997 and into early 1998. There were many Divisional accomplishments during this period, a portion of which are listed below, organized according to the three broad CHD roles.

Results related to *management of PCMA*:

- An upgraded PCMA (and CHD) web site, and growing community use of the site;
- The Archives component of the PCMA assumed formal responsibility for the historical records of the City Clerk;
- Leadership, with a consortium of community museums in Ontario, in the production of traveling exhibitions for rotating use by other museums in an initiative funded by the federal government;
- Improvements to the museum physical plant - an upgraded driveway and a new roof for the museum;
- The construction of the Heritage Pavilion outside the museum to serve as a site for museum programming and as a performing arts venue; The securing of additional resources for a part-time Program Assistant, Museum Clerk and contract cleaners.

Results related to providing *support and assistance to the City* on culture and heritage issues included:

- Inclusion of a CHB member on the Civic Awards Committee;
- Coordinated input from the culture and heritage community to the GPA 20/20 regional economic development strategy, a key municipal priority; due to the networking and advocacy

efforts of the Division the cultural community had a larger turnout at community meetings than any other sector:

- The addition of a representative on the CHB from the Library and the Native Friendship Centre;
- Successful mediation by the Manager of a conflict between a downtown property owner and a cultural organization that would have meant the loss of a performing arts space;
- Participation on a Waterfront Development Taskforce, a key municipal priority linked to downtown redevelopment (at the request of the mayor);
- Reflecting the Division's heightened profile more applications were received to serve on the CHB than any other municipal board or advisory committee;
- Assistance in mediating negotiations between the city and the local art gallery regarding operating support.

Results related to *community cultural planning and development*:

- Supported and facilitated a cultural tourism and joint marketing strategy for local culture and heritage groups under the umbrella of "Celebrate Canada in the Kawarthas;" this initiative was seen as one of the most positive concrete results to emerge from the GPA 20/20 process;
- Organized and facilitated a "Culture Matters" Roundtable for the visiting provincial Liberal culture critic;
- Organized and coordinated a Mayor's Reception for the visiting Ontario Minister of Culture;
- Participated in planning the Pathway of Fame, an initiative to recognize local artists and community leaders; and
- Coordinated a meeting with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to organize public art and heritage exhibitions in a local MNR building.

It was clear that the Manager's professional satisfaction was less tied to the museum and more to the municipality. The Manager reported a conversation with a museum colleague in which the colleague observed that the Manager must be ready to move on to a larger institution. He responded that the more exciting challenge for him was the municipal arena, working to make culture and heritage issues a higher priority in local decision-making. Between praise at the City and recognition in the community, the Manager was receiving validation and reinforcement in his

new role. Other museum staff found themselves in a changed context, one for which not all felt prepared. The Manager reported that morale was suffering.

In June 1998, a year after the team went “into hiatus,” he reflected on the process.

- In light of all the uncertainty and financial pressures there is no time to sit back and reflect or plan, we have to seize opportunities as they arise and run with them. It’s hard to stay focused on rethinking your mandate when you have doubts if you’ll even exist tomorrow ... the Division is still trying to figure out what business we’re in ... it was easier in the museum, we had some sense of the museum business. I think people are less clear just exactly what the business of the Division is, but I think we’ll figure it out as we do it.”

Despite the team’s disillusionment with the process, he felt that the experience had been positive.

- “[There is] much better communication within the Division about our activity and the larger context for the change in mandate and the project has forced us to confront this ... I think we’re better for being involved, but you can’t assess the changes overnight.”

He reflected that as a result of the team process he felt:

- “[I am] listening better and delegating more ... if I’m to survive in the new position I have to delegate more, give away more responsibilities.”
- “Rather than managing the meeting and assuming responsibility for follow-up I ask them what they want to accomplish and help lead a discussion about the options for doing so.”

The Manager increasingly saw his job as:

- “Building a web ... it’s about public relations, it’s about politics, it’s about building relationships.”

One indication of the changes in the perception of the Division was reflected in coverage in the local paper. At the beginning of 1997, the Manager was still being referred to as Manager of the museum, even when he was doing Divisional business. By the beginning of 1998, he was described



as “the city’s leading cultural bureaucrat.” He wondered if the time had come for him to move his office out of the museum and library to City Hall. A year earlier I had asked about this. At the time he considered it premature, but, based on the increased profile and legitimacy of the Division, he felt the move might now be timely, and might help to change incorrect perceptions about the Division’s tie to the museum. His challenge now, he stated, was to build support within the City for the resources needed to hire a new full-time manager at the museum.

## **7.6 Summary of Second Phase Data Collection**

The central research question that emerged from the background literature review was:

*How can organizational and professional practices in museums change in order to address new understandings of culture and community-based cultural planning?*

The premise was that there were two requirements for museums realizing an expanded role in cultural planning: first, a re-framing of museum purposes linked to a rethinking of culture and community-based cultural planning; second, new organizational and professional practices and capabilities. Organizational learning was hypothesized as a tool for supporting both of these change processes.

Findings through two phases of data collection reveal a number of misconceptions related to this neat formula for change.

### **7.6.1 Re-framing Museum and Cultural Planning Purposes**

The first premise was informed by the belief that planning is concerned with conceptualization, problem-framing and values clarification (Innes, 1990). The team did make progress in evolving a more cohesive shared vision of culture and heritage issues in Peterborough, progress evident during the retreat and during the presentation to the CHB. However, the reality was that the group *started out* with a fuller grasp of these issues than I had assumed. It was not an inability to see the “larger picture” but rather people’s desire to see progress made in smaller concrete ways. Motivation and satisfaction came from moving this larger agenda forward incrementally. The research design that encouraged people to repeatedly return to reflecting on “first principals” was enervating and disempowering.

The larger vision of local cultural planning and development that all team members were able to articulate was proving relevant in interpreting two of the three broad mandates assigned the Division – providing support to the municipality and supporting and facilitating community-based cultural development. These understandings proved far less helpful in supporting a process of change in the Division’s third area of responsibility, continued responsibility for managing and

operating the museum. Here a range of factors acted against reform in organizational and professional practices. In the words of one team member the establishment of the Division has merely given formal sanction to the “strong community orientation” that staff believed had long characterized the activities and commitments of the PCMA. But this activity continued to fall largely into the category of working with other cultural organizations on strategies to advance local cultural development, activity that had now received formal sanction in one of the three mandates of the Division.

It can be argued that this interpretation of the museum’s community commitments served to actually *deflect* attention from the more radical challenging of traditional museum and interpretive practices that lay in Tivy’s (1995) “Revising the Past” paradigm. Embracing this paradigm required a more sustained and critical examination of the larger public purposes served by the museum, and of the *operational* implications of the institution serving the contemporary cultural needs of a diverse community. The organization caught glimpses of this dramatically different role in the repatriation initiative and in exhibit themes addressing more contemporary community issues. But these activities remained confined to temporary changes in individual museum programs. Lavine (1992) argued that if museums are to shift from collections-driven institutions to institutions engaged more with communities and larger public interests a more systematic reform of organizational and professional practices would be required. The failure to engage issues at this level meant that the organization was continually drawn back to more traditional formulations of museum purposes and practices.

The more traditional functional definition of museum practice continued to exert a strong hold on museum staff responsible for those functions. It was here that they found their sense of professional identity and competence. The Manager’s professional identity and job satisfaction, in contrast, appeared increasingly tied to the municipality arena.

### **7.6.2 Barriers to Organizational Learning**

My hypothesis was that organizational learning provided potentially useful principles and practices to support the change process in PCMA/CHD. Evidence from two phases of data collection and analysis suggests that significant barriers exist to these tools realizing their potential as “change technologies.”

### **a) Information and Communication Barriers**

A basic and serious barrier is weak communication and inadequate sharing of information in the institution. The Manager's belief in sharing information on a "need-to-know basis" is an impediment to other staff's ability to develop the shared understanding of the work of the Division.

### **b) Emotional and Interpersonal Barriers**

The emotional and interpersonal dynamics on the team appeared to play an important role in people's receptivity and capacity for change. Schein (1992) argues that many barriers to learning and change are deeply rooted in the defense strategies we use to protect ourselves from feelings of personal and emotional vulnerability. Conversely, people are able to change if they feel supported rather than vulnerable, and if they are more eager to support others than "win points" for performing or fixing problems themselves (Dixon, 1994).

Team members *were* able to express strong emotion if they related to their strong sense of professional commitment to the institutions: as has been noted this had both positive and negative impacts. But there was a consistent resistance to acknowledge personal vulnerability or confront difficult interpersonal conflicts. When the Manager was able to acknowledge his feelings of self-doubt in the final team meeting at the Learning Forum the impact on how the team interacted with one another was significant. People listened to one another differently, and spoke more honestly. There was a feeling of trust and openness in the room that was palpable, and that I did not sense at any other moment in the research. This experience proved impossible for the team to sustain. Once back in the institution, amidst the pressure of work, more traditional modes of thinking and relating to one another reasserted themselves.

### **c) The Limits of Rational Analysis and Problem-Solving**

The findings point to the limits of rational problem-solving and strategic analysis in organizations, but also to the powerful hold that these traditions have on us. Among the alternatives that formed part of the experience at the Learning Forum: valuing a wider range of sources of knowledge, including personal or embodied knowledge and intuition; valuing silence; learning to listen better;

suspending judgment; acknowledging multiple answers or solutions to any issue; and , perhaps most difficult of all, relinquishing our need for control (Senge, 1990; Dixon, 1994).

I recorded the following reflection on my own response to the Learning Forum immediately after the event.

- “The weekend was a very powerful and moving experience for me. It gave me a much more visceral and direct and emotional experience of a lot of ideas about organizational learning I’d read about that I ‘knew’ intellectually but didn’t really understand ... I learned: the value of silence: slowing down so more things happen; that the most productive and satisfying meetings are those in which someone has managed to ‘take the temperature down,’ not ‘crank it up,’ allowing more people to contribute. Taking the temperature down also seems to relate to moving from intellectualized, abstract discussion to people speaking more from direct experience. Most important I learned a deep humility about the collective wisdom of others.”

### **7.6.3 Leadership Needs and Requirements**

Issues of leadership emerged as a key theme in the research, central to both the successes and factors that limit the PCMA/CHD. The findings suggest the need to recognize different cultural planning contexts and their respective leadership requirements: a mix of perspectives and competencies is required. One clear requirement is the need to rise above functional competence to understand the broader context in which professional knowledge is applied (Canadian Museums Human Resource Strategy, 1995). Much of the Manager’s ability to respond to strategic opportunities in the municipality related to the opportunities for growth and reflection he drew from his involvement with museum and heritage issues outside of the community. Conversely, a good deal of the difficulty other staff members had coming to terms with “the new world order” seemed directly attributable to their more insular professional identities.

Strategic insight, the ability to think quickly, to respond to political opportunities and to problem solve - these are all enormous assets in the “cut and thrust” environment of municipal government. The Manager’s skills in this regard were responsible for protecting the organization in a hostile environment, and indeed actually extending its influence. These same skills, however, appeared to be a liability in the context of the museum and in community settings. They acted to discourage input from others and to undermine trust and the building of shared commitments. Consensual

management is dysfunctional in the hierarchical environment of municipal government, but crucial in small organizations and in community settings where building relationships is essential (Labonte, 1990).

#### **7.6.4 Structures and Dynamics of Local Cultural Governance**

Findings appear to validate the premise, noted in the literature review, that complexity *increases* as cultural decision-making moves to the local level (Laperrière, 1995). Here, cultural issues are not distant abstractions but directly affect people where they live and work. The case also provides evidence of the conservative local politics that Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) saw as a major barrier to a repoliticizing of a cultural planning agenda at the local level. The conservative cultural politics of the “Peterborough old guard” mirrored larger political dynamics and power relations in the community, dynamics perpetuated on the basis of stereotyping and recrimination - “the Pink Brigade from Trent.”

The case illustrates two approaches to managing change in cultural planning. The more moderate and incremental approach to negotiating change utilized by the Manager stood in sharp contrast to the more “principled” approach favored by the vocal Board member. The Manager appeared to secure better and more consistent results moving the local cultural agenda ahead than the more confrontational approach advocated by the vocal Board member. The Manager saw his role as a facilitator of reform, and as working incrementally inside the structures of power and authority of the city. The board member saw his role as a self-described “shit disturber,” who pushes aggressively for change from outside the system. These two perspectives are not antithetical and indeed can complement one another. The hybrid structure of the CHB represents an effort to link the two approaches. Labonte (1990) compares the process of policy change to a nutcracker.

We on the inside create reports and data-driven analysis that essentially tell politicians and the public that, as examples, there is a crisis in affordable housing ... These form the legitimizing ‘inside arm’ of the nutcracker, translating community anger (conflict) into the ‘neutral’ language of government institutions. When community groups bring these concerns to their local leaders, applying that external nutcracker arm of lobbying and participatory democracy, there is less room for decision-makers to squirm. They come full against the ‘inside arm’ of data and analysis and, hopefully, the policy nut begins to crack (1990, 70).

A specific local cultural governance issue that emerged in the case was the tension between the municipality's role in maintaining facilities and delivering municipal services, and a more "abstract" policy and planning role. The vulnerability of the Recreation Department after they had relinquished responsibilities for direct service delivery was instructive for the Manager. Moving beyond known cultural programs and facilities to the embracing of a cultural planning *perspective*, (Biannchini and Santacatterina, 1997), one that requires politicians and administrators to see the city through a new lens, would seem a distant goal.

A parallel can be drawn between the transition underway in museums and the challenge facing local government in embracing a cultural planning approach. Museums face the need to re-orient themselves from collections-based and functionally-defined institutions to organizations engaged with a more complex and subjective set of issues and community needs. The evidence in Peterborough suggests that the functional definition of museum purposes maintain a stronger hold on organizations than the literature might have suggested. Planning, similarly, is seeking to escape its technocratic and positivist traditions, broadening its functional focus on land use property and basic public services – "thing planning" - to planning that acknowledges complex human needs of increasingly diverse communities. Here too functional definitions of planning maintain a strong hold.

## 7.7 Secondary Research Questions

Research seldom proceeds in linear or expected ways.

The central research question with which I began the case study was:

*How can organizational and professional practices in museums change to address new understandings of culture and community-based cultural planning?*

This was a broad question, appropriate as a point of entry to the research. Many issues arose that could be explored in a more focused way in the final phase of data collection and analysis. Three seem especially relevant.

The first has to do with the dimension of the research related to reframing of museum and broader cultural planning purposes. Team members did demonstrate important insights into the expanded mandate of the PCMA/CHD and the reorienting of museum purposes it required. But a series of forces, including personal and professional sources of identity, repeatedly pull people back to more traditional perspectives and practices. A deeper probing of these beliefs and assumptions is needed to understand these tensions.

The second had to do with barriers related to the translation of these broadened purposes into new or reformed organizational and professional practices. A recurring theme relates to a set of complex leadership dynamics in the organization. Different facets of the expanded cultural planning role assumed by PCMA/CHD demand different leadership skills and competencies. Members of the team also bring a variety of strengths that the organization finds difficulty to acknowledge. How might these varied forms of leadership be better understood and acknowledged?

The final area relates to the structures and dynamics of local cultural governance in Peterborough. The structure of the CHD represents an attempt to manage the complex interests and needs of different stakeholders in local cultural planning and decision-making. Managing these tensions requires a clear understanding of roles and relationships in local cultural governance, and an ability to assess relative strengths and weakness in different parts of this governance system.



The secondary research questions are:

- 1. How can the tensions involving personal and professional identities in the PCMA/CHD be brought into sharper focus in a way that is helpful and practical for the organization?*
- 2. What insights does the literature offer into the leadership needs and requirements that exist in PCMA/CHD?*
- 3. How might a clearer understanding of the structures and dynamics of municipal decision-making inform an understanding of the PCMA/CHD broadened mandate related to local cultural planning?*

## **PART V: THIRD PHASE DATA COLLECTION**

### **8.0 *Barriers to Change***

#### **8.1 Professional Identities and Belief Patterns**

Useful insights into the tensions at play in PCMA/CHD related to museum and larger cultural planning purposes are provided by Oakes, Townley and Cooper (1997). Oakes et al draw on the cultural theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1993) to analyze change experienced in historic sites in Alberta owing to the introduction of a business planning model by the provincial government. Their analysis turns on the distinction between fields of restricted production and fields of large-scale production. Traditional museum practice, they argue, falls into the first category of restricted production in which the legitimacy of the organization and the professionals working in that organization are based on rules internal to the field. These are the more functionally driven institutions that have been the norm in traditional museum practice.

Fields of large-scale production turn on rules external to the field: professional and organizational legitimacy flow from external constituents. Oakes et. al. equate this shift from a legitimacy that is culturally determined to one that is economically determined - the latter driven by the market rationality that lies at the heart of the business planning model. But the shift to externally defined legitimacy does not rest solely in economic terms. This is too narrow an interpretation and ignores the larger social and political purposes of museums advocated by the new museology. Notwithstanding this reservation, the analysis of contending forces is revealing.

Bourdieu's cultural theory revolves around two central concepts: field and capital. Organizational fields are the "totality of relevant actors ... that in the aggregate constitute a recognized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Fields are viewed as a critical unit that bridges the organizational and societal levels in the study of social and community change. They are networks of social relations, structured systems of social positions within which struggles take place over resources, stakes and access; in short fluctuating relations of power (Oakes et al. 1997, 5). Power in these fields is determined through struggles over different forms of capital at stake, capital that is central to the definition of the field.

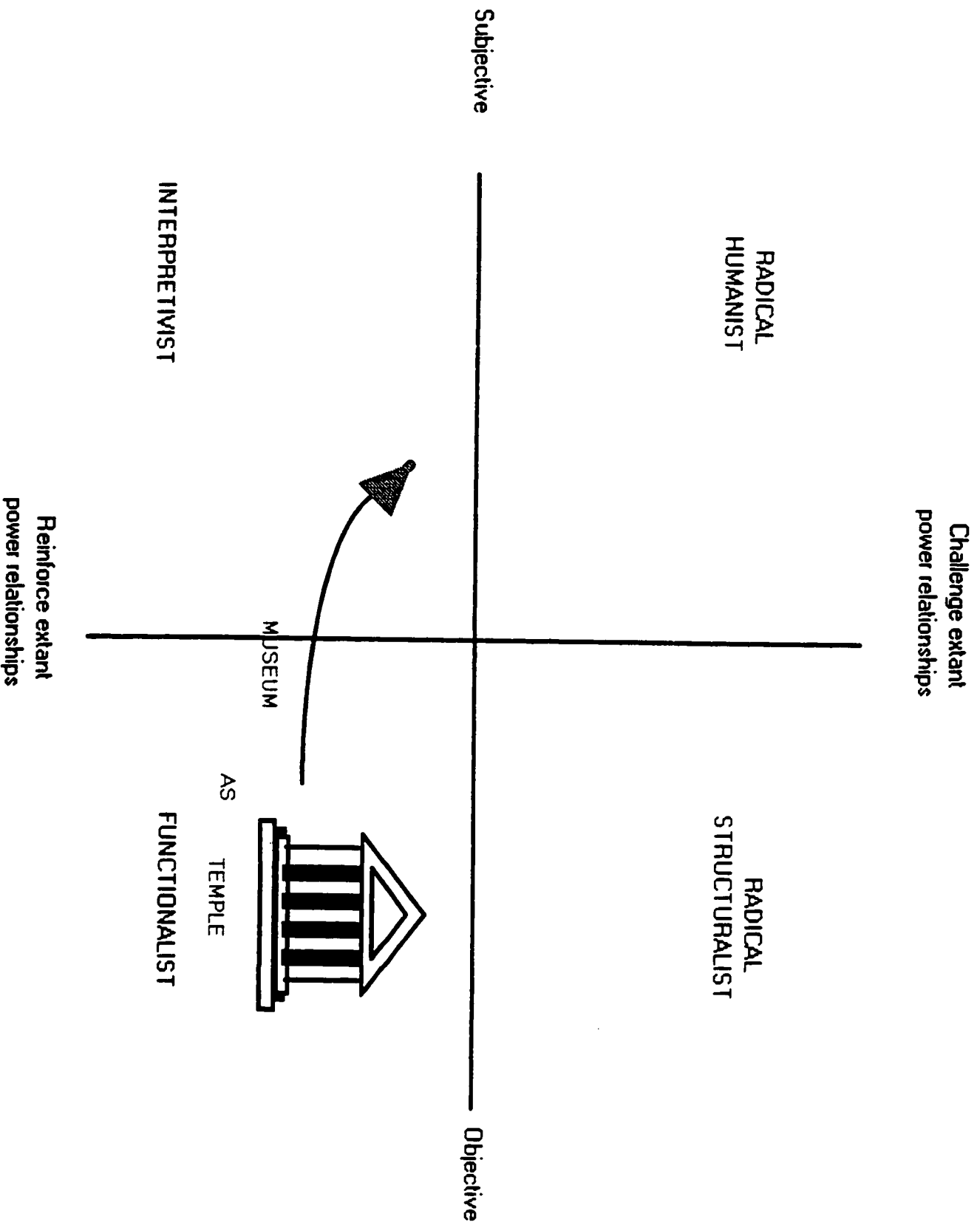
Capital is not restricted to financial or monetary assets, but takes other tangible and intangible, non-monetary forms. “While capital may be economic, it may equally be cultural as represented, for example, by education and expertise; or symbolic, as for example, the capacity to define and legitimize cultural values. It may also be social, defined by access to, and positioning in, important networks” (1997, 6). Forms of capital and the structures of a field are interdependent. The power of actors in the field varies according to their access to various forms of capital and the strategies and actions available to them. The ability of those within the field to define its boundaries, thereby determining the degree of autonomy of a field, is a key determinant of power.

Using this analysis, we can see the PCMA as a “field of small-scale production under threat” due to municipal downsizing. The response, the creation of the CHD, established a new field of actors and a new set of social relations for the staff of the institution. For the Manager, this enlarged field provided a source of legitimacy and professional renewal. The new municipal environment was one to which his particular style of management and leadership was well suited. The same was not true of other staff whose professional identities and legitimacy remained more tied to the field of small-scale production.

Bourdieu’s analysis of the role of pedagogy in organizational change is also useful. Different forms of capital are linked to a view of power that has little to do with coercion or conflict and more to do with a reconfiguring of positional and organizational identities, vocabularies or values. Pedagogy is a process of learning through discovery and self-reflection. “Meaningful pedagogical exercises cause the capital and positions within a field to shift. This shift creates points of examination at which members of a field are encouraged to examine their existing activities and identities” (Oakes et. al. 1997, 32).

A useful point of pedagogical reflection for team members in the PCMA/CHD is Burrell and Morgan’s (1979; cited in Harper, 1992) matrix of ideologies and belief paradigms. Four “ideological paradigms” are set out which, the authors maintain, represent comprehensive patterns of beliefs about social reality. The four paradigms are illustrated in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Ideologies and Belief Paradigms (Burrell and Morgan, 1979)



A subjective-objective dimension forms the horizontal axis, or continuum. This represents an individual's understanding of reality, knowledge and human nature. At one extreme, an objectivist approach views the world as an external, objective reality, where knowledge can be explained and predicted with regular and causal relationships. At the other extreme, a subjectivist approach places reality in the human consciousness, stresses the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the social world, and is concerned with explaining and understanding (Harper, 1997). The vertical dimension represents assumptions about the nature of society, and illustrates the extent to which activities reinforce - at the lower end, or challenge - at the upper end, existing power relations. The four quadrants represent different paradigms that predispose one to see the world in a particular way. Individuals switch paradigms reluctantly since the transition requires major changes in overall theoretical orientations and assumptions.

Community museums, given their history and the forces that have shaped their development, have tended to be located in the lower right quadrant of the resulting diagram: maintaining the status quo and oriented to objective reality as represented in material collections. The critique of new museology is pushing the paradigm upward and to the left, toward more subjective understandings of what constitutes social reality and toward a greater challenging of power relations. However, many workers in these institutions were drawn to work in them *precisely* due to their personal belief systems as functionalists. The weight of institutional histories, combined with the belief systems and professional training of staff, suggest that traditional perspectives will be difficult to shake off. However, the matrix provided by Burrell and Morgan (1979) may be helpful in raising issues, and prompting reflection that may hold potential for change in personal and organizational perspectives.

## 8.2 Leadership Theory

What insights can the literature on leadership offer that might assist in understanding the complex leadership needs and dynamics in PCMA/CHD?

Prominent historical approaches to leadership have been described succinctly by Arnold, Feldman and Hunt (1992):

- Trait theories that assume leaders were born not made;
- Behaviour theories that focused on what the leader actually does when dealing with followers and subordinates; and
- Contingency or situational theories that are built on the idea that the effectiveness of leadership depends upon the existence of a “fit” between the leader’s behaviour and the demands of the situation.

Senge (1990) summarizes the limitations of the “leader as hero or saviour”:

Our traditional views of leaders - as special people who set the direction, make key decisions, and energize the troops - are deeply rooted in an individualistic and non-systemic worldview. ... So long as such myths prevail, they reinforce a focus on short-term events and charismatic heroes rather than on systemic forces and collective learning. At its heart, the traditional view of leadership is based on assumptions of people’s powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change, deficits which can be remedied only by a few great leaders (1990, 340).

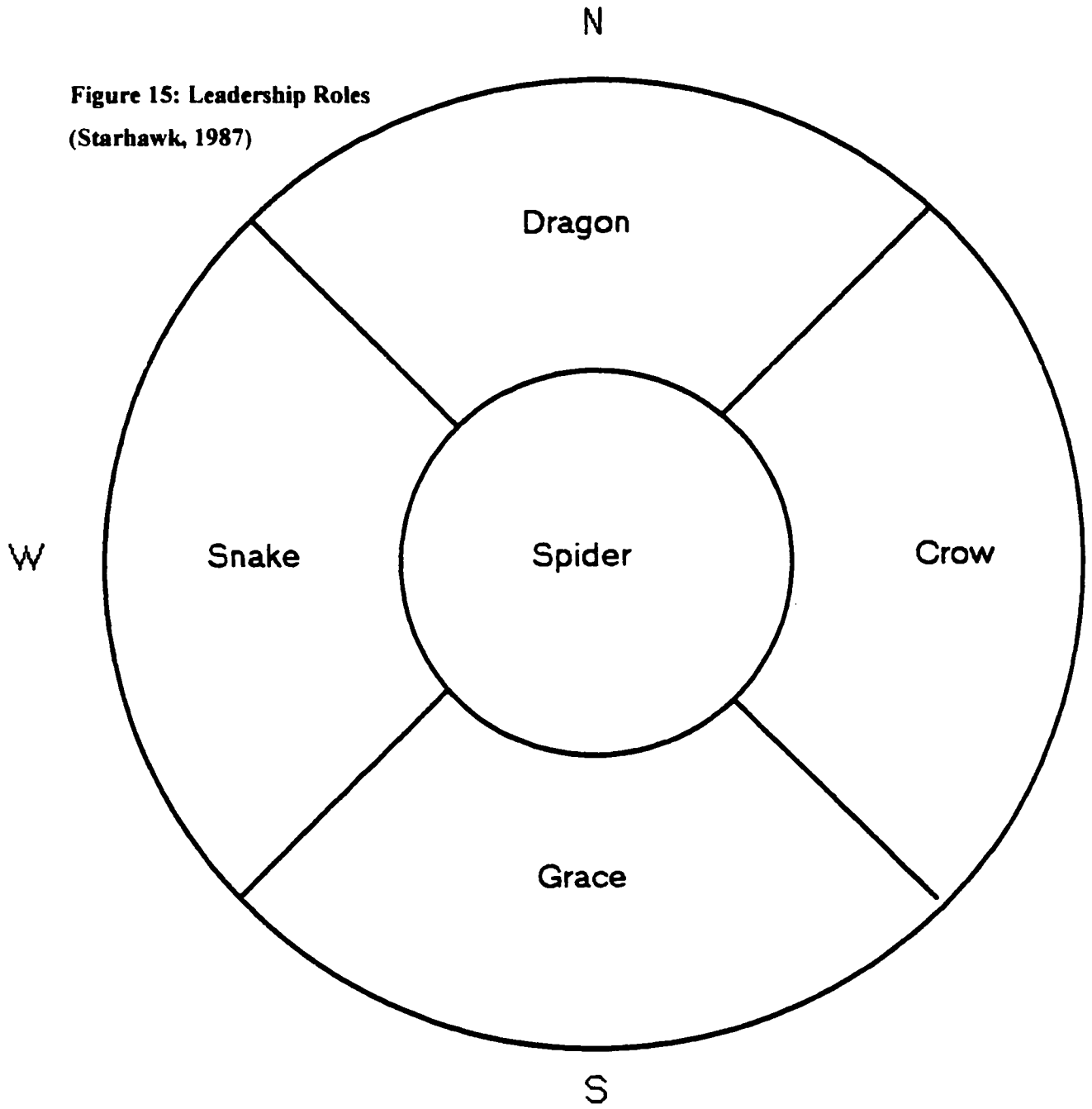
Although many of the “new leadership” models or approaches differ, most rely on participation, teamwork, continuous learning or improvement, systems thinking, participation-based organizational change, learning commitments, risk-taking, and deliberate organizational culture change (Plas, 1996). Changing views of leadership relate to a strong theme in the research to date: the barriers caused by the functional orientation of museums. Analysts argue that organizations structured by function will disappear as organizations flatten and restructure around core processes. In a cross-functional team environment, many traditionally defined management positions will be obsolete. Those that remain will function more as coaches or facilitators.

Senge (1990) believes that the central work of leaders today is to create learning organizations. More specifically, he sees the work of the leader *as designer, as steward and as teacher*. *As designer*, the leader's task is to design the learning processes whereby people throughout the organization can deal productively with the critical issues they face, and develop their mastery in those learning disciplines. This is new work for most experienced managers, many of whom rose to the top due to their decision-making and problem-solving skills, rather than strengths in mentoring, coaching, and helping others learn (Dixon, 1994).

But here, as with democratized planning and governance models, there is a danger of an over-correction to traditional understandings of "heroic" leaders must be considered. In Peterborough, the Manager's leadership style was both a barrier and a blessing: a barrier in the institution where a more consensual and collaborative approach to both learning and organizational change was needed; a blessing in the cut and thrust of the municipal environment. This suggests the need for a conceptualization of leadership that is neither the passive facilitator's role in which the leader is responsive to others, nor the forceful charismatic leader. The former fails to stand for anything; the latter dominates the agenda (Thornburn, 1994). A more contingent, situational and nuanced view of leadership is needed, one in which tensions and paradoxes – both of which are characteristic of postmodern times - are acknowledged.

Starhawk (1987) provides a valuable source of insight into a more contingent view of leadership relevant to the Peterborough case. Different facets of the expanded cultural planning role assumed by PCMA/CHD demand different leadership skills and competencies. The Starhawk analysis identifies differing leadership roles required in organizations for different purposes at different moments in time. It assumes that a group or organization moves through stages that have different goals, problems and pitfalls. The roles and tasks of leadership vary at different stages. Starhawk assigns names to different leadership roles: crows, graces, snakes, dragons and spiders (1987, 277). See Figure 15.

**Figure 15: Leadership Roles**  
(Starhawk, 1987)





*Crows* fly high and see far, from above. They take the long view, see the long-term vision, and keep in focus the group's goals. They suggest new directions, make plans and develop strategies, and look ahead to anticipate problems and needs. *Graces* are continually aware of the group's energy, helping to raise it when it flags, and to direct and channel it when it is strong. *Graces* provide the group with fire: enthusiasm, raw energy, and ability to expand. ... They furnish inspiration and generate new ideas. *Snakes* are connected with feelings and emotions, and also fertility and renewal. *Snakes* cultivate an awareness of how people are feeling. ... [They] keep current with the group's gossip. They become aware early of conflict, and bring it into the open, where they may help to mediate or resolve problems. ... *Snakes* violate the censors, bring into the open what others may not see or prefer to keep hidden. *Dragons* keep the group grounded, in touch with the practical, the realistic. *Dragons* also live on the boundaries of the wild, guarding hordes of treasures ... [they] guard the group's resources and its boundaries and articulate its limitations. The *spider* spins the web that connects points across a stretch of empty space. Every circle needs a centre, a way in which people feel connected. A group's centre may be a spiritual heart, a common goal or vision, or it may manifest in a person. [If assigned to a person] the spider is most effective ... not by monopolizing communication but by asking the questions that can create and strengthen, a true and complex web of interactions (1987, 278-282).

Members of the Peterborough team bring a variety of these strengths to the organization. Rather than focusing solely on the leadership strengths or failings of the Manager, Starhawk's leadership roles can provide a means of profiling and validating these different strengths.

### **8.3 A Systems View of Local Governance**

The structure of the CHD was intended to enable it to work simultaneously inside municipal government and in the community, and to serve a mediating role between the two. Playing this role effectively required a clear understanding of specific contexts in which cultural decisions are made, and an assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of different parts of the governance system. In the Peterborough case Council and some parts of civic administration came under criticism for traditional decision-making styles and views of local government's responsibilities.

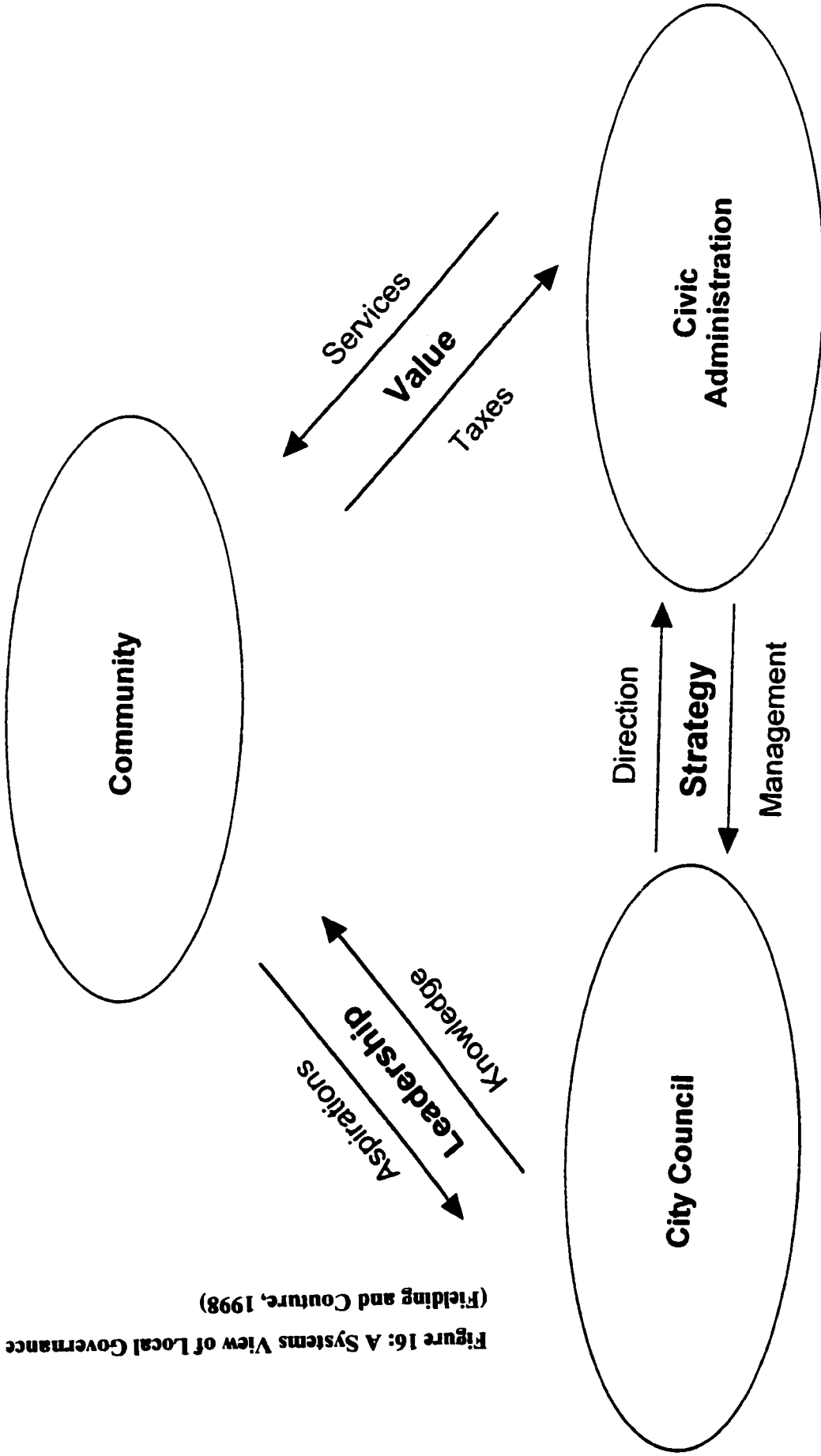
Fielding and Couture (1998) offer a systems view of municipal planning used by the City of Winnipeg that is useful. Senge (1990) defines systems thinking as a discipline for seeing wholes - a framework for seeing interrelationships and patterns of change. Fielding and Couture conceptualize local governance as follows.

At the highest level, municipal government is envisioned as a system of interrelationships between three principal groups: the community, the city council and the civic administration. There is a triangle of primary products that emerge from the relationships between these groups as a result of give-and-take between the parties: leadership, strategy, and value. Managing the city system is a matter of managing the processes that produce these three products (1998, 15).

See Figure 16.

In mapping different roles and responsibilities within this system Fielding and Couture argue that the traditional role of the planner has been to facilitate city council's understanding of the community it serves on the one hand, and provide direct public services in various facets of civic life on the other. The authors argue that these roles must be broadened by a greater focus on civic administration. "Our conceptual and analytical skills together with our understanding of communities and their citizens have, in the past, demonstrated our ability to build better communities. Now we must use those same skills to help shape better government" (1998, 14).

**Figure 16: A Systems View of Local Governance**  
(Fielding and Couture, 1998)



This need to strengthen planners' roles as civic administrators is consistent with the view that bringing cultural issues "in from the margins of governance" requires a stronger role for civic administrators – over that played by local politicians, and the simultaneous democratization of planning functions and processes (Council of Europe, 1996).

Labonte (1990) provides another perspective on the differing skills needed inside and outside government. From the standpoint of community activists there is also a need to acknowledge:

An effective project needs to combine the skills of a sophisticated bureaucratic negotiation and radical community activism ... building alliances within bureaucracies and outside them. It takes fine judgement to determine where allies can best be found. In some instances collaboration with professionals working within bureaucratic organizations such as health workers or urban planners may be profitable if they have a reflective approach to their practice ... (Labonte. 1990, 70).

Using the Fielding and Couture schematic may provide a means of provoking reflection on the part of the team on the different facets of local cultural governance, on the strengths and weaknesses of different parts of the system in Peterborough, and on how the CHD might function most effectively in this system.

## **9.0 Final Data Collection**

### **9.1 Final Interviews with Learning Team Members**

The final phase of research made use of an organizational tool called *a Learning History* (Kleiner and Roth, 1998). The Learning History provided the model for “The Peterborough Story” (Appendix D) which summarizes the organizational change process in the PCMA/CHD during the period of the research. It provided a tool for capturing data and analysis and feeding it back to the team. The Peterborough Story served as the basis for final interviews with team members.

Interviews were conducted with the four full-time staff and one of the original three board members that formed the original learning team<sup>48</sup>. There were two segments to the interviews. The first sought feedback on the Peterborough Story. People were first asked what part or parts of the Peterborough Story had struck them as most important or meaningful. They were then asked to reflect on when during the research they believed:

- the team had been at its best;
- the Division had been at its best; and,
- they as individuals had been at their best

In order not to filter out negative impressions of the process, people were also asked to identify the most difficult or frustrating moment, and anything that might have been done to avoid those frustrations

The second part of the interview focused on the three secondary research issues. Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) matrix was used as a means of provoking reflection on assumptions and belief systems shaping museum and broader cultural planning purposes. Starhawk’s (1987) framework of leadership roles in organizations was used to provoke reflection on different leadership roles and needs. Finally, Fielding and Couture’s (1998) systems view of local governance was used to provoke reflection on the structures and dynamics of local cultural governance in Peterborough.

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<sup>48</sup> The other two had left the Board and chose not to participate.

The materials used to support questions on these secondary research themes are set out in Appendix E.

Interviews ranged in length from one to two and one-half hour.

### **9.1.1 Response to the Learning History**

#### **General Response**

All team members found the Learning History a valuable synthesis of the team's work and of the organizational learning and change process. The account addressed both the substantive issues and challenges they had faced related to the CHD and to fulfilling its expanded mandate, and insights gained into organizational learning and team dynamics. Negative feelings about the process had fallen away. People seemed pleased and proud of the distance they had traveled as a team.

- “The story is beautifully documented ... it brought back lots of ideas and insights from the process that I'd lost sight of ... we need to review it as a team ... it isn't enough that you're reviewing this with us as individuals.”
- “This could serve as an extremely valuable resource for the Board ... many people still don't have enough context or history on where the Division came from and some of the issues it faces.”
- “This is a frank, fair assessment ... I found it hard to put down ... I want to use it with my students ... it provides an accurate picture of what happened to this museum ... but it also serves as a really useful introduction to museum leadership issues, to the evolution of museum roles in the community ... to governance issues... it was also good therapy for me ...”

The Learning History rekindled interest in discussing issues facing the organization.

## **Structured Responses:**

### **a) Team at its Best**

This question evoked fond reflections on the learning process. Earlier cynicism and alienation about “too much reflection” had disappeared.

One team member, the same person who had been energized at the team retreat by pragmatic action plans and discouraged by “abstract and theoretical” questions such as definitions of culture and heritage, recalled the day quite differently. In retrospect, those philosophical discussions were remembered as one of the high points of the team’s work.

- “At the retreat ... especially when we were discussing different definitions of heritage and culture ... that felt like we were really together as a team ... people were relaxed and comfortable and productive ...”

This reminds us that when and how people learn is unpredictable: ideas may surface at one moment but only later take on relevance and meaning for the learner.

- “We were at our best at the Culture and Heritage Board meeting ... we were all pumped ... everyone was performing well ... we were supportive of one another ... and we took the setback in stride ... this last part was as important as the first part for me ... it demonstrated we were a team and could come back from a setback...”

Also surprising was the Manager’s view that the team had been at its best in the weeks after the disastrous CHB meeting. I felt the Board meeting had been the final blow to the confidence and momentum of the team. The meaning and significance of events are never fixed or static. Meaning turns on the needs of the observer in a specific context at a specific moment in time.

- “We were at our best when we were pragmatically solving problems together ... getting the work done ... we were also good when we were supporting [the Manager] and helping him stop second-guessing himself.”

This individual played a grounding role for the team, continually urging them to return to focus on pragmatic, everyday concerns and problem solving. This perspective relates to differing leadership roles and requirements in the organization that are addressed below.

## **b) Division at its Best**

Everyone responded enthusiastically and with pride in the achievements of the Division. This was the case even among those staff whose professional identities were more closely tied to the museum and to traditional museum functions. Confusion regarding Divisional roles and operations had not disappeared but there was greater optimism and commitment expressed to resolving them. A common theme was the centrality of the Division's role in building relationships and networks in the community.

- "... Celebrate Canada in the Kawarthas<sup>49</sup> ... it was a concrete event, it built profile for the Division, for culture and heritage issues in the city generally and for participating organizations ... it showed the benefits of collaboration ... it's about building relationships."
- "... A meeting last week of educators from cultural organizations in the area ... 21 people came out ... it showed that a lot of work building relationships with people over the years paid off ... at the time I wondered if the time invested was worth it ... this proved it was."
- "During the Roy Studio Collection<sup>50</sup> ... here you had a volunteer committee of the CHB coming together to lead a community fundraising campaign, raising a lot of money ... with no previous experience with fundraising ... it built profile for the Division ... we didn't succeed at the time but it showed the Board and the community could pull together ... the irony is we may still get the collection."

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<sup>49</sup> A joint marketing and promotion project facilitated by the CHD.

<sup>50</sup> The campaign to purchase a local historical photography collection.



### c) **Personal Best**

People were more hesitant and tentative in offering moments when they themselves had been at their best. The *different kinds* of accomplishments people took pride in also reflected the different leadership roles people played in the organization, as examined in the Starhawk (1987) framework, discussed below.

- “Last week when all the educators came together ... this is the stuff that really interests me ... also when we were confronting the personal issues at the Learning Forum ... that stuff is scary and we were confronting it together ... I was at my best when I was hopeful we could change the way we worked together ... I’m not so sure anymore we can ...”

This individual saw the interpersonal issues more clearly than anyone else but was unable to raise them in the organization. At the Learning Forum, for a variety of reasons - including the Managers’ acknowledgment of his own vulnerability - this team member was able to overcome these inhibitions.

- “Getting the clerk’s records was the most satisfying ... we’ve built a lot of credibility with the city in the last year ... we’d tried [to get the record] before and the city stonewalled ... this time they saw us more *as part of the city* ... so now in their minds all we were doing was changing the location ... this is symbolic ... the most personally rewarding thing for me is my role professionalizing the archives ... they used to be pretty hokey ... mostly used by genealogists but not really serving others in the community ... like academics and scholars, other researchers ... this has changed.”

This shift seems an incredibly important symbol of the changed perception of the organization on the part of the City.

- “During the Library strategic plan ... I took a lot of what I’d learned from our process and from the museum and was able to apply it ... I think I can now take some of what I’ve learned at the Library and bring it back to the museum and the Division.”

- “When I was able to get together with other people who do my job ... other curators and talk about job specific stuff ... I was disappointed we didn’t have more time to do this at the Learning Forum.”

#### **d) Worst Moment**

There were no generalized complaints about the process overall, such as “too much reflection.” Instead the focus was on quite specific incidents that had been setbacks for the team and its work.

- “The Culture and Heritage Board meeting ... I couldn’t believe the response ... we made a mistake only working with keeners on the board ... if we’d had one of the old guard who were more skeptical and who reacted so negatively at the meeting we might not have been taken by surprise ... we might have built some buy-in from the old guard.”

This seems an important insight. The three Board members were identified by the Manager because they were seen as younger members, with fresh perspectives and new ideas. This was a logical decision at the time but did serve to reduce buy-in from others on the Board more connected to the past traditions of the organization and the community.

- “At the Learning Forum just after we got the scary personal stuff on the table ... I felt really inspired ... then the Manager shut it down .. I said something about his leadership style leaving him alone at the top ... and he said he didn’t feel alone ... I thought he was shutting me down ... that’s when I lost hope about us working together differently.”

My own interpretation of this moment was very different, and more positive. I felt the Manager’s intent was to signal he felt that he *did* feel supported, while still acknowledging that he had to learn to work more collaboratively. The more decisive negative moment in terms of undermining trust from my perspective was the Manager’s insistence that the reason he couldn’t get closer to people was because “I may have to fire you someday.”

- “My frustrations are never with people ... the worst moment was the downsizing ... here we are going through this really progressive process that’s invigorating for everyone and then you get

hit with the cuts ... but I'm convinced that had we not been so outward looking as an institution we'd be a part-time facility today ... and maybe not have any of the current staff."

Once again team members identified moments that they had seen through very different "eyes" than had I, another reminder that events and their interpretation are observer-specific.

#### **e) Team Task and Divisional Change Issues**

##### ***Museum Functions***

The tensions between traditional functional responsibilities and the broadened Divisional mandate were a continued theme in the interviews. Several staff with specific functional responsibilities argued for a balancing of new and old responsibilities. While acknowledging the limitations of traditional internally oriented perspectives, they believed there was a danger of overcorrecting. To ignore traditional functional responsibilities they saw as an abrogation of professional ethics and responsibilities.

- "with collections issues you have more specialized attention ... both the museum collection and the archives ... there are issues of professionalism and the integrity of the collections that we can't lose sight of ... it's important that city hall and the community see that not just anyone can walk in off the street and do these jobs."

There was continued evidence of weak lateral communication across museum functions.

- "No one on staff has ever seen an education program ... they really don't know what I do ... they don't know what goes into these programs ... the choice of temporary exhibitions really falls to [the curator] ... it's in her job description ... sometimes we talk about possibilities ... but it's really her job ... we could be collaborating more planning exhibitions."

This seems an extraordinarily telling observation of the isolation of activities, as well as a practical suggestion for defining change - i.e. the review of job descriptions.

- “Some of the staff feel insecure about our degree of professionalism ... I see students coming out of the Fleming program with all these skills and all this talent and I think it makes us feel ‘what do I really know?’”

This suggests there may have been another reason for staff being reluctant to relinquish traditional functional roles. Several of the full-time staff had trained “on the job” and saw students from the Sir Sandford Fleming program entering the field with a breadth of more formal professional education than their own. Focusing on known functional responsibilities may have been one way of keeping these anxieties at bay.

### ***Museum and Divisional Roles***

People were still struggling with how to balance roles in the museum and in the Division. They had, however, moved past analyzing the problem to making concrete suggestions about what might be done. Among them were: increasing the interaction of staff with CHB planning exercises; establishing a sub-committee of the Board to deal specifically with museum business - thereby freeing the full board to focus on Divisional activity; increasing the involvement of staff with other organizations represented on the CHB; increasing the involvement of Sir Sandford Fleming students with the work of the Division (rather than just the museum); re-examining job descriptions to formalize Divisional responsibilities and encouraging greater cross-functional collaboration, among others.

### ***Priority Setting***

There was a marked growth in confidence and determination to make choices and establish priorities, and specific suggestions for how to do so. These included: reducing the number of temporary exhibitions per year in order to better exploit these exhibitions for attendance and revenue-generation; involving all staff in annual priority setting with the CHB; being more strategic and selective about the Division’s involvement with committees and task forces struck by the City; better distinguishing Divisional and museum work; and others.

The need for priority setting was linked in the mind of one team member with the need to be able to report more clearly on outcomes in both the museum and the Division.

- “We knew what the outcomes were we were trying to achieve for the museum ... numbers of visitors ... exhibitions, education programs ... we’re a lot less clear what they are for the Division ... maybe if we’re clearer we’d be able to define priorities ... we might also be clearer about how to report on the activities of the Division ... it’s hard to capture what the deliverables are for the Division.”

Numbers of visitors, exhibits, and education programs are not outcomes, but outputs; they describe the activity undertaken rather than the public benefits or impact of that activity. The difficulty capturing the outcomes of the Division is also a recurring theme in the research.

## **f) Team Dynamics and Leadership**

### ***Changes in Team Dynamics***

There was no explicit prompt for people to reflect on the team’s working style and group dynamics. Nevertheless, people felt compelled to reflect on these issues. Comments reflected the team’s pride that significant progress had been made in addressing problems of communication and information flow, shared leadership, and so on. The progress made by the group, together with some of the forces shaping group dynamics were eloquently articulated in the following comment.

- “We *are* communicating better ... the Manager *has* changed ... he now asks at the beginning of meetings who wants to chair? We still don’t have enough meetings ... but when we do they’re better ... [the Manager’s] trouble is he just thinks too fast ... he sees an issue and the best and fastest way to deal with it and it’s just really tempting to say ‘here’s what we should do’ ... he’s trying not do this as much but when you see your way through something it’s hard to keep silent ... sometimes the group will find its way through ... sometimes it won’t but you have to let it try ... we all have to have more humility about having the right answers ... we all have such a personal need to achieve ... to get recognition for our work as individuals ... it’s so deep in the culture it’s really hard to fight.”

This comment has enormous resonance for the shift in perspective that some people, including me, had at the Learning Forum. Valuing silence, humility and “taking the temperature down” are all

themes implicit in this observation. The recognition that the need to achieve is a major barrier to thinking and relating to others, and that it is deeply rooted in the culture, is especially striking.

- “We still have issues to get back out on the table ... the leadership issues that came up at the Learning Forum ... we need to get back to this ... but we need some kind of skilled facilitator ... it is not easy to do on you own ... you need someone with specific skills.”
- “We still have issues of trust to face ... it’s a lot better than it used to be ... but it’s still not there yet ...”

Leadership tensions still existed but people continued to resist raising the issue openly.

### ***Management and Leadership Issues***

- “It read like an accurate description of the process ... my only criticism is that the voice of the Manager is more prominent than other staff ... I’d have liked to see a little better balance.”

This is a valid criticism of the Peterborough Story. The Managers’ voice *is* the most prominent voice in the story. The story pointed to problems of traditional leadership styles, but in focusing on the senior staff person may have fallen victim to the very models it faulted.

The Manager reflected on management and leadership issues at some length, and contrasted the differing style of management at the Library and the Division; the diversity of leadership skills and competencies needed in any organization - what he identified as “conceptual, technical and people skills.” He reflected on the “leadership vacuum” at the museum. He felt that different staff had different and important skills but no one seemed both willing and able to bring them all together, nor did staff seem able to pool these talents productively.

Managing change was the primary focus of the Manager’s reflections.

- “I found myself thinking that the word ‘change’ isn’t precise enough ... it doesn’t convey the different kinds of change an organization goes through ... I was reminded of the article on evolution and revolution in organizations ... change is never constant or predictable ... you can have slow evolutionary change like the evolution of the PCMA into the Division over time ...

but then you get revolutionary change being thrust upon you ... like the Library changes, like budget cuts ... like losing staff ... you have to be ready for both and not be frustrated that things don't proceed in a linear way ... the world isn't like that although sometimes I think we think it will be."

### ***Summary***

Overall the interviews provided evidence that strong organizational learning had occurred. The team demonstrated greater clarity about and support for the Divisional mandate. Although issues remained concerning the balance of institutional and Divisional responsibilities, there was much stronger consensus that all staff had responsibilities to both.

There was greater confidence on the part of staff to define priorities and insistence on the legitimacy of doing so. This represented a growth in confidence and readiness to challenge organizational authority. The Manager was working in more consultative and democratic ways, although seemingly with greater success at the Library, where he was less encumbered by organizational history. Lateral communication across museum functions had improved but could still improve further. A new insight was the connection between loyalties to individual museum functions and interpersonal dynamics, especially professional insecurities. Again, emotional issues proved inseparable from more "rational" or substantive barriers to organizational change.

Although progress *had* occurred in altering interpersonal dynamics, the tendency persisted to underplay the importance of emotional issues and dynamics. People were still more comfortable examining questions related to organizational purposes, structures and priorities. One staff person, while thoughtful and insightful about the personal and emotional issues, seemed unable or unwilling to raise them with others.

Overall I was struck by the power of the Learning History as a catalyst for organizational learning. This raises the issue, noted repeatedly in the literature review, of the need to *systematize* organizational learning practices. More formal channels for sharing information, reflecting individually and collectively on issues, and acting on the results of this learning are needed in the organization. The call on the part of several staff for more frequent planning sessions involving the staff and the board is one possible mechanism, but others must be integrated more into day-to-day work.

### **9.1.3 Focal Research Themes**

The final questions addressed the secondary research questions.

#### **a) Ideological Paradigms and Belief Systems**

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) matrix of ideological paradigms and belief systems provides a useful tool because it speaks to two dimensions of the change issues facing the organization. The subjective-objective axis is relevant to the traditional functional orientation of the museum, an orientation more focused on physical collections and care of these collections than on the insights and understandings related to community life that these collections can help us understand. The second axis related to challenging existing power relations relates to the fundamental conservatism and reluctance to challenge authority and local power relations that characterize most community museums.

#### **Subjective-Objective Orientation**

Traditional museum purposes and practices would predispose individuals to fall on the objective side of the continuum. Three members of the team saw themselves just slightly on the objective side of the continuum. The two staff members responsible for collections were two of the three, the Manager the third.

One of these explained their perspective, noting the shortcomings of the current collections.

- “The central resource of the institution is the collection ... but the collection needs to be relevant to people ... and I realize the collection isn't representative of the community ... the story of unions, ethnic groups and other themes are missing ... a lot of this collecting is trickier ... involving oral histories etc. ... archives are actually further ahead on this than museums on dealing with these issues ...”

The other two team members located themselves on the subjective side of the continuum, although only modestly so. These individuals signaled a greater interest in subjective experience and a more constructivist approach to human understanding.



One surprise here was a response from the vocal board member who had been one of the most vigorous critics of the conservative Peterborough community. Although he continued to locate himself high on the vertical axis challenging authority he expressed far more respect for the wisdom of the local community based on his personal experience with a local heritage inventory.

- “I’m more interested in exploring relationships and multiple meanings in the community ... I want to challenge people’s comfortable assumptions about Peterborough ... it’s a much more complex place than anyone acknowledges ... it has a much more sophisticated mentality than we give it credit for ... it takes real sophistication and care to interpret it... when I was working on the heritage inventory and collecting oral history I was amazed at the richness of insight ... at the public wisdom ... it was like Haagensasz ice cream ... the first few spoonfuls are great ... but then you get overwhelmed at how rich it is.”

### **Challenging Power Relations**

All team members saw themselves as challenging rather than accepting existing power relations. The two members who saw themselves on the subjective side of the horizontal continuum were also the most radical on the vertical power relations axis. One team member interpreted the question solely in the context of organizational dynamics, rather than larger socio-political dynamics in the community.

- “I see myself as a radical humanist ... I believe in the power of the group ... I don’t like hierarchies ... only responsibilities ... the municipality is all about power and hierarchies ... so I’ll never feel comfortable there.”
- “The museum needs to challenge the community a little more ... but we need to be careful ... we should be able to challenge issues like racism ... to show this has never been an idyllic community ... the truth doesn’t usually come out in local histories ... I don’t believe museums should be radical but they should be open and have a social conscience.”
- “I’m a radical structuralist ... I think the institution is too ... we keep trying to challenge and move away from the temple ... but we keep getting pulled back ... we need to understand why this is ... we are taking baby steps ... but I think in the right direction.”

Locating themselves where they did on the continuum seemed to reflect some level of political consciousness on the part of team members. Team members continued to be critical of Peterborough's conservatism but there was still little indication of how this criticism might actually be translated into organizational or professional practice.

The collective portrait of the organization confirms the hypothesis that organizational reform is constrained by a dominant ideological paradigm of functionalism. Individuals are *intellectually* aware of the need for change, but their current responsibilities as well as individual pre-dispositions act against this reform.

## **b) Leadership Needs and Requirements**

All team members described themselves as hybrids of two or more of Starhawk's (1987) leadership roles. People's self-perception largely matched how others saw them. Collectively the organization had a good balance of leadership styles. Several staff members were pleased that their own leadership inclinations were acknowledged and respected by others as part of this leadership continuum. A broadened understanding of the kinds of leadership needed in the organization seemed to have an empowering effect on these staff members.

The shortfall, if one existed, was the lack of a spider that knit the various leadership styles together. One member saw themselves as a spider but more in the context of knitting relationships within the Division and the larger community rather than more narrowly in the institution..

All but one member of the team saw the Manager as the crow. This person disputed this view, arguing that genuine crows were individuals who could see twenty to twenty-five years out. Few organizations had crows according to this view. More common in this person's view were leaders like the Manager who were effective strategists in the short- to medium-term, and who were strong problem-solvers. This team member saw the Manager in these terms and recognized these were skills that served him well in the municipal environment.

The Manager saw himself as "a crow caught in a web," torn between viewing his traditional leadership style as visionary, but with the need to direct more attention to knitting the various parts of the organization together.

### c) **Planning and Governance Structures**

Fielding and Couture (1998) view municipal government as a system of interrelationships between three principal groups: *the community, the city council and the civic administration*. A triangle of primary products emerges from the relationships between these groups as a result of give-and-take between the parties.

Reaction to the system model of local planning and governance was mixed. Everyone felt it was helpful in broad terms to map different dimensions of local planning and governance. But almost everyone felt it oversimplified the complexities of these processes. One person said the dynamics were more “like a web” than the rigid linear and causal relationships implied by the system model.

There was general consensus that city council had in the past been the weak link in planning and governance on issues of culture and heritage in Peterborough. There was some optimism that the new mayor and Council might reverse this pattern and provide stronger strategic leadership.

- “The current council is stronger ... they refuse to get drawn into the minutia ... they have more respect for the knowledge of civic administration ... they’re less suspicious of staff ... they’re demanding and getting a more democratic and inclusive approach to decision-making from city staff ... the city used to be driven completely by the budget ... the budget *was* the city’s corporate plan ... the current CEO was the former Director of Finance and that was how he managed ... the new council is demanding a broader perspective .. and getting it.”

Almost all felt that arrows between components needed to go in more than one direction. “Knowledge” flowed both to and from the community from Council; “direction” flowed both to and from Council from civic administration. There was a general sense that the model underestimated the role of civic administration, that both the Council and the community relied on the knowledge and continuity provided by city staff. The vocal Board member was especially critical of the Peterborough Planning Department for not staying abreast of current thinking in community development. He felt that other parts of civic administration, in particular Community Services, were stronger and more knowledgeable public administrators.

All saw the Culture and Heritage Board in the middle of the diagram, simultaneously being fed by and feeding Council, civic administration and the community. Two team members saw the Board as distinct from the Division, needing to move closer to the community, and to be driven more by the needs of that community.

- “The average age of the Board dropped thirty years with the recent appointments ... it operates better with more of a strategic perspective ... although we still don’t have a strong cohesive sense of context and direction.”
- “The Board needs to organize itself more around the culture and heritage community’s needs ... those things that everyone needs ... advocacy, marketing and promotion, communications and information sharing, strategic planning, fundraising, partnerships ... things like that.”

Others saw the Board and the Division closer to civic administration and needing to remain there. This was in part a pragmatic recognition of the Manager’s strong position vis-a-vis the Board, and the Division’s location within civic administration. All viewed the Board as a hybrid but saw this as a strength. All agreed that the Board could function more effectively and could wield greater influence in local decision-making, although there were few specific suggestions as to how this might be achieved.

## **9.2 Testing Findings in Two Communities**

Research findings to date were tested for their relevance in two other community settings. In one community I wanted to test findings related to cultural planning in a municipal environment. In a second I wanted to examine issues related to organizational change in a local community museum.

Kitchener and Aurora were communities I had considered as subjects for the primary case study. Each brought circumstances relevant to the Peterborough findings.

### **9.2.1 Kitchener**

Kitchener is a city of 178,000 and in 1996 was located within a regional population of 405,000. The population is projected to grow to 236,000 by 2016 (City of Kitchener, 1998). Like Peterborough, Kitchener is managing a transition to a new economic era after the decline of many traditional industries. Also like Peterborough, it has an aging population, still primarily of European descent, but with growing numbers of immigrants, especially from Asia and Caribbean countries. It has a strong arts and cultural community, including such institutions as Centre in the Square, The K-W Art Gallery, the Homer Watson House and Gallery, Woodside National Historic Site, and others. The community welcomes 600,000 visitors to Oktoberfest each year.

I was interested in Kitchener because of what was seen as a successful cultural plan completed in 1996 (Cardinal, 1996). Peterborough to date had opted not to undertake a formal cultural planning process. One issue I wanted to examine was how Peterborough's experience differed from that of a community that had undertaken such a plan. More specifically, I wanted to understand how municipal cultural governance issues and perspectives differed in the two communities. I identified the staff person with the City of Kitchener who had been responsible for the cultural planning process.

#### **a) Background**

This Manager had been with the City of Kitchener Parks and Recreation Department for 17 years. He had originally been a facility and programme manager, moving into his current job when the department was restructured seven years ago. His educational background was in Psychology and a

diploma in recreation from Connestoga College. Prior to Kitchener he had worked in the Parks and Recreation Department for the City of Stratford.

The current Arts, Culture and Special Events unit had been created in 1994 to connect arts and cultural activity with significant citywide special events such as Oktoberfest. As in many communities there was for many years an uncomfortable fit in Parks and Recreation between the sports and recreation activity, and arts and culture activity: the recreation activity had wielded the most clout in the department. This changed with the arrival of a new Chief Executive Officer for Kitchener who was a strong arts advocate and someone who had seen the benefits to the community of a formal cultural planning process. At the urging of the CEO, the Manager began to explore a planning exercise aimed at a more strategic approach to arts and cultural grants and services in the City.

## **b) The Cultural Plan**

This was a challenge in the beginning because communication between the City and the arts and cultural community was not strong (“we didn’t know the community and the community didn’t know us”). The unit secured funds from the City and the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation to support the planning process. A regional officer of the Ministry played a strong role in initiating the plan. The first step was a conference to identify “what the important issues were and what the City could do”. This information provided substantive input to the plan but also provided the “support and ammunition” for undertaking the plan internally at the City and in the community.

In 1993 the City appointed an Arts and Culture Advisory Committee of ten people to assist with the planning process. Their mandate was “to assess the state of arts and culture in Kitchener, and then formulate a cultural strategic plan that would provide City Council with guidance in making decisions that affect the investment of City resources - money, personnel, facilities” (Cardinal, 1996, i.). The Arts and Culture Advisory Committee had representation from City Council, from the Parks and Recreation Department, and from the cultural community. The City’s first instinct was to recruit representatives from the major cultural institutions - e.g., the Kitchener Public Library, the Circle in the Square, the Kitchener Symphony. The Manager observed that the city “lucked out” when these organizations insisted that the city focus on more grassroots involvement.

The Committee worked with an external consultant to design an “open and participatory process in which ideas for cultural development were generated by citizens (not by experts), and which included public review of the ideas before their presentation to Council” (Cardinal, 1996, i.). The planning process used was described in the final plan as follows:

“The ideas in CulturePlan were generated by fifty residents who chose to take part in response to a very broadly disseminated invitation from the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. They worked together for four full days in October and November (1993), first sharing their concerns for cultural development, then sharing their images of those concerns well addressed. Eight teams formed around future images shared by team members. These teams developed their detailed scenarios and action plans, and discovered that all scenarios harmonized into a shared vision for culture in Kitchener. One of its most lasting outcomes [of the process] is the degree of ownership and self-authorizing action that is generated by those taking part. We see this in the number of initiatives that have already begun, through the efforts of the citizens who envisioned them and offered them to the CulturePlan community” (ibid., 12).

The recommendations in the report speak to the following issues: “where we want to go as a community, and why; how our vision for Kitchener might be accomplished”; what roles would be played by the various stakeholders; and how we might assess the progress we are making over time, in the realization of these goals” (ibid., 10).

Elements of the vision articulated by the plan:

“A city in which the arts and culture are strong and valued components of our day to day lives; where people of all ages explore their creativity and express their uniqueness at all levels of accomplishment; where the year is punctuated by festivals; where our revitalized downtown highlights the arts and culture activities and amenities; where ongoing cultural and arts activities contribute to our distinct sense of place, to the quality of life of residents, and to our attractiveness to businesses and visitors; and where, through our experiences with the arts, we have learned to value and celebrate our diversity while working together toward shared purposes” (ibid., 6).

A set of core values were identified: “we value quality of life for residents; imagination as an infinitely renewable resource; a distinctive sense of place; participation in the city’s public life; participation in the global community; and the particular gift of the original creative artist” (ibid., 7). Principles underlying goals, initiatives, and actions included: “citizen initiative and City support; building on what already exists; building incrementally toward the vision; involving multiple partners; using existing City processes; and being ready to act when opportunities arise” (ibid., 8).

The plan recommended that City Council adopt the vision, values and principles, and the following six goals for cultural development. For each goal the plan proposed specific actions to achieve the goal and recommended that City Council request the involvement of appropriate City departments and existing advisory committees. The six goals were:

- i. strengthen the municipal cultural infrastructure;
- ii. encourage creation of arts-based festivals and celebrations;
- iii. incorporate an arts and culture focus into downtown revitalization;
- iv. augment existing cultural facilities;
- v. support increased awareness of the arts within the community and increased communication within the arts sector; and to,
- vi. monitor progress toward goals for arts and cultural development” (ibid., 10).

To monitor progress in arts and cultural development, the plan proposed an “ongoing, community-based, participatory process to monitor progress toward the goals of CulturePlan.

The plan proposed that the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee be established on a permanent basis. The composition of the body is not specified but it is implied it would be a combination of political and community appointments. The mandate was to include “responsibility for recommending goals for cultural development every five years, assessing progress toward those goals, setting annual priorities for the committee’s work, advising City Council on arts and culture priorities in the capital and operating budgets, advising on staffing for positions with arts and culture duties, and advising council on any other matters pertaining to arts and cultural development as may arise from time to time” (ibid., 12).



The monitoring process proposed by the plan involves the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee annually reviewing goals, initiatives; publishing a report on progress to Council and to the public; hosting an annual forum for purposes of reporting to the community and seeking input to priority setting; every fifth year formally reviewing and revising the CulturePlan and shaping recommendations to Council; contributing to revisions to other planning documents (the Municipal Plan, leisure facilities strategy master plan, and similar planning documents).

I asked the Manager what had been the critical success factors in the planning process.

The arrival of a new, supportive CEO had been the most important factor. A second major stimulus that contributed to the receptivity of City Council to the cultural plan was the focus placed on downtown revitalization as an economic development strategy for the City. The arts and culture were seen as a major contributor to this priority. The focus on downtown revitalization made it possible to get a range of different municipal departments to pay attention to cultural issues, paralleling the role played by cultural tourism in Peterborough.

A third factor was the participation of two City Councilors on the Advisory Committee. These councilors took part in the four-day visioning process and came away impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of others at the meeting. They became strong advocates for the plan and its recommendations. This visioning process was seen as a success. It attracted approximately 50 people who contributed four days to the event.

- “People really became champions for the ideas and the proposals. They didn’t expect the city to do it all. This really impressed the city”

If these had been critical success factors I then asked what he saw as the major barriers in the planning process, and to ongoing cultural development needs in Kitchener.

The shortage of resources, especially staff resource, was at the top of the list.

- “We delivered the product and are making headway but the lack of resources slows the process down and prevents us from achieving more”.

I asked him why there was no explicit definition of “culture” or “cultural development” in the plan. He expressed some surprise at the question, indicating definitional issues had not occurred to people as a concern.

- “People brought their own ideas about what we were talking about and what they wanted”.

I asked about whether issues of diversity and pluralism had arisen and if so how they had been addressed. The city had sought input and involvement from the local Ethno-Cultural Committee in the planning process, and on the Advisory Committee. To date they had received no response. He acknowledged that the arts and cultural community needed to be more proactive here, taking more initiative in reaching out, not relying on groups to come forward when there has been so little history of interaction.

The Manager was also the staff support person to the Ethno-Cultural Committee and indicated there was opportunity for stronger links and synergy in the future. His sense was that many members of diverse communities, especially recent immigrants to Canada were more preoccupied with access to basic city services. However, the committee had recently sponsored a photographic exhibition focused on diversity in Canada.

The ongoing evaluation and monitoring function established by the plan seemed an innovative component. He indicated that the first forum reviewing progress on the plan had been held recently. While there was good information sharing, the event had failed to galvanize people to further action and commitment, as had been hoped. His general sense was that the most serious challenge was keeping volunteers motivated and engaged once the original momentum from the planning process had dissipated.

Even after the planning process the cultural community in Kitchener remained fragmented along disciplinary lines: the visual arts still had relatively little to do with the literary or performing arts. The more integrated understanding of local cultural issues remained a challenge to implement. The emphasis the city placed on festivals in the plan was one way of encouraging these cross-disciplinary linkages.

There was a gradual growth in appreciation both within the cultural community and in the city that the arts and culture did have important contributions to make to community development.

- “People need to see they are all part of the cultural landscape of the community”.

### c) **Secondary Research Questions**

#### **Ideological Paradigms and Belief Patterns**

Although the Burrell and Morgan (1979) matrix had been primarily used to probe perspectives in the museum context I was interested in how the Manager perceived himself and where he might situate others in the cultural community and the city. The Manager placed himself more on the subjective side of the horizontal continuum but felt that senior management at the city and Council were definitely more on the objective side.

- “They’re very results driven ... don’t tell me how difficult the job is, tell me what you did for me yesterday”.

Council saw the job of the unit, and of cultural development more broadly, as involved in the delivery of “a product”. The Manager, in contrast, in his interaction with clients and with community-based work saw himself and his job as requiring him to be more oriented to the subjective needs of people and the cultivation of relationships.

In terms of the vertical axis related to accepting or challenging existing power relations he indicated he was willing to challenge those above him, but:

- “You can only go so far ... then it has to be taken up by the community to press for change”.

He felt the most valuable output of the CulturePlan was less the specific action recommendations than the statement of values, principles and broadly defined goals. These statements had been helpful in arguing for the inclusion of statements relating to culture in such planning documents as the Official Plan, Urban Design Guidelines (which included public art). The unit was working on a policy related to a percentage of all capital projects devoted to art for those facilities. The city’s adopting of the broad statements of goals and principles did provide a point of reference in raising cultural issues in these other planning contexts.

- “Overall we’re doing ok ... we’ve taken a bunch of incremental steps ... and they’re headed in the right direction”.

## **Leadership Needs**

I asked the Manager to reflect on the Starhawk (1987) mapping of leadership in terms of the needs of cultural planning. He said he believed that the crow was needed early on, in order to get the basic infrastructure and vision in place. Then it was critical that the snake and the spider go to work building relationships and networks. He felt there was a shortage of these skills in the current situation and the loss of energy and commitment was partially attributable to this.

## **Local Cultural Governance**

The Manager thought the model was a useful illustration of some of the dynamics in local cultural governance in Kitchener. However, he too thought it was too rigid and mechanistic a model. He turned quickly to talking in more specific terms about the structures in Kitchener. Council determined the structure of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. Members were appointed for a minimum of a one-year term, most served for two. There were two Councilors and community representatives representing different cultural disciplines (e.g., literary arts, library) rather than specific institutional representatives as in Peterborough.

The Advisory Committee reported through the Culture, Parks and Recreation Division. The City was in the throws of restructuring which was involving a “turf war” at the senior management level. The Planning Department was “gobbling up” other departments. Planning had responsibility for downtown revitalization and the department was using this as a base from which to take over the community development agenda, an agenda that had been held by Culture, Parks and Recreation.

The Arts and Culture, Special Events unit enjoyed a “good relationship with Council ... our credibility is good ... we’ve delivered on things for them”. Again the link to economic development was cited as a strong factor. But he noted a second factor, not noted explicitly in Peterborough:

- “Council wants to see the City as more cosmopolitan and see culture contributing to this. There are also some articulate advocates in the arts community who have been persuasive about the importance of the arts to the community, including to economic development”.

He acknowledged there was some questioning of the balance of attention to the downtown core at the expense of other parts of the city, but that nothing overt had yet emerged.

He felt the Advisory Committee was “losing some steam”.

- “The plan kept us busy and motivated but now what? The challenge for the city is how to keep people involved. One issue that people are coming together around is a review of grants”

Overall he believed the process had resulted in substantial progress. Council was more sensitive to cultural issues. There were now advocates for public art on Council that were not there in the past which he attributed to the increased profile of these issues achieved through the CulturePlan.

## **9.2.2 Aurora**

Aurora is located approximately 30 minutes north of Toronto. The town has undergone dramatic growth with the expansion of suburbs serving a workforce in Toronto. The population has doubled in size since 1986 and is projected to grow to over 59,000 by the year 2016 (Town of Aurora, 1998). The current population of approximately 40,000 is of predominantly English origin with German, Italian, French and Chinese representation. Cultural amenities include an excellent library, a live performing arts theatre, provincially recognized museums and an annual equestrian show.

### **a) Background**

The Aurora Historical Society (AHS) is responsible for two museums in the community, a small general history museum and a restored nineteenth century home with a strong collection dealing with medical history.

I contacted the Curator of the AHS. The Curator had been in her job since 1981. Her first career had been as a civil engineering librarian. She had felt “detached from the end product” of this work and after participating in a historical walk with a local historian decided that museum and heritage interpretation was a field she could feel more committed to. She enrolled in the Interpretive Programme at Seneca College. Since that time she had also completed courses with the Ontario Museum Association. Her father was born in Aurora. She had not lived in the community before taking her job but she felt this link with the community’s past “helped her with the older folks”.

The AHS was in the midst of a planning process. In light of diminishing government funds and changing community expectations the organization felt the need to “go back to basics” and review “the purposes, mission, and images of the Society for the period ahead”. This involved not only a re-examination of the role of the two museums, but also more broadly the needs of culture and heritage development in the community.

#### **b) The AHS Planning and Renewal Process**

Greatly reduced financial resources had precipitated a staffing crisis when the Society decided they could not afford to keep on a second staff person responsible for the historic house. But there had also been a “clash of visions” over the Hillary House site and how it should be interpreted. The tension was:

- “Should it be a place for scholarly study or a more traditional historic house that tried to build community connections”

The staff person who had been let go had been an advocate of challenging the traditional historic house model by emphasizing more the specialized medical collection.

The Curator was supportive of the planning process but was also frustrated by the slow progress in coming to conclusions.

- “I’m sure it WILL be valuable but we need to move to conclusions ... no-one wants to make any decisions until we’re finished the plan .. we don’t need perfection right away ...”

The scope and ambition of the exercise is signaled by the Table of Contents of the planning documents (Aurora and District Historical Society, 1998):

- i. Defining the Nature of the Work and Getting Started
- ii. Changing Conditions and Needs Affecting the Future of the Society
- iii. Coming to Understand the Fundamental Nature of Our Work - Building Capacity For What?
- iv. Renewing Our Understanding of the Nature of Community Cultural Development. The Contribution of Heritage and Historical Understandings
- v. Determining the Capacities Required by the Society's Museums
- vi. Determining the Society's Capacities for Public Programming and Outreach
- vii. Rethinking the Purposes, Mission, and Images of the Society for the Period Ahead
- viii. Ensuring the Resources Needed to Undertake the Work
- ix. The Aurora (Civic) Museum: Next Steps as Bridges to the Future
- x. Hillary House: Next Steps as Bridges to the Future.

The draft document was more than fifty pages long, with many citations from recent literature on cultural development.

I asked what in her mind were some of the principal issues emerging in the plan.

- "We need to be playing a more active, in-your-face role in the community ... taking stronger advocacy positions on local issues ... the LACAC (Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee) is active but the Society also needs to be more active ... we need to move away from being a small, inward-looking group ... we need to involve the museum more in the community ... and the community more in the museum".

Given resource constraints there was also a need to reach out to people to gain specific skills - lawyers, accountants. They also needed:

- "A go-getter ... someone who would be out there selling us, raising money ... involved in special events, ... someone who can fundraise".

That these needs were only now being acknowledged may stand as an indication of how internally focused the institution had been in the past.

### **c) Secondary Research Questions**

#### **Ideological Paradigms and Belief Systems**

Asked where she would locate herself she replied

- “Bang in the middle ... but maybe somewhat to the subjective side and maybe somewhat above the middle on challenging authority”.

She indicated the board of the AHS was split. At least one person on the Board she felt had no interest in the material collections, and others that saw the collections as everything (“if only we had fine antiques everything would be fine”). I asked if there was any discernible pattern with regard to the split on the Board such as age difference. It was not necessarily the older members who were pro-collections. She felt level of education might be a factor. The person who had the least interest in the collection was also the most highly educated person on the Board.

She herself saw collections as:

- “a tool for illustrating aspects of our particular history, how things have or have not changed ... collections are a means to the end of communicating human experience”.

The issue in Aurora was not the controlling interest of old families with strong investments in the early settlement narrative: very few older families remained involved with AHS. The issue was more “reversing old ways of thinking and entrenched professionalism”.

The population of Aurora was becoming increasingly diverse, however:

- “we’re still pretty much a white bread organization... we don’t see cultural groups, as much in the suburbs... we have less clustering of communities like in downtown Toronto”.



She acknowledged:

- “We have to do more, find out more, reach out more ... there are many Dutch people in the community who would probably like to get together .. the museum might be the group that brought some of these newer communities together with older residents”

The association of the Dutch community with “diversity” may reveal something of the distance the institution has to travel in acknowledging ethno-racial and cultural diversity. When I described the Peterborough model of the CHB, its composition and its evolving structure there was strong enthusiasm and support. But there was also acknowledgment of the leadership provided by the Manager in Peterborough whose reputation in the museum community was strong.

- “I know that (the Manager) in Peterborough is a real go-getter”.

### **Leadership Needs**

The Curator saw herself as the dragon, trying continually to bring the Board “back to reality” about resource constraints. The issue was not “guarding collections as much as guarding human and financial resources”. She felt the role was necessary but acknowledged that it could also be a negative force in rethinking and reframing issues.

As far as others on the board there was:

- “One crow who was so high up that person never touched earth and day-to-day grounding ... there is a pretty good mix of others ... the chair of the Board was a grace who had a long view but was also able to see day-to-day realities ... they were also able to resolve conflict ... we don’t have a spider at the moment ... we’re not linked by a common vision ... the only thing that links us is the desire for a common vision”.

The Board for many years did not think at all about the future. In the short term there was some frustration about being without a clear sense of direction. However, she was confident the process would ultimately prove beneficial.

## **Local Cultural Governance**

Culture and heritage issues fell within the Leisure Services Department that also included Parks and Recreation. The Department “has always been headed by a jock”. Despite the different organizational cultures the recreation community was:

- “Willing to work with us but we haven’t gone the extra mile to reach out to them .. it’s our fault as much as theirs”.

The current Council she described as “mostly open minded”. The current mayor was very sports oriented, and in fact was the chief staff person responsible for recreation in the neighboring community where he lived. The AHS enjoyed excellent access to the mayor and had been able to take issues forward frequently. This view was shared by most in the community who felt that they could take issues forward to the mayor and at least receive a fair hearing.

One of the purposes of the planning exercise had been to think through what the best structural arrangements might be. At the moment there was no cultural representation on the Leisure Services Committee, but again “there could be if we made the effort”.

### **9.3 Final Dialogue With the Museum Manager**

The summary of the individual interviews was incorporated into the Peterborough Story and forwarded to the Manager in advance of the final meeting. I opened the meeting by simply asking the Manager to reflect on the results of the interviews, and on the project overall.

He began by saying that he felt the final conversation with him, and with the team, was important to bring closure to the project. Satisfactory closure on projects in the museum field he felt was rare. The perpetual shortage of time and resources usually left people feeling that projects were never completed to people's satisfaction. It also meant that people rarely had an opportunity to reflect on their experience and the lessons that had been learned.

- “The irony is in museums, where we're supposed to be concerned with the past, with history... but few people know the history of their own institution or of museums in general... we still operate without an understanding of the context and the forces that shaped the institution”

He felt the PCMA had been studied more than many institutions and that my dissertation research had afforded the institution an incredible luxury. He felt that resource constraints, combined with the pace and complexity of change in people's lives, meant that museum people had less time than ever to reflect. But he also felt there was resistance to reflection among museum workers even if the time were available. One member of his own staff he believed was inclined by temperament to be reflective; a second was not reflective by temperament but was becoming more so as that person matured. The third had little inclination in this direction.

Finding concrete ways to encourage more lateral communication and cross-functional co-operation had been a strong theme in the interviews. I raised the suggestion, which had arisen during the final interviews, regarding the need to review job descriptions, as well as the possible use of a cross-functional team to plan and develop exhibitions and programs. He indicated a willingness to consider this, and agreed that concrete projects were the best way to encourage stronger lateral communication and collaboration. Staff had worked collaboratively and effectively in the construction of a new picnic pavilion and meeting/performance space outside the museum, using joists from a recently demolished nineteenth century church.

But he also cautioned that this was not a new idea and indeed *had* been tried in the past. In that situation personality tensions had arisen that had proven a serious barrier of the team functioning effectively. The Manager felt the legacy of this experience would be difficult to get around. Also, while the process might potentially result in better communication, and potentially a better exhibition or program, the harsh reality was that it was likely to take more time, time that was in short supply. The “theory” of alternate organizational process was still up against the messy, harsh reality of personality conflicts and resource constraints.

The Manager felt integrated programme planning would only be meaningful if driven by a clearer understanding of the mission of the PCMA/CHD, a mission he felt still remained vaguely defined and understood. He described plans for a retreat for the CHB and staff that would kick-start a cultural plan or strategy for the City. It was hoped that out of these discussions there might begin to emerge more consensus on a Divisional vision, one that might then set a context for more effective long-term program planning by staff. He indicated he was considering using the final Peterborough Story as a resource for this planning exercise.

In terms of local cultural governance the Manager felt that the incoming chair of the CHB was bringing the past chairs’ enthusiasm and intelligence, but better political instincts, instincts more oriented toward consensus rather confrontation. He was also someone who acknowledged that any change process takes time. The previous chair “wanted everything yesterday”.

The CHB would re-examine the structure and functioning of the Board in the cultural strategy/planning process. He maintained that he had always seen the structure of the Division and the CHB as transitional, “solid enough to get going ... but not perfect”. The structure put in place had also been the result of the requirements for governing boards set out in the Community Museum Policy for Ontario. He felt the suggestion that there be a museum sub-committee of the CHB could still meet these requirements, and was a useful suggestion.

A new mayor had been elected in the last municipal election that was making a real difference. Unlike her predecessor the Manager felt this mayor “liked ideas”, liked looking for alternate ways of framing problems and generating solutions. This openness to new ideas was having a significant impact on Council’s expectations of City staff.

The Manager had begun discussions with the Manager of the Recreation Division about a collaborative approach to a leisure services plan that would include a cultural component or strategic plan. He reflected on the difficulty “locating” cultural planning issues. While there was strength locating them in Leisure Services, this didn’t adequately address heritage conservation, especially land based heritage resources. Nor did it adequately address cultural tourism and the growing importance of culture as a source of local economic development. The difficulty “locating” cultural issues in local government is a continued theme.

He also felt there was an opportunity to have input to a study of capital facility needs to be undertaken by the City. If the PCMA/CHD was successful in legitimizing the City’s responsibilities for culture and heritage, the museum and the Division’s capital needs should be addressed in the study of capital facilities. This was an opportunity because capital facilities were an issue that both the City and the community understand in tangible terms. In this regard he felt the Parks and Recreation Division was ahead of the Planning Division in using a “community development” planning model involving genuine public participation. He contrasted this with the more traditional, “top-down” planning still favored by the Planning Department where plans were prepared and then “sold” through community consultation.

In a discussion with Recreation staff about the planning process the Manager raised the issue of values, how they fit into the plan and how they might be addressed. He felt the Division needed some fundamental statement of values and beliefs to guide its work. Local values continued to place considerably less importance on cultural development compared, for example, to Parks and Recreation. Overcoming this would take time.

He felt the interviews had performed a useful role in revealing the other side of the “mission versus functions” debate. There *were* functional responsibilities in the museum that could not be taken for granted, that did need to be adequately staffed and resourced. The best the museum could hope for in the short-term would be some additional part-time staff. Care would be needed to ensure these resources were distributed across the institution.

He continued to feel conscious of a leadership vacuum at the museum that he felt did not exist at the Library. At the Library the Manager was able to focus on the “big picture” issues, feeling confident that the micro-management was being handled effectively. He had less confidence that

this was the case at the PCMA. He acknowledged the organization was still lacking the systematized approaches to information sharing and communication.

## **9.4 Final Team Meeting**

The results of the individual interviews were incorporated in the revised Peterborough Story and circulated to the team in advance of the final meeting. The only expectation stated in the cover material was that the meeting was an opportunity to review the final interview results in light of the overall team process, and to bring closure to the research.

Three full-time staff members attended; the fourth was away dealing with a serious family illness. The one Board member who had been a member of the team from the beginning was also in attendance.

I opened the meeting citing the Manager's comment that there were few opportunities to bring full closure to work in the museum field. In the spirit of appreciative inquiry I asked people to begin by identifying the most positive or hopeful facet of the interviews.

One staff member reiterated the view that the analysis was an extremely valuable resource for ongoing organizational and professional development. The Board member then said he felt the whole Peterborough Story painted too positive a picture of the process, citing the Learning Forum specifically:

- "The Forum was a pain ... it was a make-work project, it wasn't well structured, the three days in Toronto were a waste of time ... I was annoyed by the other teams who completely misread us".

I responded by saying that from my perspective the Forum had had a significant impact on the way the Peterborough team interacted. The Board member continued in a confrontational style, asking if there had been follow-up with any of the other teams, and what - if any - impact the Forum had had in these organizations. Based on conversations with staff in two of other museums I indicated that the Forum appeared to have had a significant impact. One museum contacted felt the experience had in fact dramatically effected the organizational culture, from one based on

confrontation, secrecy and intrigue, to a more open organization in which differences of views could be aired.

This was a revealing exchange. During the first community dialogue at the Learning Forum this Board member had expressed unease due to what he saw as a process for diffusing conflicting views. His preferred mode of interacting was that of intellectual debate - thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Others at the Learning Forum argued that a difference of views could be expressed while still maintaining an open and supportive environment. My impression was that at that moment he remained unconvinced. However, during the closing community dialogue at the Learning Forum he spoke movingly of having come to see the limitations of rational debate, and the need to find alternate ways of thinking and interacting. The final team meeting represented a return to the earlier, and still dominant, confrontational style.

He then moved to describe what for him was the most important issue to emerge from the interviews, "the vacuum of leadership" at the museum.

- "With (the Manager) at the Library and at City Hall we really only have a ¼ - time manager here ... the report documents these problems clearly and for that reason it is a useful tool to make the case for additional resources".

Two other team members agreed that the analysis provided "ammunition" for going to Council to make the case for additional resources. The Manager agreed the document could help in this regard but stressed that, despite the increased legitimacy of the Division, a careful strategy would be required; he was not optimistic of an early "win". He said he felt that had the same report been tabled 18-24 months earlier it might have provided ammunition for the city to do just the opposite, to argue that operating a full-time facility was no longer possible.

- "Timing, timing, timing ... today it can be a tool for rebuilding ... then it would have been an excuse to shut us down".

None of the other team members appeared to have considered this possibility. The Manager's political instincts continued to serve the institution well in a volatile municipal environment.

Discussion then turned to how new resources might be allocated if a successful case could be made; should resources be assigned to senior management or should it supplement specific functional responsibilities of other staff. This triggered another discussion about the need to distinguish museum roles and functions from those of the Division. Several staff members felt there continued to be a danger that museum staff would be drawn increasingly into the work of the Division, leaving essential museological functions understaffed.

This discussion bridged to the results of questions related to ideological paradigms and belief patterns. The two staff people with direct responsibilities for collections - as curator and archivist - defended the importance of these traditional functions. This triggered a lengthy and rich discussion about the shift from more internally oriented and collections based museums to more externally focused institutions serving the contemporary cultural needs of a diverse community. The two staff people argued for a balancing of the two, maintaining the need to uphold professional standards related to collection, and to recognize the professional body of knowledge tied to the care of these collections.

This discussion placed the core issues of organizational and professional identities on the table, framed more clearly than they had been to date. The debate seemed to turn on differing views of the fundamental definition of the museum: were the interests and well being of the community or the collections at the heart of a museum's purpose. The Manager raised the issue of the "community orientation" of the museum having displaced the more traditional collections mandate. He continued to view the establishment of the CHD as a "natural evolution" of this orientation. I reiterated the point, made in the Peterborough Story, that the "community orientation" was leadership that could have been exercised by any local cultural organization; it had not flown from *the museum's* rethinking of its role and function serving the contemporary needs of a diverse community.

With the debate polarized in a "community versus collections" dichotomy the Manager found himself at odds with the two staff members responsible for collections. I found myself in the middle and offered that while collections *were* central to the mission of museums, there was perhaps a need to view collections and collection policies differently than they had been seen in the past. This led to a rich discussion about the need for a *more* aggressive and proactive approach to collecting if the weight of institutional history and existing collections were to be overcome and the needs of under-represented facets of the community addressed. There was recognition that without



this more proactive collecting approach the “pioneer narrative” would likely continue to dominate. There was also recognition that new collecting practices would be more challenging and need to make greater use of oral history and testimony. One member of the team offered that archives had considerably more experience than museums with this kind of collecting and could be a valuable resource.

The Manager indicated the proposed Cultural Strategic Plan process was a context within which the staff and the board could raise these issues. In undertaking the plan one team member suggested a distinction be maintained between planning related to PCMA, including a systematic and long-term plan for collections and public programs, and planning for the Division overall. The proposed establishment of a sub-committee of CHB to address focus on museum issues was seen as consistent with this goal.

The discussion then shifted to leadership. I had charted people’s response to the Starhawk (1987) leadership model styles on a flipchart. When the various leadership roles were charted, the organization seemed relatively well served by a balance of leadership styles. The one possible shortage was that of a spider able to link the various parts of the organization together. It was clear to everyone “who was who” on the chart. One team member commented there was a danger in models like this because people may *see* themselves in one role, but not always act in accordance with this role. The missing team member was seen as someone who would see themselves as a snake, and who did have real insight into many of the difficult emotional issues the organization seemed reluctant to face. Yet this person had been no more able than other team members to raise these issues openly.

The Manager asked me where I saw myself. I had not considered the question but eventually said that, like him, I felt I was a “crow caught in a web”, trying to be less the long-term visionary focused on “big picture” issues and more focused on building networks and relationships. I acknowledged that my inclination to the first had been a barrier in my early interactions with the team when I was continually urging people to step back and look at the “bigger picture” or longer-term vision. I felt I had been more effective when I was able to restrain these inclination, asking questions and pointing out contradictions but not trying to direct discussion.

The team then turned to a discussion of cultural governance. There was universal agreement that the basic model of the Division was sound. Constraints on the Board’s ability to lobby aggressively

were acknowledged. But the opportunities presented by having status as a committee of Council outweighed these limitations. There was some discussion regarding a different process for determining appointments. It was suggested that names might be put forward to Council based on a different model of community representation, for example moving to broader discipline-based - e.g., visual arts, rather than specific institutional appointments - e.g., the Peterborough Art Gallery.

Whatever its composition there was consensus the Board needed to move to a different way of organizing its work. The possibility of work being organized around different needs in local cultural development - marketing and promotion, fundraising, advocacy, cultural tourism - appealed to several people. The Manager argued that although the CHB was attracting stronger Board members:

- “But we still don’t get the power brokers ... we’re getting closer but we still get ‘second-stringers’.... Unlike the Showcase board and the Art Gallery board who do get the heavy hitters ... they have no constraints.... they can appoint anyone”

Turning to the interaction between City administrators and Council, the Manager reflected on different approaches operating at City Hall:

- “(We use) a more community development model of planning than most parts of the city who still operate in an autocratic fashion, they’re run more on the model of professional expertise .... We think it’s part of our role to actually *educate* Council on issues coming forward ... other staff at the City resent this ... they’re accustomed to just *briefing* Council, using as little information as possible”.

This pointed to the need for staff to continually upgrade their own expertise and knowledge to ensure they are bringing forward the best information and advice possible.

- “Despite the pressures of work we have to keep developing ourselves... Our link to Fleming and the new knowledge the students bring to the organization helps ... but it isn’t enough ... somehow we have to do this more systematically”.

This continuous upgrading and development of human resources is *the* essence of a learning organization. Although the sentiment expressed was a hopeful sign there was still little indication of a tangible commitment first to a more systematic approach to individual staff training and development, and second to formalizing collective or organizational learning processes.

## **PHASE VI: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### ***10.0 Summary of All Research Findings***

This dissertation began with a literature review that hypothesized a convergence of interest among three fields: local cultural development, planning and community development, and museums. As is the case with many “systems” at the end of the century, each of these fields is engaged in a process of self-examination and renewal.

Postmodernism shatters illusions of unitary public interests and undermines traditional sources of professional and cultural authority. All three fields are also being forced to confront the reduced power of the welfare state on which they had grown dependent. Each is searching for a new balance of public-, private-, and Third-sector responsibilities, and more effective methods and strategies to support decision-making and governance in complex human systems.

The cultural critique of postmodernism can bring vital new perspectives to planning and community development, perspectives needed by planners to better acknowledge inequity, accommodate difference and negotiate complex questions of identity and meaning in cities. Conversely, more inclusive community-based planning and decision-making models can inform new strategies for local cultural development, strategies constructed outside the government-driven models of the past. Cultural planning is the place where these interests can converge.

The literature review proposed that local museums could provide institutional settings in which cultural planning approaches could be tested and championed. The hypothesis was that museums could take on broadened roles in cultural planning but that this would require two things: first a substantial reframing of museum and broader cultural planning purposes; second, new organizational and professional practices and capabilities needed to take on broadened cultural planning responsibilities. The literature suggested that the practices of organizational learning could serve as a “change technology” to support both requirements of change.

My primary research question was:

***How can organizational and professional practices in museums change to address new understandings of culture and community-based cultural planning?***

The research revealed a number of false assumptions that lay buried in the primary research question, and many barriers to the successful application of this somewhat neat formula for change.

Conclusions from this dissertation fall into the following categories:

- Conclusions relevant to the research method;
- Conclusions relevant to emerging cultural planning approaches; and,
- Conclusions relevant to organizational change in local museums.

## **10.1 Findings Relevant to the Research Method**

### **Primary and Secondary Research Questions**

I began the primary research with a very broad research question. This was useful at the beginning because it did not foreclose any emergent issues. As the research proceeded it was possible to move to identify progressively more specific research issues and questions. The second literature review based on a set of secondary research questions was effective in sharpening the investigation in the final phase of data collection and analysis.

### **Use of Primary Case Study**

The research focused primarily on one case study. The intent was to probe beneath the surface of the organizational change process to acknowledge the complexities of the case study. I had no expectation that the study would produce “models” or “strategies” that could be transferred intact to other communities and other contexts. However, the comparison of findings in Kitchener and Aurora did provide an opportunity to test the relevance of key findings in other settings and to surface other insights.

Of the two communities Kitchener proved the more valuable. Here the focus was on the dynamics of local cultural planning and governance. Results revealed a number of parallels, and some differences, to the Peterborough experience. In Aurora some parallels pertaining to organizational change in local museums could be identified. However, it was clear that the museum in Aurora was just beginning the process of organizational renewal and the rethinking of its role in the community begun by the PCMA many years before. While some similarities in barriers to change could be identified the two institutions were at very different stages of organizational development.

The focus on one primary case study enhanced the ability to establish personal relationships with participants. A number of significant findings in the case relate to personal and emotional dynamics in the organization. These research issues may have been missed had the level of involvement with participants been more superficial.

## **Constructivist and Critical Research Orientation**

The overall research orientation followed Lather (1990) who explores the intersection of constructivist and critical research perspectives. This orientation appealed to me as a researcher for the same reasons expressed by Sullivan (1995) in the museum context:

Museums must look for ways that honour both the authority and point of view of the cultural participant/visitor and the authority of the professional cultural interpreter, documenter or scholar ... (we must engage visitors in this dilemma) helping them to understand why these two distinct ways of knowing can sometimes be in conflict but both be essentially correct (1995, 6).

I struggled with the tensions described by Sullivan and by Lather throughout the research, trying to remain responsive to the needs of participants while providing enough structure and context to challenge traditional assumptions and support the change process. This paralleling of tensions inherent in the research method and the interpretive challenges facing museums was an unanticipated but useful insight.

## **Appreciative Inquiry**

The research made extensive use of appreciative inquiry. People responded positively to the opportunity to look for “the best in what is, as a basis for identifying the best of what might be”, and to have an opportunity to frame alternatives to the “world-as-a-problem-to-be-solved” paradigm. The tool has since become a standard way of operating for the Manager of the PCMA/CHD.

On the other hand the research also demonstrated the powerful hold a problem solving worldview has on how people think and function in organizations. Despite the use of appreciative inquiry all the issues identified in the Team Story in the First Phase of Data Collection were framed as problem statements. Appreciative inquiry also did not help the team confront difficult issues related to the Manager’s leadership style, not did it help challenge or reveal assumptions about traditional collecting and interpretative practices. The limitations of appreciative inquiry in confronting these issues reinforces the need to link constructivist and critical research traditions,

finding methods to build strategic intent in ways that also acknowledge real inequities and barriers to change.

### **The Learning History**

The use of the Learning History/Peterborough Story was perhaps the most successful facet of the research method. The Story succeeded in establishing a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the change process. Participants commented on the richness and value of the Story, and on the insights they drew from it both individually and collectively. Access to personal narratives and testimonies proved a powerful learning tool (Van Maanen, 1988; Krug, 1997).

The Learning History also served as an important tool for testing validity in the research. It provided a method for feeding back participant’s views and ideas about the change process, together with my own analysis of these same issues and events. It was a tool for building shared understanding of the change process.

### **Relationship With “An Insider”**

The use of and ongoing dialogue with the Manager as a source of data had both benefits and drawbacks. The use of an “insider” with a deep knowledge of the organizational system, joined to an “outsider” who brings fresh perspectives and insights from other sources, is an acknowledged organizational change strategy. The danger is that the views of the “insider” distort issues through a privileging of one point of view. One team member identified this problem in the final interviews, arguing the Manager’s perspectives and questions related to his leadership style had taken on undue significance in the Peterborough Story, pushing to the margins other factors that may have had equal importance. This team member had from early on insisted that the central issue was less the organization’s inability to “build new capacities” than it was the unwillingness to establish priorities, to say “no”. This point did not receive the attention it deserved until late in the research process.



## **Insights About Myself**

The research was a journey for me every bit as much as for the participants. It was revealing to be forced, in the context of the final team meeting, to reflect on Starhawk's (1987) leadership roles. Like the Manager I saw myself as "a crow caught in a web", trying to reduce the need to be the far-sighted visionary and problem-solver, and to strengthen attention to building relationships and shared commitments to action. I was more effective as a researcher when I focused on the latter, prompting the team with questions to challenge assumptions when necessary, but not imposing my analysis of issues. My inclination to be drawn to the larger context or "system-level" analysis of issues on several occasions proved alienating and enervating for team members. Most did not feel a need to be continually examining the larger context for their actions; they were content with an "adequate grasp" of this larger picture.

## 10.2 Findings Relevant to Cultural Planning

In his examination of cultural planning in the United States, Dreeszen (1994) concluded that the most significant barriers were those that traditional definitions of culture - mostly European high arts, have on conceptualizations of cultural issues, and the hold that traditional views of planning - largely synoptic or rational planning, have on conceptualizations of planning. Using Friedmann's (1987) typology of four intellectual traditions in planning he distinguishes four categories or perspectives on cultural planning: as *community development*, as *organisational (sic) development*, as *public policy planning*, and as *planning for equity*. Most plans remain locked in the rational tradition of organizational development - either strategic planning or marketing strategies - and are unable to acknowledge diverse values and multiple sources, and inequities in power.

The most powerful forces of change, he argued, were equity demands from traditionally marginalized groups: "planning in the equity tradition is more accepting of difference, acknowledges multiple perspectives and multiple values, and is more tolerant of ambiguity than is rational comprehensive planning in the other traditions" (1994, 115). It also directs greater attention to dialogue, to networks of interpersonal relations and to trust and alliances critical to effective collaboration. These are issues that rational planning models discount through their emphasis on a linear process of assessment, goal formulation, implementation and evaluation. Dreeszen believed cultural planning must move from an organizational development to a community development model, and forge strong links to equity planning.

The findings drawn from the Peterborough case study suggest that narrow conceptualizations of both "culture" and "planning" do pose a barrier to cultural planning approaches. However, they also urge caution in assuming that efforts to reframe issues of local cultural development as advocated by the cultural planning approach hold out potential for significant change. Innes' (1990) view that planning is about conceptualization, problem framing or values clarification worked in Peterborough at the macro and meso levels. Participants did evolve a broadened vision of local cultural planning, and of potential new roles for the museum in this new planning context. But these insights did not translate themselves at the micro level into relevant practices across the full spectrum of the CHD's mandate, in particular to reformed museum practices. Nor did they assist in overcoming a variety of personal and emotional barriers to the change process.

The research also suggests there is a danger in accepting Dreeszen's conclusions regarding the weighting of Friedmann's four categories of plans. The Peterborough case did confirm the need for more inclusive and participatory *community development* approaches, with strong links to *equity planning's* emphasis on building trust and relationships. But the evidence in Peterborough suggests that a focus on these approaches not take place at the expense of a strong focus on *organizational development*. Cultural planning requires strong local organizations, organizations with real, as opposed to, imagined capacities. These organizations must be linked laterally to other organizations with shared interests in local cultural development. The evidence in Peterborough further suggests that cultural planning requires greater attention to *public policy planning* if culture is to be brought "in from the margins" of local government and decision-making. The Manager's skills working inside the municipality suggest greater sophistication is required on the part of planners working as civic administrators.

A more useful perspective may be to suggest that cultural planning approaches must embrace a *whole systems* view that links all four planning traditions to the challenges of planning and governance in complex cultural systems at the local level. A clearer understanding is needed of how each planning tradition relates to specific issues and needs in local cultural planning. Each planning tradition in turn has specific skills and capacities that must be identified and developed.

### **Cultural Planning in Peterborough**

This dissertation began by describing the broadened view of local cultural development characteristic of cultural planning approaches. Cultural planning, it was argued, provided a new *perspective* through which decision-makers in the public-, private- and voluntary sectors could see and act differently with regard to local cultural issues. This is an appealing recipe for transformation. However, the evidence in Peterborough suggests there are many difficulties with implementing this new perspective in Canadian municipalities.

The often conservative and technocratic traditions of municipal government where, in the words of the Manager, "the budget is often the corporate plan", can be a significant barrier to an embracing of holistic cultural planning perspectives. Delgado (1995), commenting on European experience, argues that conflicts and decision-making on cultural issues in cities "present themselves under a variety of forms and tend to require more sophisticated responses than those usually supplied for

urban planning transactions” (1995, 11). The paradoxical impact of communities attempting to embrace a holistic cultural planning approach may be the opposite of what is intended - a further marginalizing of cultural issues.

The Peterborough case suggests that advancing cultural planning in Canadian municipalities may be more effective when it works outward from “known” and accepted facets of local cultural development:

- Links between local cultural resources and activity and community economic development; cultural tourism - in Peterborough, downtown revitalization - in Kitchener;
- Support for local cultural facilities;
- Certain facets of heritage conservation, especially those linked to municipal responsibilities for land use planning (e.g., built heritage, archaeology)

A further insight regarding municipal treatment of cultural planning issues drawn from the Peterborough case was the need for line municipal departments to maintain a balance between their responsibility for facilities and direct program delivery, and the “softer” planning or policy role.

The clear danger in working outward from known and accepted activity is that this approach acts to reinforce entrenched interests. one of the principal criticisms of cultural planning approaches that emerged from the literature review. The danger of a narrow focus on cultural facilities is well expressed by Matarasso and Landry (1998).

In the allocation of resources, and the planning of programs, it is often easier to think in terms of infrastructure than activity. Infrastructure is a visible asset which can appear on a balance sheet; it can be opened by a local politician, who can point to it and say “see what I have delivered”. .... Cultural infrastructure is essential: without museums, libraries, theatres, sports stadia cultural activity would be severely curtailed. But facilities bring the serious danger that their presence and management demands lead cultural planners into thinking that they are the city’s culture, rather than a means of supporting it (1998, 25).

## **The Culture and Heritage Division as Governance Structure**

The CHD functioning as a municipal department supported by an advisory board – the Culture and Heritage Board (CHB) – served as an effective governance structure for local cultural development in Peterborough. During the course of the research the CHD succeeded in building profile and legitimacy for a cultural agenda inside the municipality. Cultural issues brought before Council were more apt to be taken seriously and referred to staff in the Division for analysis and recommendations than they had been in the past.

The CHD was effective in facilitating communication and mediating between the interests of the community and the municipality. The Manager's reputation as the "city's leading cultural bureaucrat", someone able to function as an effective broker between the two constituencies, was a key factor in the Division's success. The structure and composition of the CHB was also an important factor. The structure did prevent the CHB from taking vocal advocacy positions opposing Council decisions. However, it did not prevent individual community representatives on the CHB from opposing city positions speaking through other institutions or other channels. Nor did it prevent the Manager from providing quiet advice regarding the most effective external advocacy strategies.

The structure of the CHD was less effective in terms of its third mandate, continued responsibility for the PCMA. For a significant period of the research the relationship between the CHD and the PCMA was unclear. Were the entire staff and the resources of the PCMA intended to serve as the implementation arm of the Division? Or was the PCMA simply one client organization among other clients of the Division represented on the Culture and Heritage Board? If the PCMA as a whole was to serve as the implementation arm of the Division, how were the new responsibilities to be reconciled with already extended institutional resources in the museum?

These issues were framed clearly in the Team Story early in the research but not fully understood and structurally addressed until much later. The establishment of a formal museum sub-committee of the full CHB signaled recognition of the need to delineate institutional (museum) and Divisional mandates and responsibilities. Eventually all staff came to accept they had responsibilities to both PCMA and CHD, but that these responsibilities needed to be more clearly delineated in revised job descriptions. Still unresolved at the end of the research was the question of priorities. The implicit

assumption throughout the change process was that new Divisional responsibilities could be taken on through a process of “capacity building” in the organization. Successes and shortfalls on this issue will be examined in the next chapter.

## **Leadership Needs**

The many barriers identified to cultural planning approaches in Peterborough does not mean that strong leadership on the part of key individuals can play no role in advancing a larger vision of cultural development in municipalities. The leadership skills demonstrated by the Manager were a key factor in the case (below). Toward the end of the research the arrival of a new mayor in Peterborough, one “more receptive to ideas”, also appeared to be having a positive impact. In Kitchener the arrival of a new Chief Executive Officer supportive of local cultural development was identified as a critical success factor.

Working inside the municipality, the first of the CHD’s broad mandates, required the capacity to operate effectively in an environment the Manager described as still characterized by traditional organizational structures and hierarchies. This required sophisticated bureaucratic negotiation, strong strategic and political judgement, and creative and short-term problem-solving skills. There was ample evidence that the Manager brought these talents. In the course of the research he also developed a reputation for his ability to act as “facilitator and broker”, able to help local cultural groups communicate more effectively with City officials.

Working in more community-based settings, the second of the CHD’s mandates, required staff to be skilled in more consensual decision-making models and capable of generating relationships of shared commitment and trust – all the characteristics of equity planning cited by Dreeszen (1994). Early in the research the skills the Manager demonstrated working inside the municipality appeared to be at odds with this second group of leadership capacities. By the end of the research the Manager, along with other staff in the Division, had strengthened these skills.

Starhawk’s (1987) mapping of different leadership roles also provided a useful lens on leadership needs. In both Peterborough and Kitchener “a crow” was needed at the outset to establish a basic vision and planning infrastructure. Soon after, other needs assert themselves requiring different leadership skills, among them the skills and insights of the spider in cultivating relationships and

building shared commitments. The Kitchener case suggested that without these skills momentum and ownership of a shared agenda can be lost.

### **Informal versus Formal Planning Processes**

The research provided mixed evidence regarding the merits of informal, decision-by-decision approaches - as practised in Peterborough, and more formal cultural planning processes - as occurred in Kitchener. In Peterborough no formal cultural planning process was undertaken. The focus was on working in pragmatic ways to secure specific short-term results, while building profile and legitimacy within municipal government and the community. This incremental approach succeeded in significantly extending the influence of the Division during the period of the research. On the other hand by the end of the research a more formal cultural planning process was being considered to solidify gains and establish a new foundation for moving forward.

In Kitchener the more formal cultural planning process of the CulturePlan also succeeded in advancing an agenda. The plan established a set of principles and commitments that served as useful benchmarks in bringing cultural considerations into other municipal plans such as the Official Plan. The CulturePlan process also mobilized community support around a specific series of concrete projects. However, there was evidence of a waning of enthusiasm and focus, in part due to the loss of momentum when the formal planning process ended.

Further research might help to suggest factors related to a "readiness" for more formal cultural planning processes.

### **The Politics of Cultural Planning in Peterborough**

Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) describe one of the defining characteristics of cultural planning as the reintegration of larger social and political with economic goals, in effect a repoliticizing of local cultural development after its narrowly economic orientation in the late 1970's and 1980's. They also identify the conservatism and resistance on the part of local politicians to the politicizing of local cultural issues as a significant barrier to change. The evidence in Peterborough supports this conclusion.

The discussion among team members at the retreat regarding the Division's responsibility to reflect or to actively challenge community norms crystallised these tensions. The case also provided evidence of strong factions in the community, factions in some instances perpetuated on the basis of stereotyping and recrimination – “the pink brigade from Trent”. The resilience of the influence of “the Peterborough old guard” on the case lends support to the hypothesis that the politics of local cultural planning are often a microcosm of larger political dynamics and power relations in the community.

The tensions here are clear. The pragmatic approach of working outward from known territories in local cultural planning, combined with the conservative tendencies of local government, can act to perpetuate entrenched interests and maintain the status quo. One solution may lie in professional education for planners and cultural practitioners that provide them with more critical cultural perspectives<sup>51</sup>, but perspectives always tempered by pragmatism and patience. One team member articulated this change strategy well:

- “The cultural elite drive the current system and structures ... our challenge is how to build a program that better reflects the actual community ... there will be resistance to politicizing culture ... Peterborough needs to be pushed ... little steps but in the right direction”.

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<sup>51</sup> This issue is taken up in Chapter 10.4 - Implications for Future Research.



## **10.3 Findings Related to Organizational Change in Local Museums**

The dissertation began with an assumption that local museums, informed by the theory and practice of the new museology, could take on broadened roles in cultural planning. The CHD did evolve relevant new professional and organizational practices in two of the three mandates assigned to the Division. In the first, responsibility for providing advice and support to the municipality, the Manager developed a highly sophisticated and relevant set of skills and practices. In the second, responsibility for supporting and advancing community-based cultural development, all staff extended their skills and experience working collaboratively with other community groups. Appreciative inquiry was a specific new practice that served this part of the mandate well.

An enlarged vision of museum and broader cultural planning purposes was less effective in helping to generate new organizational and professional practices in the third mandate of the CHD - its continued responsibility for managing and operating the PCMA. The research identified a series of barriers to change. Some of these were specific to the museum setting. A great many more were shared with most organizations.

### **a) Museum-Specific Barriers**

Lavine (1992) urged that museums not underestimate the organizational and professional challenge of shifting from insular, functionally oriented and "collections-driven" institutions to more outward looking institutions focused on "exchanges with communities". The Peterborough case study suggest that many barriers exist to the more systemic institutional reform called for by the new museology. The experience in Peterborough lends support to Galla's (1993) conclusion that most museums are a long way from actually *practicing* the cultural democracy advocated by the new museology.

### **"Collections versus Community Engagement"**

The evidence in Peterborough supports Lavine's view regarding the challenges associated with systemic reform of organizational and professional practices in museums. But it also points to a

potential false dichotomy between “collections-driven” institutions and institutions focused more on “exchanges with communities”. In Peterborough, “exchanges with community” were seen as the equivalent of the institution’s strong “community orientation”, its longstanding commitment to working collaboratively with other community organizations. This activity was now given formal sanction in the second mandate of the Division. However, the formal endorsement of this community role may well have contributed to the organization’s failure to undertake the more systematic examination of collecting and interpretive practices reflected in Tivy’s (1993) “Revising the Past” paradigm.

The PCMA’s mandate as a museum requires that it continue to be concerned with “collections” in the sense of the symbols, experiences, and memories of the diverse communities that constitute Peterborough. In order to redress historical and cultural biases in collections and narratives, a *more* focused and proactive approach to collecting and interpretative practices is needed. This was the insight that emerged in the final team meeting. Tivy (1994) describes a simple community mapping process relevant for local museums faced with the need to assess collections and programming bias. The exercise records statistics, demographic information, local community groups, and unique or distinguishing characteristics of the community. The goal is to create a contemporary portrait of the community against which a museum’s existing purpose, collections, programs, board composition and users can be compared in concrete terms. This portrait can then be used to target *specific* communities of interest that will be the focus of attention.

As noted in the final team meeting, addressing the needs of certain underrepresented groups in the community may take the form of oral histories and other non-tangible heritage resources. These collecting practices are often more time consuming and require more skill than did physical collections. This reality constitutes a real and pragmatic barrier to change. Wilhelm (1998) also cautions against assuming that museums have the capacity to engage with diverse communities if they lack any meaningful understanding of, or relationship with, these communities. These relationships must be built over time. Only gradually can the capacity to build knowledge and tell stories in full partnership with community members be built.

## **Functionalist Ideologies and Belief Systems**

Part of the resilience of traditional collecting and interpretative practices in Peterborough grew out of a conscious effort on the part of the institutions not to alienate the traditional constituency of the museum, while reaching out to new audiences. However, the research suggests that another powerful barrier to change in Peterborough was the inclination prevalent among team members toward functionalist ideologies and belief systems. Burrell and Morgan (1979) argue these belief systems are extremely difficult to change because they involve a fundamental reorientation of assumptions few are willing to confront. The research suggests that many museum workers may well be drawn to their work *precisely* because of their orientation toward objective realities and acceptance of status quo power relations that characterize functionalists. The experience in Peterborough suggests that the conservative origins of many community museums, combined with staff reluctance to critically examine theoretical or political assumptions, means that reform will be slow.

## **“Us and Other”**

The Manager’s observation that the work with First Nations had given him a “more visceral and meaningful” sense of culture than he had ever experienced before, was revealing. The premise that because people *work* in a museum or other cultural institutions they should have the potential to gain insight into the cultural dimension of civic life may, in retrospect, have been naive. Sullivan (1995) argued that museums must help all visitors to “see that they too are culture bearers, and, in that, more alike than different from the ‘Other’ they meet in the museum’s exhibits” (1995, 12). In Peterborough this goal may be said to be as applicable to the museum workforce as to museum visitors. Indeed, the evidence suggests the possibility that the museum workforce, one that continues to be overwhelmingly drawn from the dominant culture, may be *more* handicapped than individuals from minority communities. For the latter, culture is more likely to be understood as a “living” reality, key to their survival as distinct communities and a world removed from the “dead” and objectified culture that is the focus of much traditional museum work.

## **b) General Organizational Barriers**

A 1992 planning exercise for the PCMA provided a useful snapshot against which to assess organizational change. Problems identified included: poor facilities, “lack of recognition at City Hall,” “lack of a bridge” with other local heritage groups, “weak communication between Board and staff, poor staff communication”. Commitments were made “to improve relations with the mayor and council” and to address internal staffing problems: “inadequate support staff, personality conflicts, unclear reporting relationships, the absence of daily and weekly communication, must also be resolved.”

The research confirmed that considerable progress had been made in strengthening the organization’s external relationships with the municipality and with local heritage and cultural groups. What is revealing is how much more resistant to change were those internal issues of personal and interpersonal dynamics. Significant progress on these issues *was* made during the period of the research, but these gains had been difficult and tensions and challenges remain.

### **Emotional and Interpersonal Dynamics**

The team *was* willing and able to express their personal and emotional commitment to work and to one another. This was both a strength and a liability: a strength in that it translated into dedication and commitment; a weakness in that it undermined the ability to set limits and manage activities at a sustainable level. While some increases in efficiencies and gains were made, vague commitments to “capacity building” were no substitute for hard choices. Like many organizations the PCMA/CHD proved better at adding new responsibilities than at retiring old ones.

While the team could express their emotional commitment to work and to one another they consistently resisted working through the more problematic emotional and interpersonal issues. The rush to “put the lid on” the difficult issues raised at the Learning Forum, including the challenge to the Manager’s authority, was the starkest example of this. Yet it was in those rare moments when members of the team were able to raise these issues, and especially at moments when people were able to relinquish control and acknowledge their vulnerability, that the sense of

openness and trust and possibility in the groups appeared to be the strongest.

### **Limits to Rational Analysis and Problem-Solving**

The difficulty of stepping outside a rational analysis of issues to acknowledge other dimensions of human interaction and organizational change was another barrier to change evident in the case. Findings point to the limits of rational problem-solving and strategic analysis in organizations, but also to the powerful hold these traditions continue to exert. Among the hard-to-achieve alternatives that were acknowledged by the Peterborough team and other participants at the Learning Forum:

- Valuing a wider range of sources of knowledge, including personal or embodied knowledge and intuition;
- Allowing silence in meetings and slowing down the pace to enable more people to participate and to allow more room for creativity;
- Learning to listen and suspend judgment;
- Acknowledging there are multiple answers or solutions to any issue: and,
- Relinquishing the need for control.

### **“Giving Power Away”**

This last point relates directly to one of the most difficult barriers faced by the PCMA/CHD, one it shares with most organizations. This was the difficulty the team had accepting that “power grows when you give it away”. This observation at the Learning Forum was offered first as a comment on the working style of the Peterborough team, and more specifically on the need for the Manager to relinquish control in order to allow others to participate more fully. But it was also offered at another level, as a principle that the PCMA/CHD might consider in the larger context of its cultural planning mandate in Peterborough.

The link between the two levels is important. The observation suggested that it was unlikely the PCMA/CHD would be able to build community trust by relinquishing some degree of professional and cultural authority without individuals in the organization first having the capacity to “give power away” with one another in their work. The connection between personal or interpersonal and larger collective change processes is addressed by Labonte (1990). He describes an “empowerment

continuum” linking personal empowerment, to small group development, to community organization, to coalition advocacy, and ultimately to political action.

The Learning Forum exposed participants to “new work structures and new work processes which, over a period of several days, enable people to experience themselves in a different relationship with each other and with the whole of the organization. This opens the door to altering the fundamental power and structures of the organization” (Dixon, 1996, 36). The evaluations from the event confirm that the Forum did provide many of those who attended an experience of a profoundly different way of being in the world and relating to others.

### **Barriers to Organizational Learning**

A major barrier to organizational learning in the case study was the difficulty the team had sustaining a commitment to reflection amidst the pressures of excessive workloads, inadequate resources, and the general speed, complexity and stress of modern life. The moments in the case when the team came to some of the most significant insights about themselves and their work were generally moments when the group was able to remove itself from the press of daily demands – at the Learning Forum, and at the team retreat. The paradox is that at the very moment turbulence and change in organizations require people to reframe problems, moments when working harder in existing frameworks will not suffice, these same conditions make it difficult to find the space and time necessary for thoughtful reflection and dialogue (Dixon, 1996).

The Learning History proved a powerful mechanism to support organizational learning. Its impact reinforced the need for organizations to invest in systems and tools that *operationalize* opportunities for sharing information, reflecting individually and collectively on that information, acting on the results of this reflection, and evaluating the impact of those actions (Dixon, 1995). The repeated call for more frequent meetings throughout the history of the PCMA/CHD signaled that difficulty the organization had maintaining commitments to communication and information sharing as an integral part of the *day-to-day* work of the organization.

One of the clearest conclusions to be drawn from the case study is that learning is rarely linear or predictable, but rather circular and iterative. There is seldom a clear cause and effect relationship between learning “inputs” and “outputs”. The team frequently caught glimpses of important new

insights, but it often took time before these ideas could be fully grasped and the implications for the organization assessed. Oakes et al (1996) aptly describe organizational learning as a “process of sedimentation”

## 10.4 Implications for Future Research

Many issues have emerged in the course of this work that could form the basis of useful future research.

On the most general level the research has demonstrated a need for further in-depth examinations of opportunities posed for museums and other local cultural organizations by the emerging cultural planning approach. Despite many barriers to its implementation in Peterborough, findings suggest that cultural planning approaches can help challenge the insular traditions that characterize many cultural organizations, linking organizational renewal to larger community planning contexts.

The dissertation further suggests that future research must do justice to the complexity of change in any individual organization while relating that change process to the larger challenge of planning and governance in complex cultural systems. The concepts of field and capital in the cultural theory of Bourdieu (1993)<sup>52</sup> provide a critical bridge between organizational and societal levels in the study of social and community change. A closer investigation of how these concepts might be applied to future research design would prove a productive area for future inquiry.

Beyond these overarching considerations for future research, two more specific research questions suggest themselves. The first relates to a more rigorous look at cultural decision-making systems in Canadian cities. The second relates to strategies for linking organizational and broader community change and capacity building processes.

### a) **Cultural Decision-Making in Canadian Cities**

The research points to the need for a more focused analysis and delineation of specific types of cultural decisions and decision-making processes in Canadian cities. At more senior levels of government considerable attention has been devoted to the study of cultural decision-making. Foot (1998) ably synthesizes specific institutional arrangements and policy instruments and processes used at the federal level. Relatively little comparable work has been done at the municipal level, work that acknowledges the unique characteristics and demands of this level of government

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<sup>52</sup> Previously cited in Chapter 8.1 – Professional Identities and Belief Systems.



Elvidge (1996) identifies six governance issues on which municipalities differ fundamentally from their provincial and federal counterparts in Canada, and which bear directly on local cultural development:

- Their legal and constitutional basis;
- The nature and transparency of decision-making structures;
- The role of political parties and party discipline;
- Budgeting, borrowing powers and sources of revenue;
- The roles of head of government (Mayors versus Prime Ministers or Premiers);
- The range of policy instruments available.

Contrary to the expectation that governance decisions become more complex as they move to more senior levels of government, the findings in this dissertation suggest that cultural decisions may indeed become more complex the closer they are "to the ground" in local communities.

Commenting on the European experience, Delgado (1995) argues the complexity of conflicts and decisions that need to be resolved in local cultural planning demand a far more sophisticated set of responses and decision-making tools than are supplied by traditional urban planning methods.

A particularly contentious issue in the context of local cultural governance is the strong belief in the need for arm's length decision-making bodies capable of operating outside formal municipal structures. The arm's length principle has been a cornerstone of cultural policy at more senior levels of government in Canada for many years. Yet the appropriateness and application of these assumptions have not been critically examined at the local level. As the definition and scope of cultural resources addressed by local cultural plans expand, isolating decision-making from the political process will be increasingly difficult to justify. We need to understand with much more precision the different types of cultural decisions in municipalities, and the decision-making mechanisms and processes appropriate for each.

This need for greater clarity regarding alternative governance structures and mechanisms is not an issue restricted to the cultural field. Dale (1996) argues a much more rigorous understanding is needed regarding those decisions that are subject to decentralized and/or consensual decision-making, using multistakeholder or multipartite bodies such as environmental roundtables, and those that should legitimately continue to fall to existing structures of the liberal democratic state.

It is clear across many fields that traditional governance systems are inadequate for emerging circumstances of complexity in cities, and that new collaborative processes are required.

“(But) it seems that our understanding of what these collaborative processes represent is limited. There could be serious consequences for planning and for the world in which we plan if we do not come to a clearer understanding of what we are doing... We are involved in devising new systems of governance. We are forging new modes of communication. We are creating new social arrangements that will continue to shape and mold society far beyond the moment. ... In making the decision structures that can be adequate for today’s circumstances, we should carefully draw on the strengths and values of the old systems. Planners have vital roles in realigning these strengths and values. We must do this carefully, deliberately, and accountably (Skelton, 1998, 18).

#### **b) Capacity Building in Cultural Planning**

A recent project involving capacity building and urban leadership development may provide a useful model for examining these issues in cultural planning. *Urban Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Scaling up and Reaching Out from the Neighbourhood Level* (Perlman and Hopkins, 1996) was a three-year pilot project involving leaders drawn from neighbourhood level organizations in New York and Los Angeles. The idea was to identify and celebrate the most innovative neighbourhood leaders and collaborate with them to extend their impact by sharing what works within and between their cities, and introducing their successful approaches into the public policy discourse. The program consisted of three phases: *Year 1 - Capacity Building*. Focused on identifying and celebrating innovative approaches to problem solving in each city and building networks of communication and trust among leaders who made them successful; *Year 2 - Reaching Out Through Sharing Approaches That Work*. Provided mini-grants to allow leaders to partner with each other in mutual learning teams to transfer and adapt innovations across ethnic, geographic, and policy area boundaries within and between New York and Los Angeles; *Year 3 - Scaling Up into Public Policy*. Provided grassroots leaders access to policy-makers at the national, state, and local levels and enabled them to explore ways to multiply the impact of their work and

reconceptualize their roles as civic leaders and social change agents.

The hypothesis was that solutions to pressing public policy issues existed at the local level but that local leaders required support systems: allies in other sectors; forums for the exchange of ideas; exposure to global perspectives; opportunities to document and disseminate what they have achieved; and resources so they can scale-up and reach out from the neighbourhood level (1996, 7). Multi-sector partnerships linked grassroots groups, government, business, academia, media, and non-governmental organizations in each city.

A key concept was the notion of “innovation transfer”. The project distinguished between horizontal and vertical transfer. Horizontal transfer involves reaching out to a multitude of new locations. This can happen through *peer-to-peer* learning - where the approach is replicated by organizations in other sites, or through *expanded organizational reach* - scaling-up through centralized growth or the creation of “franchise” or spin-off sites (1996, 46). Through vertical transfer, the innovation achieves scale by filtering up into the policy process. This takes place when government sub-contracts with the community-based organization as a service provider, or incorporates the approach of the group into public policy. Horizontal and vertical transfers were not mutually exclusive and often complimented one another (1996, 46).

The project defined four dimensions of leadership development: personal transformation, organizational development, community change, and the acceleration of ideas.

*Personal Transformation.* Project activity stimulated in participants a heightened self-awareness as leaders and change agents, a better ability to “name” and value that what they do is innovative, and broadened visions of their own work and its importance locally and beyond (1996, 56).

*Organizational Development.* Participating organizations developed a more sophisticated capacity for disseminating their innovations or teaching other groups about them, better abilities to network and enter into partnerships with other grassroots groups, an enhanced ability to work with other sectors and participate in larger dialogues about urban problem-solving, and overall an increased sense of organizational self-esteem and confidence (1996, 58).

*Community Change.* Although difficult to assess in the short-term impacts here included stimulating collaboration across racial, ethnic and geographic boundaries, the formation of inter-

organizational strategies for community improvement, building multi-sectoral partnerships for urban problem-solving, and creating new visions of the “possible city” based on grassroots success stories (1996, 59).

*The Acceleration of Ideas.* The project enabled leaders to shorten the lag time between idea and implementation, enhanced the evolution of ideas through exposure to the ideas of others, convinced leaders their ideas were transferable and adaptable, taught them how to incorporate innovation transfer and mutual learning into their ongoing work, and forced them to “formalize their ideas” - taking initiatives which were really experiments-in-progress and translating them into “models”(1996, 60).

While neither innovation transfer or leadership development were felt to be linear processes the project identified five steps that constitute a model of how the impact of innovative approaches in individual organizations can be broadened (“scaled up”) to leverage systemic change. *Step 1: Dissemination.* The transfer process begins with leaders disseminating their ideas broadly, with no assurance that they will take root elsewhere. *Step 2: Mentoring.* When step 1 results in a leader’s interest in adapting the work of another, the two leaders enter into a mentoring relationship. *Step 3: Partnering.* As mentoring evolves it often results in the creation of a partnership or joint venture in which the leaders come to see that they can accomplish more together than they could individually. *Step 4: New Venture.* Once a partnership is established the leaders often work together to invent new ideas reflecting their combined expertise and creativity; synergy here can enable leaders to make the leap into a whole new level of thinking. *Step 5: Scaling Up.* While it is acknowledged that more work is needed to understand this area it became clear that when meaningful mutual learning takes place between grassroots leaders and policy-makers the leadership capacity of both can enable them to break out of the confines of their professions (1996, 62).

The report identifies changes that can be made in critical sectors to build on the lessons of the project and again increase the potential for leveraging systemic change (1996, 63). This model offers insights into linking personal (or individual), organizational and broader community or societal change processes – linkages that the Peterborough case demonstrates are essential. It could form the basis of productive subsequent research in cultural planning.

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**Museums and Community Cultural Planning:  
Strategies for Change**

**TECHNICAL VOLUME:  
APPENDICES**

**by**

**Gregory G. Baeker**

**A thesis**

**presented to the University of Waterloo**

**in fulfillment of the thesis requirement for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**Planning**

**Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1999**

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## **Appendices**

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***Appendix A: Definitions and Characteristics of Cultural Planning in Other Jurisdictions***

<p><b>United Kingdom - Greater London Council</b> (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986)</p> <p>The Labour-led Greater London Council (GLC) had a seminal influence on local cultural planning and development strategies in the United Kingdom and Western Europe. The GLC was closed down by Margaret Thatcher in the late 1980'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLC cultural strategies took social democratic reform intentions and directed them to the challenge of democratizing culture as a modern industry. It was part of the "new left" in the United Kingdom in the 1980s that rejected both market-based and conventional social democratic visions, "the traditional socialist response of collective, universally available civic or municipal culture ... bland municipal provision" was seen as a bankrupt vision.</li> <li>• Central to all strategies was the need to address the structural dynamics of the emerging cultural economy. This perspective represents a wholesale shift away from a pre-industrial and liberal humanist vision of culture as creative expression for a few to one based on the requirements of modern cultural production for the many</li> <li>• Policies and plans moved away from a <i>patronage and subsidy</i> paradigm of cultural development, toward new forms of <i>investment and regulation</i> more suited to the realities of culture as a modern industry. The GLC believed that failure to address these realities meant that many "new communities" would not survive in a competitive marketplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noteworthy is the degree to which plans combined rigorous economic analysis with clear social justice goals addressing the independence of cultural producers and the interests of minority communities.</li> <li>• Cultural plans modelled a different kind of contract between government agencies and cultural producers in the commercial and voluntary sectors. In return for financial support or regulatory intervention government extracted specific policy-based outcomes, for example expectations related to minority interests, employment equity or specific content programming. Democratic accountability replaced patronage and subsidy as the central frame of reference.</li> <li>• The state remained at arm's length from the day-to-day operations of cultural institutions and producers, but extracted expectations regarding broader social benefits. The basic operating principle of cultural governance is one of self-organisation; the state establishes certain directions or expectations and then steps back. Its role is catalyst, not engineer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Western Europe</b> (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993)</p> <p>The authors studied the experience of ten cities in Western Europe over a ten year period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Its] central characteristics are that it rests on a very broad, anthropological definition of 'culture' as 'a way of life' ... it integrates the arts into other aspects of local culture and into the texture and routines of daily life in the city</li> <li>• Its field of action ranges from the arts, the media, the crafts, fashion and design to sports, recreation, architecture and townscape, heritage, tourism, eating and entertainment, local history, and the characteristics of the city's public realm and social life, its identity and external image.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural planning is seen as helping urban governments to identify the city's cultural resources and think strategically about their applications ... and to achieve key objectives in areas as diverse as physical planning, townscape design, tourism, industrial development, retailing, place marketing, community development, education and training.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Jurisdiction</b></p> <p><i>United Kingdom</i> (Comedia, 1991)</p> <p>This report, entitled <i>'reative City'</i>, was a cultural strategy prepared for the city of Glasgow. It is a frequently cited source and had a strong impact on cultural planning in the United Kingdom in the 1990s</p>	<p><b>Core Understanding of Cultural Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Cultural planning is] an intellectual and professional discipline concerned with the process of identifying, developing, managing and exploiting a city's cultural resources. The distinctive feature of it is precisely the way in which a cultural <i>perspective</i> becomes the defining framework for policy and strategy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural planning involves a process of monitoring and acting upon the economic, cultural, social, educational, environmental, political and symbolic implications of a city's cultural resources in order to inform the formulation of policies and strategies [that cut] across the public and private sectors, different institutional concerns and different professional disciplines.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Australia</b> (Bowen, 1997; Brednock, 1997)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emergence of cultural planning in Australia owed much to the Australian Council<sup>1</sup>, which became an active proponent of integrated cultural planning and development in the late 1980s.</li> <li>• The goal was to support local governments in developing cultural strategies, or to include cultural strategies as integral parts of existing city plans.</li> <li>• "Cultural development is recognized as a potentially valuable approach for achieving corporate and community objectives in such areas as: the development of public facilities, economic development, tourism, education, heritage conservation, crime prevention, 'Mainstreet' projects, children's and youth services, community consultation, the environment, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing cultural development represented a conscious shift away from a paradigm of "community arts"</li> <li>• This more inclusive vision is a significant change from the early 80s vision of community arts as a marginal "feel good" program within the community services of Local Government.</li> </ul>
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<sup>1</sup> The equivalent of the Canada Council.

<p><b>United States</b> (Dreeszen, 1994)</p> <p>The author surveyed cultural plans produced in 250 American cities over the past decade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural plans are analyzed using Friedmann's (1987) typology of four intellectual traditions in planning: cultural planning as <i>community development</i>, as <i>organizational development</i>, as <i>public policy planning</i>, and as <i>planning for equity</i></li> <li>• Most cultural plans remained locked in the rational tradition of organizational development – either strategic planning or marketing strategies – and are unable to acknowledge diverse values and multiple sources, and inequities, in power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most powerful forces of change are equity demands from traditionally marginalized groups: "planning in the equity tradition is more accepting of difference, acknowledges multiple perspectives and multiple values, and is more tolerant of ambiguity than is rational comprehensive planning in the other traditions" (1994, 115).</li> <li>• Cultural planning must move from the organizational development to the community development model, with a strong link to equity planning</li> <li>• Dreeszen notes the leading role museums have played in the United States in cultural planning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>United States</b> (Partners for Livable Communities, 1995)</p> <p>PLC is a national not-for-profit corporation active in culturally based community development strategies for two decades. Since 1995 the agency has run a national program called <i>Culture Builds Communities</i> (CBC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the late 1970s and well into the 1980s PLC led the way in demonstrating how cultural planning and development could be an engine for downtown revitalization. More recently the organization has moved "away from the cultural planning economic argument and moved to apply culture as a bridge for community problem-solving" (McNulty, personal correspondence, 1996)</li> <li>• Cultural planning is directed at four types of community building: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Human development</i> - e.g. literacy programs, skill training and education, cultural resources as a tool to teach problem solving;</li> <li>2. <i>Economic development</i> - e.g. strengthening cultural infrastructure to generate income, jobs and community investment;</li> <li>3. <i>Physical development</i> - e.g. capital improvements to neighbourhoods; and,</li> <li>4. <i>Social development</i> - e.g. cultural programs as resources for community building, fostering multicultural understanding and providing critical gathering places</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish plans and initiatives at three scales: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Individual institutions</i> such as libraries, museums, performing arts centres or community-based cultural groups. In partnership with social, economic, or human development concerns, these institutions "can become fulcrums of change. By redefining their identities around solving community problems, [they] can expand their importance in the life of the community".</li> <li>2. <i>Community partnerships</i> between cultural institutions or activities and other community development institutions or interests. Goals here include "exploring how [cultural institutions] can become direct service providers in supporting the agenda and goals of social, economic or community action."</li> <li>3. <i>An entire community</i> that "examines its cultural resources to see how these resources can be woven together into a support structure for the central needs of the community."</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

***Appendix B: Barriers and Bridges to Success in Cultural Planning***

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Barriers – Difficulties and Tensions</b>	<b>Bridges – Successes and Opportunities</b>
<p><b>United Kingdom</b> (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies represented a return to the social justice concerns of the late 1960s and early 1970s but warn about the trap of strategies based on “increased cultural participation”.</li> <li>• Although appealing on the surface participation strategies mask the reality that relatively few citizens actually participate as “producers” at any one time.</li> <li>• Many well-meaning community arts projects that sought to “reach out” to minority communities also often ended up diverting funds from the minority communities they claimed to be serving - e.g. groups representing women, gays and lesbians, ethno-racial minorities. These groups knew what they wanted, but lacked the infrastructure or resources to do it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful strategies included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for alternative organizations and institutions that represent specific community, often minority interests;</li> <li>• Connecting old (mostly pre-twentieth century) art forms resistant to increased productivity, together with the “ephemera” of cultural festivals and celebrations, to modern communications technologies capable of broadening access to these activities and experiences;</li> <li>• Support for cultural production co-operatives and the use of semi-autonomous investment companies;</li> <li>• Overcoming legal barriers that prevent government loans to commercially-viable, but socially desirable, cultural producers and distributors.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Western Europe</b> (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant barriers to implementing cultural planning approaches:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planners and policy makers who are not sufficiently aware of the potential of cultural resources in urban development;</li> <li>• Aesthetic definitions of “culture” as “art” prevail;</li> <li>• Cultural policies and plans are rarely co-ordinated with policies on sports, the media and other elements of local culture;</li> <li>• Narrow professional specialization - including arts and heritage administration – must be countered through more broadly-based training in cultural planning approaches;</li> <li>• Lack of “shared language” that would enable urban planners and policy makers to make connections between their</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger integration of cultural issues to exploit potential synergy and strategic development opportunities across the public, private and voluntary sectors.</li> <li>• To implement cultural planning strategies, city governments will have to move toward more “horizontal” approaches to planning and policy making, connecting them more effectively with other areas of municipal policy-making</li> <li>• A defining feature of the emerging cultural planning approach is the reconciliation or reintegration of economic with social and political goals. The “depoliticization” of cultural planning that occurred in the 1980s, with its focus on economic issues, must be reversed and a broader set of social and political issues and inequities must be engaged.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> In Canada the pre-occupation with facilities in the arts has been deemed the “edifice complex”.

<p>respective areas of work;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "monofunctional" tradition of zoning and land use concerns in planning theory and practice;</li> <li>• A "lack of urban leadership," with decision-makers unable to make practical action plans that link public, private and voluntary sectors;</li> <li>• Conservative local politicians who will resist a politicizing of the cultural agenda and thereby prevent a reconciliation of social and economic goals in cultural goals.</li> <li>• Three serious conflicts - "strategic dilemmas" - characterize cultural planning in European cities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for bridging the growing divide between lively city-centres and marginalized areas are identified in several cities</li> <li>• The creation of neighbourhood-based cultural facilities in Hamburg and Bologna is cited. These centres provide facilities for community-based, not-for-profit activity but their provision of training courses, loans and technical facilities also helped spark commercial enterprise in electronic music, video, computer graphics, crafts and other cultural industries.</li> <li>• These strategies as important but inadequate to solve the centre-periphery problem. Urban planners and policy makers must "recognize the importance of developing "open-minded space," which is designed for a variety of uses, including unforeseen and unforeseeable uses, and used by citizens who do different things and are prepared to tolerate, even take an interest in, things they don't do" (1993, 202).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First, the conflict between cultural provisions in affluent city centres and in low income, often surrounding areas.</li> <li>• The spatial manifestation of economic inequities in many European cities emerged in the 1980s between the interests of residents in affluent city-centres and low-income citizens living in run-down inner-city areas or in surrounding housing estates</li> <li>• The decade saw the further deterioration in the relative economic position of the unemployed or under-employed, the main victims of growth in long-term unemployment and de-skilling related to economic restructuring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) The second strategic dilemma is the conflict between "consumption-oriented" strategies - those that promote urban cultural attractions and activities as magnets for tourism and retail, and "production-oriented" strategies - which provide strategic support for publishing, film, music, design, fashion and</li> </ul>

<p><b>Europe</b> (Council of Europe, 1996)</p> <p>This report, entitled <i>In from the Margins</i>, was the Council of Europe's submission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other examples of contemporary cultural production.</li> <li>• A number of cities, including Glasgow, demonstrated increased employment through tourism and consumption-oriented strategies. These tended to be low-paid or part-time, and required few skills. These strategies also had the disadvantage of being tied to changing levels of tourism activity, fluctuations over which cities had little control.</li> <li>• Contemporary cultural production, on the other hand, requires more specialized skills and infrastructure and produce higher value-added employment and economic growth.</li> </ul> <p>3. The final dilemma is the tension between "ephemeral" programs of events and activities - like festivals profiling the work of different artists and communities, and investment in permanent facilities such as concert halls, libraries, museums and arts centres.<sup>2</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The distinction is in some ways artificial; "ephemeral" events, if coherently organized, can become "permanent" features of a city's cultural landscape.</li> <li>• The dichotomy does highlight the overwhelming percentage of cultural budgets consumed by existing facilities, with relatively modest amounts left for funding other activity.</li> <li>• During periods of fiscal restraint public and private sector funders have tended to cut funding first from those activities seen as "marginal", often those activities that serve disadvantaged groups or those that are more experimental in character.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More equitable distribution of resources in general terms.</li> <li>• Instead of constructing new, purpose-built cultural facilities cities should make greater use of public and open spaces, temporary structures and buildings that can combine cultural activity with other types of uses. The result would be freed up funds for events and new cultural production.</li> <li>• Recognition by urban planners and policy makers of the importance of developing "open-minded space" designed for a variety of foreseen and unforeseen uses.</li> <li>• Greater use of temporary structures and buildings that can combine cultural activity with other types of uses.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural policy in Europe faces two fundamental challenges:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First, how cultural policy can assist in bringing minorities "in from the margins" of society; and,</li> <li>2. Second, how cultural policies and plans can be brought "in from the margins" of governance.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Too little attention has been paid to defining basic policy intentions and assumptions, and too little effort invested in determining more rigorous implementation strategies. "Countless declarations, resolutions and recommendations have been agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local governments have been more innovative in cultural policy and planning than national governments, and have been more responsive on questions of pluralism and diversity.</li> <li>• More integrated approaches to local cultural development are positively influenced by close links with local environmental groups and planning related to the conservation of natural and cultural environments.</li> <li>• Two changes are needed to bring cultural policy "in from</li> </ul>

<p>to the World Commission on Culture and Development</p>	<p>to, sometimes after years of preparation, but to uncertain effect" (1996, 9).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions are raised about the continued relevance of many core cultural planning assumptions: "key principles that have served cultural policy for forty years or so – identity, diversity, creativity and participation in cultural life – may no longer be adequate to meet the challenges of the second half of the 1990s and beyond" (1996, 9)</li> <li>• Tensions and barriers between two kinds of cultural plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first is driven by ambitious capital projects of "politico-symbolic beautification", the ambitious construction projects in Paris implemented by former President Francois Mitterand are cited as examples.</li> <li>• This is contrasted with the second, what is described as "the living culture approach" in which cultural resources and activities become tools for urban problem-solving and community development.</li> <li>• The former work to solidify existing power relations. The latter are often linked to opposition and resistance; "a source of political critique, a source of intellectual ideas and reflection ... [it has] evolved in opposition to dominant ideologies and centres of power" (1996, 220).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>the margins of governance":</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The enhancement of the powers of city administrators vis-à-vis those of the state;</li> <li>2. The simultaneous co-ordination and democratization of planning functions and processes.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success also depends on a recognition of the "utilitarian paradox" in cultural policy and planning. Namely, the more one demonstrates the significance of culture to social and economic development, and the more one seeks to integrate these cultural considerations into broader development agendas, the more culture is seen as an instrumental means to other ends. This runs counter to deeply rooted liberal humanist assumptions that must be rethought.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>United States</b> (Dreeszen, 1994).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most significant barrier to cultural planning is the hold of traditional definitions of both "culture" and "planning."</li> <li>• Narrow definitions of culture - mostly Eurocentric high arts - limit the conceptualization of cultural issues, and</li> <li>• Traditional views of planning - largely synoptic or rational planning - limit conceptualization of planning</li> <li>• There is little indication that cultural planning has been informed by the planning literature, or by <i>any</i> conscious theory, it is largely practice-driven, with little critical examination of epistemological or ideological assumptions.</li> <li>• The "cultural politics" of plans played out in divisions between old and new organizations, and in the class and race overtones that paralleled these distinctions. Established institutions tend to support cultural plans only if they were so general and vague as not to restrict their autonomy.</li> <li>• Other barriers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised expectations and an inability to establish implementation priorities,</li> <li>• Naive beliefs in possibilities for new funding,</li> <li>• Ambiguity about "who does what"; and</li> <li>• An unwillingness to drop old programs or initiatives when new responsibilities are taken on.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many examples of leading thinking and practice in inclusive equity planning are drawn from the museum field.</li> <li>• Museums are also called on to play a leadership role in building stronger links between arts and cultural organizations and activity on the one hand, and land use planning and cultural resource management on the other.</li> </ul>
<p><b>United States</b> Partners for Livable Communities: Culture Builds Communities (1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional approaches to leadership are stressed over more personalized approaches; the dangers of reliance on "charismatic leaders" is cited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rather than generalized appeals to community, explicit targets must be identified: i.e. the needs of youth, families, low income people, and people of colour</li> <li>• Museums again cited as leaders in culture-based community development</li> <li>• The premise that choices must be made between social and cultural goals is rejected " a key tension ... is whether the quality of the art needs to be sacrificed for the sake of achieving the social goals ... [we have] found that the most meaningful programs are those that continue to put a strong emphasis on both If there is a dual message that</li> </ul>

		<p>engaging in the arts can provide critical feelings of success and catharsis but that the art itself is unimportant, the effectiveness of using the arts is immediately undercut (1995, 24).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong focus is placed on the organizational infrastructures needed to support community work.</li> <li>• Program materials direct a great deal of attention to process issues in planning and stress the importance of strengthening relationships and building trust.</li> <li>• Conflict resolution tools are offered in recognition of differing interests and power imbalances.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Australia</b> (Bowen, 1997; Brednock, 1997; Hawkins and Gibson, 1994; Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 1998; Stevenson, 1992)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions of "culture" that are too broad – cultural plans must address more than conventionally defined arts activity, but must be manageable in political and administrative terms;</li> <li>• Weak understanding of cultural planning and policy at the local level;</li> <li>• Poor intergovernmental relations and the need for structural change at the local government level;</li> <li>• Weak recognition of the importance of the built environment in local cultural development;</li> <li>• An overemphasis on aesthetic definitions of culture and on non-technological or pre-electronic subsidized cultural forms, continued hostility towards commercial culture from within the traditional subsidized cultural sector;</li> <li>• The control arts bodies wield over the cultural planning discourse;</li> <li>• Cultural agendas that pretend to be open and inclusive but in fact are captured by traditional cultural interests;</li> <li>• The dominance of middle class values that act to deny the extraordinary diversity of urban popular culture and impose very specific definitions on concepts like "culture," "amenity," "quality of life," and "livable places".</li> <li>• Cultural plans that contest rather than accept at face value notions of "public art," "public access," and "community", among other core concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to be exploited linking cultural planning and sustainable development agendas that recognize the indivisibility of our natural and cultural environments.</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on the built environment, urban design and place making.</li> <li>• Cultural plans that form part of urban development, planning and management in the context of broad frameworks such as sustainable development and employ performance measures and indicators to track urban development.</li> <li>• Sound analysis of the forces that are restructuring local economies and the cultural impact of these changes is required.</li> <li>• Cultural plans that counter visions of cultural standardization and economic concentration; plans that sustain culturally diverse spaces within the urban fabric.</li> </ul>
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**Appendix C: The Team Story**

**"From the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives  
to the Culture & Heritage Division for the City of Peterborough  
in One Easy (?) Step"**

**The Peterborough Story**

**THE CHALLENGE:**

In the face of decreasing resources, the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives (PCMA) is, paradoxically, actually expanding its role in the community.

For years, the PCMA has been administered as an "on-line" Museum and Archives division of the Corporation of the City of Peterborough, under the governance of a municipally appointed Museum Board of Management. Within this structure, the PCMA's institutional and divisional roles were virtually one and the same.

With recent down-sizing and restructuring of the Community Services department, there was an opportunity to consolidate services and recognize the value of Peterborough's unique culture and heritage by re-assigning responsibility for the culture sector from the former Recreation and Culture division and by encouraging the former Museum and Archives division to assume a broader range of responsibilities.

The result was the creation of a new Culture & Heritage Division (CHD) in December 1994 through the passage of a municipal by-law. The by-law set out the mandate for the division. (See Appendix) The establishment of the new Division was motivated by several factors:

- \* It "legitimized" existing staff leadership in interpreting the PCMA's mandate through a wide range of community-based activities.
- \* It reflects growing recognition of the contribution of culture and heritage resources (broadly defined) to community planning and development.
- \* More pragmatically, the division served as a defensive "buffer" in the context of municipal cuts and down-sizing.

After one year in existence, this project provides a timely opportunity to review the mandate and structure of the new Division and to more clearly delineate institutional and divisional roles and responsibilities. The project also complements a study of the Division being undertaken by Greg Baeker as part of a doctoral dissertation in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Waterloo.

**Process to Date:**

A focus group was held with 15 individuals representing all full-time and part-time staff, volunteers, and members of the Culture & Heritage Board. Based on discussion at the meeting and expressions of interest the Manager (K. Doherty) confirmed a 7 member team.

Interviews were conducted by Greg Baeker. Based on these interviews, each team member was

asked to draft their own "story" describing the strengths and future potential of the CHD. More specifically, each member was asked to identify the changes needed in the next 1-2 years to ensure their longer-term vision for the CHD was realized.

These individual stories were consolidated into this team story.

### **Group Structure:**

Biographies of team members follow. The team is comprised of 3 full-time and one part-time staff (a Manager, Archivist, Museum Technician and Education Officer) two members of the CHC Board, and one individual (and former Board member) currently working on a special project for the Division.

### **Reporting Relationship:**

The team leader will be Ken Doherty. The team will report through Ken to the CHD Board and to the Director of Community Services. The final product will be a report to the Board and Director that will form the basis of future divisional strategies.

### **Team Commitments and Responsibilities:**

For full-time staff, the project has been confirmed as a priority; participation is considered a significant part of current responsibilities. Other team members see the project as a significant opportunity for the CHD and will also bring a strong commitment to the work of the team.

Each team member will participate in the Learning Forum in Toronto, June 6-9, 1996. They will participate in follow-up activities and meetings. Each member will commit to "tracking" their own insights through a personal journal and will assist in the tracking of the group's overall process.

### **Issues Identified to Date:**

A number of core issues have emerged from discussions to date:

- \* while there are many exciting hopes for the future there is no shared vision of the role and function of the CHD.
- \* can the PCMA actually be the "implementation arm" of the Division?
- \* how do the broadened Divisional responsibilities relate to the more traditional collections and facilities based responsibilities of the institution?
- \* how does a broadened view of culture and heritage issues in the community affect expectations --in the institution? --in the Division?
- \* is another governance structure needed to more effectively broker partnerships and facilitate community-based cultural activity?
- \* how can the work of the CHC Board be re-oriented from its current focus on institutional issues towards a broader policy and planning function for culture & heritage?

- \* is another governance structure needed to more effectively broker partnerships and facilitate community-based cultural activity?
- \* how can culture & heritage issues be brought more effectively into municipal planning and decision-making?
- \* how can organizational capacity be built to realize the potential -- of the institution -- of the Division? If additional resources could be found, where could they be best invested?

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Institutional Profile:**

- \* medium sized community museum with an annual audience of approximately 35,000
- \* paid staff compliment of 4.3 Full Time Equivalent
- \* approximately 170 volunteers contributing over 12,000 hours
- \* budget of less than \$300,000
- \* attained recognition for entrepreneurial activity, educational programmes and relations with First Nations
- \* host site for Sir Sandford Fleming College's Museum Management and Curatorship Program
- \* actively involved in and with community and museum profession
- \* currently leading community campaign to raise \$350,000 to purchase a local collection of 300,000 negatives
- \* suffered massive major cutbacks in 1993 including 33% reduction in staff, 20%< in operating budget, 75% cut in capital budget

### **Community Profile:**

- \* population of 67,000 , predominantly British
- \* dying industrial base (1 million square feet of vacant industrial space at heart of the Kawartha tourism area
- \* home of Trent University and Fleming College
- \* epitome of progressive conservative
- \* extremely active heritage, arts and cultural community

### **Heritage Sector:**

- \* . 5 museums
- \* 7 archives
- \* 8 art galleries
- = 21 heritage custodial institutions
- \* 4 active LACAC's
- \* 14 historical societies and other heritage organizations
- = total of 39 heritage organizations

**Arts/ Cultural Sector: (within a 10 mile radius of Peterborough)**

- \* 20 cultural and multicultural groups
  - \* 8 libraries and literary organizations
  - \* 7 material arts groups eg. spinners and weavers
  - \* 4 media arts groups
  - \* 54 performing arts organizations including:
    - 4 dance
    - 27 music related organizations (eg. Kiwanis Music Festival)
    - 15 theatre groups
    - 8 multidisciplinary groups
- = 134 arts, cultural, and heritage organizations in the not for profit sector

**Individual Professionals:** The Peterborough area is home to hundreds of professions including:

- \* artists
- \* actors
- \* historians
- \* authors
- \* poets
- \* genealogists
- \* journalists
- \* craftspeople

**Cultural Industries:**

- \* 43 businesses that revolve around music
  - \* 6 dance studios and suppliers
  - \* 21 with a focus in design eg. architecture
  - \* 15 local media
  - \* 4 video production
  - \* 35 printing firms
  - \* 42 art dealers and suppliers
  - \* 19 commercial photographers
- = 185 businesses engaged in cultural industries!

**There is not a single individual in our community who is not touched in some way on a regular basis by the local culture & heritage sector!**



## **PARTICIPANTS:**

### **Ken Doherty**

With the new divisional structure, I now serve as both the Manager of the City's Culture & Heritage Division and as Manager of the PCMA. My primary duties include directing the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives and advising the Culture & Heritage Board, council and city departments on cultural and heritage matters. My recent secondment to the Roy Studio Campaign has meant that I have had to delegate most of my institutional responsibilities to other staff. While stressful, this does set the stage for me to spend more time on divisional responsibilities once the campaign is over.

As primary architect in the development of the new Culture & Heritage Division, I do have strong views on the role of culture and heritage in the community. I take considerable pride in the infrastructure that exists for the new division but am still concerned about the level of community involvement and support. I also face two nagging questions: how long we can sustain our current level of activity; and --perhaps most importantly-- how much will this infrastructure protect us in the next round of municipals cuts expected in 1997?

Ironically, my vulnerability does not stem from either of the above but rather from stepping back and letting go. This is a big step but a crucial one. I'm looking forward to this project as a vehicle to both share and test that vision.

### **Eric Hanson**

Erik Hanson holds a Bachelor's degree in History from Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario and a Masters of Science Degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Vermont at Burlington. He is currently on leave from his position as the Chair of the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee to complete the first phase of a comprehensive inventory program of the City of Peterborough's built heritage resources.

Mr. Hanson's interest and participation in the Culture & Heritage Board stems from a belief that the health of a community is a function of the depth of understanding of a community's sense of itself. that understanding is derived from accepting, tolerating, celebrating, maintaining and using the myriad cultural and historical manifestations of all its citizens, by all its citizens.

Significantly these are all dynamic and contemporary concepts. The past, in the end, is really only a map of the future. Traditional roles for institutions mandated to protect culture and heritage often fail to accept that heritage is not about history "per se", but about facilitating the connections between past, present and future. This role as facilitator must in many ways reject the static model of a community museum and accept a more political position as advocate for municipal involvement in protecting the cultural environment.

The environment analogy is apt, for we must come to understand that the cultural environment, like an eco-system is a complex interwoven, organic fabric of seemingly unrelated elements; building form influences the space; aesthetic perception affects cultural tolerance; building life

safety codes influences the vibrancy of street life etc..

In this context, the Culture & Heritage Board becomes not an administrative body, but an activist one, seeking to rationalize the dissonance between the maintenance and perpetuation of heritage/culture and cultural notions of growth and development. Such a mandate is to say the least sensitive. We may well discover that traditional corporate and municipal structures and practices are culturally inequitable. To succeed, the Board must become both an internal advocate, lobbying for legislative restructuring, and an educator developing a popular consensus that demands and supports healthy cultural initiatives. When this happens, the Culture & Heritage Board will become a potent engine for validating the City's sense of itself and self-worth. And that is probably the most important step Peterborough can take in securing its future.

**David Hayes:**

David is the current chairman of the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee and a "de facto" member of the new Culture & Heritage Board. As a member of PACAC, he is involved in promoting Peterborough's rich heritage through architectural studies and appreciation. An elementary school teacher, he is also interested in educational programming that introduces students to local historical and cultural influences.

David comes to this project with ideas about expanding community awareness for the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives and other local institutions that have been "pigeon-holed" by the community. He is also involved with the Museum's new educational curricula and hopes to discuss how other institutions educate the students of their communities.

**Bill Kimball:**

Bill Kimball is the Peterborough Arts Umbrella's representative on the Culture & Heritage Board. As Chair of the arts advocacy group and as the main-driving force behind Peterborough New Dance, Bill is looking to the Culture & Heritage Division for support to improve the lot of Peterborough's arts organizations and cultural workers.

Specifically, he is interested in the establishment of a civic arts awards program; encouraging downtown landlords to open up 2nd and 3rd floor spaces for artist studios and apartments; encouraging the city to include more arts activity in its promotional literature, tourism plans, and economic development strategies; plus, he would like to see the municipality provide more tax relief to charitable arts organizations.

In the on-going debate about municipal funding for arts organizations, Bill has encouraged the City support the CHD's plans to develop a Municipal Cultural Policy which should clear up the mixed messages now being sent to the city's cultural community. Through the Culture & Heritage division, a productive year-round relationship can develop with the arts community, rather than the present once-a-year contact through the grants committee.

## **Jim Leonard - PCMA Archivist**

I was hired by the PCMA as Archivist in June 1994. My responsibilities include, acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, description, computerization and development of finding aids for the archival holdings of the PCMA. A considerable amount of my time is spent assisting researchers, caring for the holdings of the Archives and revising finding aids to meet common archival standards including RAD (Rules for Archival Description). I also serve as records manager for the PCMA.

Additional duties have included development and management of artifact computer database systems, creation of a World Wide Web site for the PCMA, co-curating museums exhibits and assisting other institutions such as the Boards of Education, local Sports Hall of Fame, Canadian Canoe Museum with their own archival and records management projects.

I also serve as staff liaison between the Culture and Heritage Board and PACAC (Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee). I assist the committee with architectural research (often using the extensive photographic collections in the Archives), assist with special projects such as the Heritage Inventory Project currently underway, help assess buildings for designation, exchange information between the Culture and Heritage Board and PACAC. I sit as an ex-officio member of PACAC and various sub-committees including Publications and Designation sub committees. Recently, the Archives took on the role of records manager for PACAC. In the near future I hope to begin developing a database of designated buildings in conjunction with members of PACAC's designation sub-committee.

I was hired by the PCMA just as the Culture and Heritage Division and new Board were being formed. This new model is dynamic, broad-based and evolving still. It is the type of institution the City of Peterborough needs and I think the future potential for the Division and Board is exciting - especially as municipalities take on more responsibility than ever before for heritage preservation and cultural development. The Learning Forum should offer the staff and Board members of the PCMA an opportunity to reflect on the last few years and look to the future. The Learning Forum is certainly timely and should prove to be a valuable exercise.

## **Kim Reid, Museum Technician:**

After graduating, in 1985, from the two year Creative Arts Administration program at Sir Sandford Fleming Collage, I applied for the position of Registrar at the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives. The PCMA was no stranger to me, as I had worked in a volunteer capacity during the fall of 1984.

Since that time, my duties have changed drastically, from physical registration to more of exhibit design and collections records management. Since our curator left, through city staff downsizing in 1993, I have been doing many curatorial responsibilities. I feel that I have "grown" a great deal through hard work and learning.

I have recently been working with a committee, and during that process have been able to build a better working relationship with the Peterborough Historical Society and other groups in the

community. With these working relationships, I feel that the PCMA is heading in the right direction with it's future in the community. It has established itself as a leader, a supporter, a teacher and a forerunner in dealing with changes and challenges. This is due to the fact that all of the PCMA staff give 110% of themselves in what ever they do.

### **Sally Warren:**

Sally Warren has been the Education Officer at the Museum for nine years. Her responsibilities include the development of a variety of school and pubic programs and services. Liaison with teachers, and consultants from school boards, as well as faculty from the local college and university and educators from a wide range of cultural organizations has resulted in some innovative partnership programming for area students over the years. The most adventurous project to date is the development of Heritage Handbooks a series of teaching guides on community heritage resources which will be sold as curriculum across the country. Partners in this project include the local school boards, historical societies, Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, the Genealogical Society, Trent University, Little Lake Cemetery and (hopefully) the Canadian Museum Association.

Public programs have also involved active partnerships. "The Discovery Team" made up of the Museum, the Peterborough Public Library, the Art Gallery of Peterborough and Hutchison House have, for the past four years created exciting joint March Break programs for area children, one of which won the Angus Mowat Award for Excellence in Library Service. The museum's unique "Summer Discovery" program engages a variety of artists and crafts people in the delivery of an exciting variety of programs for children 4 to 14 throughout the summer months.

Sally sits on the events committee for Peterborough's First Night, is a member and co-founder of LACE (Local Action for Cultural Education) a community network dedicated to arts, heritage and environmental education and is past Training Coordinator for the Ontario Section of Interpretation Canada. She is also on the faculty of Sir Sandford Fleming College as both an instructor and as internship supervisor for the Museum Management and Curatorship program.

Already a committed community worker, Sally sees the Culture and Heritage divisional structure as a "legitimization" of much of her current work. With a background as a visual artist herself she sees this creative approach to strengthening the role of the arts, culture and heritage as an important focus for community development. The forum will provide an opportunity for staff of the Museum and members of the Heritage Board to discuss the roles of those two bodies and of the individuals which comprise them. Together they may be able to develop a vision of the future for the institution and for the board in which limited resources are acknowledged and used in the best possible way and in which the interests of the client groups are paramount. For the division to be able to effectively represent cultural organizations and develop a role or "product" which will be seen to be of benefit to them it will be important to be sensitive to their fundamentally autonomous nature and to include them in the process.

## APPENDIX

# CULTURE & HERITAGE DIVISION City of Peterborough

### 1. Divisional Role:

As an integral part of the Community Services Department, the Culture & Heritage Division shall work with the Director and other divisions to assist in the development and provision of cultural and heritage activities, facilities, services and resources. The Division shall serve as a community resource for all matters relating to culture and heritage.

### 2. Divisional Structure:

City Council shall appoint a Culture and heritage Board to act on behalf of the Council in the management and regulation of the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives; and to advise and to formulate and recommend policies to council on cultural and heritage matters.

This new board includes the previous Board of Museum Management, which consists of 5 community members at large and one aldermanic appointee, as well as an additional Aldermanic appointee and organizational representatives from the Peterborough Historical Society, the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, the Art Gallery of Peterborough, and the Peterborough Arts Umbrella.

### 3. Divisional Responsibilities:

The division shall:

- \* **manage and operate the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives** as the municipality's repository for archival and artifactual material and as the municipality's heritage interpretation centre
- \* **act as a resource for Municipal Council** and municipal departments and divisions on all cultural and heritage matters
- \* work with the Peterborough Arts Umbrella to encourage **communication, cooperation and coordination** among arts and heritage organizations
- \* coordinate the **development, implementation and evaluation of plans, policies and programmes** to guide cultural and heritage development in Peterborough
- \* coordinate the **identification, designation, and conservation of community heritage resources** including living heritage, movable property, and real property
- \* provide **advisory and technical support** to arts and heritage organizations.
- \* **encourage and support community cultural and heritage celebrations**

- \* **encourage, recognize, and reward initiative and excellence** in artistic and heritage pursuits
- \* **encourage community awareness, appreciation, and support** of cultural and heritage activities

#### **4. Long Term Goals:**

Council has also approved the Division's long term goals. The Division intends to:

- \* **attain recognition of the importance of culture and heritage to the quality of life**
- \* **represent the culture and heritage community in broader municipal planning issues and activities**
- \* **develop and make recommendations to Council for a Municipal Arts Policy for the City of Peterborough**
- \* **develop and make recommendations to Council for a Municipal Heritage Policy for the City of Peterborough**
- \* **assist the city in resolving the question of a comprehensive and equitable grants programme**
- \* **guide the development of a comprehensive grid of cultural and heritage facilities, programmes, and services**
- \* **establish a broad base of community and financial support**

***Appendix D: "The Peterborough Story"***

## **The Peterborough Story: A Learning History**

This is the story of the evolution of the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA) into the Culture and Heritage Division (CHD) of the City of Peterborough.

It makes use of an organizational tool called *a learning history* (Kleiner and Roth 1998). People in organizations act collectively, but they learn individually. This is the central premise - and frustration - of organizational learning. The frustration exists because managers have few tools with which to capture institutional experience and disseminate its lessons so that the past can be "processed" and translated into more effective action.

A learning history is a written narrative of an organization's change processes, a modern version of an ancient practice of community storytelling.

It is presented in two columns. In the right-hand column relevant events are described, as much as possible in the words of individuals in the organization involved in the change process. Each person is quoted directly but his or her identity is not provided. The exception in this story is the Manager of the Division whose identity it was not possible to disguise.

The left-hand column contains analysis and commentary by the "learning historian". This individual or team is composed of knowledgeable outsiders. The left-hand column identified recurring themes in the narrative, cites ideas from relevant literature, poses questions about assumptions, and raises issues that may lie beneath the surface in the narrative<sup>3</sup>.

Once a learning history is complete, it is used as the basis for group discussion for those involved in the organization. This history will also serve as the basis for a final interview with the researcher.

### **Commentary and Analysis**

### **The Organizational Story**

#### **Institutional History**

The Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (PCMA) is a medium-sized community museum with an annual audience of approximately 35,000. It has a paid staff complement of 4.3 full time equivalents (FTE) and approximately 170 volunteers (who contribute over 12,000 hours annually). Its annual budget is approximately \$230,000. Like many small museums PCMA suffered major cutbacks. Since 1993 the organization has faced a 33% reduction in staff, a 20% reduction in operating budget, and a 74% cut in capital budget. This worsening financial picture was a key factor in the Manager of the institution in 1995 negotiating a new mandate as the Culture and Heritage Division with substantially broadened civic responsibilities, and no new resources. This is the story of an organization's efforts to take up that considerable challenge.

The PCMA is a highly-respected community museum. It came to national attention in 1991 for its leadership in working with the Curve Lake First Nation to re-bury Native skeletal and related grave goods that had been excavated decades before and deposited in the museum.

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<sup>3</sup> Specific questions for the team to reflect on are underlined to distinguish them from general analysis.



The education program of the museum has been recognized for outstanding work by the Ontario Library Association and the Ontario Museum Association. The institution played a leadership role in the establishment of the Sir Sandford Fleming Museum Management and Curatorship Program, an imaginative partnership that provides students with valuable work experience, and the institution with invaluable additional human resources to supplement limited staff resources.

*Mechanics Institutes emerged in Britain in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to discourage social unrest, acting to "educate and civilize" working classes and promote middle-class political and social values" (Teather 1991).*

*Tivy (1992) situates the growth of community museums in Ontario in the decades after the Second World in the context of profoundly anti-modernist sentiment, a defense against the onrush of immigration, urbanization, and fear of the loss of local character. It emerged out of nostalgia for an idealized past and the values associated with that past. Descendants of long-standing families played leadership roles; preserving their personal past was indistinguishable from preserving the most significant facet of the community's history.*

*Tivy (1992) describes the Community Museum Policy having a "Protestant tenor" in its focus on practical aspects of managing and interpreting material culture. The policy did little to encourage museums to critically examine any of their collecting or interpreting assumptions, assumptions such as "what culture and whose heritage?" they were interpreting. Kurylo (1984) argued that the policy failed to provide any overriding vision regarding the larger purposes and public benefits served by community museums. In the absence of this larger vision she compared the policy to*

The PCMA was established in 1967, part of the nation-wide burst of museum development. But like many community museums its roots are much older and can be dated to the Mechanics Institutes movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first "permanent" facility was the Victoria Museum established in honour of the Queen's Silver Jubilee and officially dedicated in 1897.

Over the next fifty years the institution went through periods of dormancy and neglect, rescued repeatedly by strong leadership on the part of a few dedicated community members. By the early 1960's there was mounting pressure to establish more adequate facilities. In the words of the President of the Peterborough District Historical and Art Museum Foundation, this was needed in order to "display its fine collection of historical articles left by pioneers of this territory"

From early on the PCMA displayed a strong community orientation. Its second Director sought to make the museum "an inviting cultural centre ... by inviting various community groups to share in museum life". Other arts and cultural groups were encouraged to make use of the facility: local choirs and string quartets used the facility, a film series was launched and television programming used to stimulate community interest.

Beginning in the late 1970's and continuing into the 1980's there was a strong focus on strengthening operating standards, a development consistent with the passage in 1981 of the Community Museum Policy for Ontario which placed a focus on meeting a series of operating standards as conditions for provincial operating support.

Exhibitions and programs continued to focus primarily on the story of early settlement. But there were also efforts to break out of this focus. In 1982 an exhibit entitled "Peterborough's Industrial History" traced the story of the city's early industrial heritage. In 1989 the museum mounted "Ordinary Women .. Everyday Lives" on the challenges of researching women's history in Peterborough from 1850 to 1940.

In 1983 the Statement of Intent for the institution was: "To collect artifacts to illustrate the natural history, history, growth and development (including the scientific, educational and other cultural aspects) of the City of Peterborough and of Peterborough County.

*"rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic".*

*The Manager believes the Policy had served a useful role in the early 1980's in leveraging improved operating standards. But it has become more of a shackle than a support today. The absence of a larger animating vision, and the apparent isolation of the Museums Section (responsible for administering the operating grants program) from policy elsewhere in the Ministry of Culture and wider government, was actually discouraging museums from adopting a larger view of heritage and culture in communities.*

*McDaniel and Thorne (1994) argue that the majority of American arts organizations have levels of activity 45-50% higher than the human and financial resources available to sustain them. This was one of the major contributors to what they identified as the chronic instability - the "quiet crisis" facing the arts.*

and of the Trent-Severn Waterway"

Various strategic planning processes through the late 1980's and early 1990's called for upgrading of what was increasingly clear were inadequate physical facilities, together with more proactive collecting policies, stronger storylines in exhibitions, and so on.

The institution continued to struggle with only moderate levels of community support. Notes from a strategic planning exercise in 1988 state: "there is little community involvement in the museum and little museum involvement in the community"; and also that "recent efforts to attract a new audience have alienated the traditional audience". There was a call for the institution to become "more of a team player" with other local heritage and cultural groups, to play a stronger leadership/facilitation role.

In 1988, soon after the arrival of the current Manager, the Board of Museum Management adopted the following mission statement: "The PCMA shall preserve, present and promote the heritage and culture of Peterborough and area and shall also provide other significant heritage programs". The final clause "and other significant heritage programs" was the most controversial addition discussed by the board, signaling as it did a movement outside the facility and the more narrowly conceived functions of the museum.

Based on this analysis a five year plan was produced. The longterm organizational goal focused on improved operating standards, improved facilities, and stronger museum programs.

Staff of the institution were actively involved - in both their professional capacities and their volunteer commitments - to a wide range of community groups and organizations, building profile for the museum in the community.

By the early 1990's fiscal pressures were mounting as provincial funding remained static and the institution became more reliant on the municipality for support. This despite seeing itself, in the words of a planning document, largely "outside the municipal political and administrative orbit". The formation of the new Museums and Archives Division did signal an effort to establish more direct links with municipal administrative structures.

A planning exercise in 1992 identified familiar themes: poor facilities, "lack of recognition at City Hall", "lack of a bridge" with other local heritage groups, "weak communication between board and staff, poor staff communication". The conclusion drawn was that the institution had become "a victim of our own success/plateau" - its level of activity outstripping the time and resources available to sustain them.

Commitments were made "to improve relations with the mayor and council" and that "internal staffing problems - inadequate support staff, personality conflicts, unclear reporting relationships, the absence of daily and weekly communication, must also be resolved".

There was a call for the institution to broaden its “leadership in heritage/culture policy and development” and achieve greater financial and administrative distance from the City: “in becoming an independent entity... the advantages outweigh disadvantages ... if support from City Council continued”.

*Here was a strong signal about the institution trying to turn from a functionally-driven to a more mission-driven organization. This represents a huge challenge for most museums where an understanding of institutional purposes has flown from functional responsibilities for collecting, exhibiting and interpreting specific collections, rather than from a larger set of public goods served by those collections*

*The need for this shift was what motivated the International Commission for Museums (ICOM) two decades ago to revise their definition of museums. The old definition which had placed the focus on traditional functions (“A museum exists to collect, preserve...”). The new definition: “A museum is a non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and its development that collects, ...”. The Canadian-based International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM) has a still broader view: “Many museums collect, conserve, exhibit, but they remain separate from the present economic, social and cultural context, avoiding the mission of participating in the development of the societies they serve” (quoted in Weil, 1988, 36).*

**What issues do these shifts raise for the work of the museum and the Division?**

**What would you say are the principal barriers to a more consistently mission-driven organization.**

Out of a call for a “clearer vision of the institution’s primary role and function in the community” emerged a new mission statement:

“As an integral part of the collective memory of the community, the PCMA shall preserve, present and promote the heritage and culture of Peterborough and area, and also provide other significant heritage programs for the education and enjoyment of residents and visitors alike”.

In bringing the proposed mission to the board the minutes record the Manager stating “ while the existing mission statement is a concise statement of what we do, it does not adequately reflect why we do it and why we do it is important”.

Between 1995 and 1997 the Division played a leadership role in trying to acquire a nationally-significant local photographic collection. More than \$250,000 was raised over a short period of time, with no previous fundraising experience or infrastructure. The Manager felt the campaign played a significant role in raising the profile of the museum and the Division in the larger community and strengthened the network of contacts in the culture and heritage community.-

Attendance continued to grow despite funding reductions. In 1996 the institution’s professional stature was recognized when it was designated as a Category A institution for purposes of receiving significant national collections.

The Manager’s lead role in this campaign resulted in him having to shift many of his responsibilities to other staff. Despite their already considerable workloads staff stepped in to take-on additional internal responsibilities, both internally and liaising with local heritage groups.

Even before the establishment of the CHD the Policies and Procedures Manual of the museum signaled a responsibility for providing leadership on local culture and heritage issues outside the mandate of the institution.

Exhibits and programs continued to demonstrate an effort to broaden the range of community issues and stories. Although the majority appeared to remain collections-based (i.e., themes defined primarily on the basis of existing collections) more thematic- or issue-based exhibitions were also mounted, several in partnership with other local community groups or organizations: “Once Upon a Watershed” celebrating the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority’s 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, “Seasons of Darkness: Celebrations of Light” - exploring how different cultures celebrate the winter solstice period.

Educational programs, still widely acclaimed, continued to focus on early settlement themes.

**What was it about the work with First Nations that made it “the institution at its finest?” What were the underlying characteristics or conditions that made it so? How might they be replicated?**

*One of the paradoxes of working in museums for many of us from the dominant culture is that we rarely experience culture in as immediate and visceral a way as do First Nations and other communities for whom the issues are about their very survival as unique communities. We enjoy it, understand it to some extent intellectually, but only rarely can step inside it. And yet we're supposed to help others come to understand and appreciate it. Some of the most exciting work in museums today is aimed at addressing this challenge, experiments with exhibits and programs that help all visitors come to experience what the Manager felt, helping them to see themselves as “cultural animals” with as distinct and recognizable habits and traits as those cultures they see exhibited and interpreted in our museums.*

*One of the reasons the Manager said he was able to move as quickly as he did in creating the Division was the time invested reflecting on local heritage and cultural development. He had participated actively in the Heritage Policy Review, and in the subsequent drafting of a new Ontario Heritage Act. Both had required him to think through a larger vision of local heritage issues and heritage-based*

The repatriation of burial materials was viewed by the Manager as the institution “at its finest”. The repatriation process, and an exhibition mounted in conjunction with it, sought to place the cultural traditions of First Nations in a contemporary context. The Manager described the experience of working with First Nations as having given him a more visceral and meaningful experience of heritage and culture than he had ever experienced.

## **The Establishment of the CHD**

In the context of municipal downsizing the Manager believed the museum was seen as

- “a marginal service, a prime candidate for significant further reduction”.

He described the establishment of CHD as

- “a strategy to build a protective buffer around the museum, while at the same time relating it better to the city’s priorities”

*community development.*

*Part of the increased receptivity to culture and heritage issues on the part of council and city administrators was a growing focus on community development, specifically community economic development, as a response to the decline of traditional industry. The "K-factor", the unique character and heritage of the area were seen as important elements of a tourism strategy. These economic issues were able to put culture and heritage on council's "radar screen" in a way that other "softer" quality of life or social issues could not. The conservative and technocratic traditions of municipal government, with their focus on land use issues and the efficient delivery of public services (combined with limited taxing power) have made more pragmatic and utilitarian issues the norm in many municipalities.*

The Division "legitimized" some of the work with other local culture and heritage groups that staff had been doing for some time. It was made possible by restructuring in the Community Services Division with the breaking up of the Culture and Recreation Department. The strong relationship the Manager had with the Director of Community Services was a significant factor in the development.

More significant in terms of a new mandate was the substantially increased responsibility to council and to all city departments on culture and heritage matters. The mandate was sold in part on the basis of the advantages it offered in rationalizing the city's dealings with cultural questions that until then had been handled on more ad hoc basis.

The Division had emerged quickly in response to restructuring in municipal departments. Some consultation took place with the Board of Museum Management (soon to be the Culture and Heritage Board - CHB) but there was little opportunity for them to fully digest the implications of the changes. There was no discussion with staff. The Manager welcomed the opportunity to use the researcher's doctoral research on museums and community cultural planning as an opportunity to bring staff and board members together to discuss and reflect on the implications of the new mandate.

## **Enter the Researcher**

The researcher's central research question was:

***How can organizational and professional practices in museums change in order to address a new understandings of culture and community-based cultural planning?***

## **The CHD Mandate**

The Divisional Role, Structure, Responsibilities and Long Term Goals were drafted by the Manager in consultation with the Director of Community Services and adopted by council in the form of a municipal by-law.

The Division had three broad areas of responsibility.

*One of the challenges faced by all municipalities in addressing cultural issues is that they do not fit neatly anywhere; they are in a sense "everywhere and (potentially) nowhere". They cut across all departments and agencies, and across public-, private- and voluntary sectors. Working to overcome "silos" and integrate issues horizontally across government is a tremendous challenge, both administratively and politically.*

- i. To continue to *manage and operate the PCMA*.
- ii. To act as *a resource to the municipality* on culture and heritage matters. These responsibilities included problem-solving, resource rationalization and "the development, implementation, and evaluation of plans, policies and programs to guide culture and heritage development in Peterborough".
- iii. To *advance community-based cultural development*. Here responsibilities included communication and coordination, conserving community heritage resources, providing advisory support, encouraging celebrations, recognizing excellence, and building community awareness.

*It was clear at the September 1996 meeting the "revolt" by some members of the Culture and Heritage Board (CHB) was due to some members seeing these not as goals but as specific tasks, tasks that in their minds had not been realized. The Manager viewed them as a broad framework for action, to be implemented strategically over time as opportunities arose.*

A series of long-range goals were also identified. They included a mix of open-ended goals ("broadening public recognition of culture and heritage; rationalizing and integrating culture and heritage into broader municipal planning") and more specific goals ("developing (separate) arts and heritage policies; resolving a comprehensive and equitable grants program").

*The Division was establishing arts and heritage policies in its month-to-month work, mediating issues between the cultural community and the municipality. Here policy or planning are seen as ongoing problem-solving and precedent-setting, more than "big bang" formal pronouncements*

*The Governance structure here is a hybrid neither "inside" nor "outside" the municipality. Hybrids can be creative; they can also pose potential difficulties if not fully understood. The board is advisory only; final decisions on any matter rest with city administrators and council. It is a mix of political appointments and community representatives - some citizens-at-large and some*

The CHB consisted of the Board of Museum Management (5 community representatives and one aldermanic appointment) as well as an additional aldermanic appointment, and organizational representation from the Peterborough Historical Society (PHS), Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC), the Art Gallery of Peterborough (AGP), and the Peterborough Arts Umbrella (PAU).

*representing other local culture and heritage organizations. The hybrid structure limits the Committee from taking stronger advocacy positions against Council positions on issues, but on the other hand it gives them opportunities to affect change working inside the system.*

**What are the trade-off's here for planning and governance of Peterborough's culture and heritage?**

**Should the Division have articulated definitions of "culture" and "heritage" to guide decision-making?**

**Other communities have articulated statements of values and principles by which decisions will be made in culture and heritage matters. Should the Division have such a statement?**

**Should multiculturalism be separated from the Division?**

*One senses in the question a frustration, a feeling of being left out of the loop, and as a result, some were surprised and unprepared for the change.*

No definition of "culture" or "heritage" appears in the mandate. At the first board meeting after the establishment of the Division the Manager led a mapping process that located all culture and heritage organizations on a political spectrum from "left to right".

Most contemporary arts organizations were located "left" of centre, local heritage groups approximately in the middle of the spectrum, and "mainstream" cultural institutions such as a Showplace, a new performing arts facility committed to programming popular, mostly mainstream plays and musicals, to the right of centre.

He noted that

- "multiculturalism has been left out of the application that has gone to city hall since most multicultural groups already deal directly with the Recreation Department. And adding this element would simply complicate matters"

At the board meeting the minutes records the board asking the Manager "to inform the Board exactly what their new role would be?"

## **Start-Up: Defining the Work**

The challenge for the Division from the Manager's perspective was

- "to determine how the institution could realize the potential of the mandate ... how to lever change in the staff and board that would make this possible".

He acknowledged:

*The danger with visionary and or charismatic leaders is that they do not always put the systems and infrastructures in place needed to replace them should they leave. Strong leaders can also undermine efforts to build capacity within the organization.*

- "much of the community's perception of the institution is tied up with my leadership and I must draw-out staff and board members to play a more prominent role".

The first step in involving staff and members of the board in exploring the new mandate was a focus group attended by full-time and part-time staff, student interns and three board members. The goals of the meeting were to: strengthen involvement; assess institutional changes; review, assess and prioritize divisional goals.

Among the themes from the meeting were many of those that emerged from minutes and other sources earlier in the institution's history. The overall picture was no shared vision of the mission and mandate of the Division, nor much understanding of how these would be operationalized.

#### ***Complaints about the inadequate facility***

- "we work in a tired building that's deteriorating".

***This same message kept recurring throughout the team process. People talk repeatedly about PCMA being one of the most "community-oriented" museums in the province yet there are ongoing complaints about low levels of community support. What explains these mixed messages about community involvement and support?***

#### ***Weak community support***

- "the community is being better served" but also "there is a lack of awareness of the community in the museum and a lack of awareness of the museum in the community".

*In many respects this is perhaps the central issue: how to decide what it must stop doing in order to take on additional responsibilities. Museums, and most organizations, are notoriously better at adding programs and services than at eliminating or reducing them. Such decisions require tremendous clarity about the outcomes the organization seeks to achieve; easy to say, profoundly difficult to do in a meaningful and instructive way. Only out of such clarity around outcomes can the organization help staff and the board distinguish*

#### ***Work overload***

- "I'm not sure how much further I can go without falling over the edge"
- "we're tired".
- "I can't do what I'm supposed to do now ... how do we let things go, especially things we like, in order to take on new tasks?"

#### ***Board uncertainty and confusion***

- "I sometimes think we're floating".
- "we're still struggling separating our old and our new responsibilities".



*high-value from lower-value work.*

***But also excitement about CHD potential***

- “we can focus energies, build profile, provide leadership”.

***Leadership tensions***

***This theme was to recur again and again. Is there a way around this impasse of the Manager's leadership being simultaneously a tremendous asset and a liability related to others' involvement?***

There was also mixed feelings expressed about the leadership role of the Manager. There was great respect and admiration expressed for his strategic insights and political savvy, but also some anxiety about these strengths. Fear was expressed that “he might try to drive the bus”, discouraging others from participating. But there was equal fear “that he *wouldn't* drive the bus” and rob the institution of a powerful champion.

***Poor communication***

There was reiteration of concern about poor communication, little opportunity for people to share ideas and learn from one another. Combined with reduced opportunity for professional development staff expressed a feeling of “working in isolation”.

***Personal and emotional commitment to work***

*This was the first demonstration of strong emotion among staff. It was moving for me. Everything in organizational cultures encourage us not to express feelings, to pretend we can “check our emotions at the door”, that we're entering into a sensible, rational world of organizations. Yeh right!*

People spoke with pride about the institution, their role in it and their respect for one another. A group process based on a Native Healing Circle was used to close the meeting which resulted in strong emotions being expressed; there was a close feeling of community in the room at the end of the meeting.

***People seemed more comfortable expressing these emotions here than they did during a similar process later at the Learning Forum? Was this only because it was a smaller group that knew each other better? Were there other factors?***

Based on participation in the meeting a core learning team was established consisting of full-time staff and three board members

The researcher then conducted the first of two interviews with team members, asking them about: the strengths of the PCMA; their hopes for the Division; what they saw as important issues of culture and heritage in Peterborough; and, their perceptions of the city and its identity.

## ***A Synthesis of Divisional Challenges***

### ***i. A Museum Identity Crisis***

*Not surprisingly there is still confusion and uncertainty about "who we are" and "what business we're in" as the new Division. But there seems a deeper, and more long-standing identity crisis, one present in PCMA before the creation of the Division.*

*Initiatives like the repatriation work and the museum's education programs place the museum among the most progressive and innovative community cultural institutions in the country. But PCMA, like many other museums in the late 1990's, seems stuck between two images - two mental maps - of itself. The first is the traditional museum paradigm that defines itself in functional terms - a collections-based institution dedicated to communicating an "objective" account of the history of the community. The second is a more mission-driven organization serving the contemporary cultural needs of a diverse community. The first is a museum about objects. The second is a museum about people.*

*This sounds straightforward enough but it is a huge shift, one museums will be wrestling with for some time; the schizophrenia in Peterborough is shared by many other institutions.*

*One of the things that in some ways disguises these tensions in Peterborough, paradoxically, is one of the dominant "stories" people tell themselves about where they work: namely, that the PCMA is one of the most "community-oriented" museums in the province. This is true in terms of the leadership role it plays working*

The following messages, many familiar, emerged from these interviews.

### ***Museum Strengths***

People spoke with pride about the museum, the dedication of its staff, and leadership role it played in the museum and heritage community locally and provincially, and "growing community support and profile".

### ***Views of Culture and Heritage in Peterborough***

- "the vision of culture and heritage is broadening ... I think it's partly a generational thing"
- "we need to speak to new interests and needs ... move beyond the traditional history"

### ***Hopes (and Anxieties) about the Division***

- "we're doing it already ... it just gives us the seal of approval"
- "(it should work) like a network with nerve cells ... I hope we're leaders in cultural change ... our primary purpose should be to be a voice for the culture and heritage organizations")
- "how do we let some things go to take on others"
- "I'm not sure where I fit in"
- "I don't think the museum's business should be so tied up with the Division .. we get too tied up at board meetings with the museum and other groups get shortchanged ... we need to separate functions .. we need a CHD Administrator"
- "the culture and heritage community is like a body without a head .. but the museum can't be the head ... we need new decision-making structures ... our minds are so geared to traditional structures ... it's hard for people to give up power"

*with other community organizations on partnerships and joint initiatives, together with the role as a resource to many of these same institutions. But these activities arguably could be undertaken, if the leadership existed, by PHS or PACAC; the activity does not flow from a rethinking of the museum's relationship to the community, what it would mean for the museum to serve the personal and civic needs of a diverse community in Peterborough today.*

**What are your thoughts on this challenge?**

**What would it mean for the organization to reorient itself around some of these ideas?**

*One reflection of the split institutional identity is staff's tendency to define their professional identities with individual functions - curatorial, education, archives. To combat these tendencies (still the norm) in other institutions one strategy is to operate more through the use of cross-functional teams drawn from different parts of the museum. One role of these teams in some institutions is to collaboratively plan and develop exhibitions and programs. Rather than having these ideas and plans for exhibitions developed in one area (in large institutions usually curatorial), staff from across the institution are charged to think across functions, to link exhibit and program plans to institutional missions and goals - educational goals, civic goals, marketing goals, revenue targets, and so on. Cross-functional management teams have been shown to help break-down functional silos.*

**Could these models be applied in Peterborough? If not, why not and how can these barriers be overcome?**

**ii. A Community Identity Crisis - Peterborough's Character and Identity Collections and Constituencies**

*This issue is inseparable from the last one and again pulls the institution in two directions. This is not always bad; tensions and paradigms can be productive if managed creatively. But this requires understanding the tensions clearly.*

*With notable exceptions the core museum narrative continues to be that of early settlement. Tivy (1992) describes community museums in Ontario as having moved through three paradigms that characterize collecting and interpretive practices:*

- a) *"Rescuing the Past" - the Age of Collecting (19<sup>th</sup> century to early 1970); main interpretive theme - the myth of the pioneer;*
- b) *"Controlling the Past" - Age of Description Management (early 1970's to mid 1980's); main interpretive theme - professionalization;*
- c) *"Revising the Past" - Age of Analysis (mid 1980's to today); main interpretive themes - multiculturalism, relativism.*

*PCMA has taken significant steps into the third paradigm (with initiatives like repatriation) but seem continually drawn back to the first and second paradigms in terms of exhibits and programs themes, and thus the image it presents to the community. For*

- "I had no idea about small town attitudes before moving here ... the bigotry, prejudice and small mindedness was a shock"
- "this is a community of contrasts ... ultra conservatives and ultra progressives"
- (a town still dominated by the Peterborough "old guard" - also the PCMA's traditional constituency) "the museum doesn't help with this ... our stories are mostly about the old guard ... we need to connect to the current life in Peterborough ... for example Native artists ... I like the idea of the museum as a cultural centre linking arts and heritage, not separating them in different institutions"
- "the cultural elite drive the current system and structures ... our challenge is how to build a program that better reflects the actual community ... there will be resistance to politicizing culture ... Peterborough needs to be pushed ... little steps but in the right direction"

*example illustrations in the museum brochure depict almost entirely 19<sup>th</sup> century themes.*

*The museum is trying to walk a careful line between not alienating its traditional constituency - many of whom support the early settlement narrative, while reaching out to new audiences. Staff are very critical of the conservative values of the old guard but institutional practice seems to reinforce the very influences they abhor.*

**Are there strategies that could be devised to address these issues?**  
**What thoughts come to mind about the tensions here?**

### **iii. Organizational Dynamics**

*Familiar patterns emerged from the interviews and the construction of the team story. The picture is of a extremely dedicated group of professionals, highly committed to their work. But this professional dedication seems directly linked to the second part of the picture, that of an overextended staff, several of whom seem perpetually on the edge of burnout.*

*There seems either a reluctance or an inability to make choices and define priorities. But is it unclear what process would be used to make choices even if the will existed to try. The reputation of the museum and past performance seem to drive staff to reach ever higher.*

*The staff seem on one level a "tight team" committed to one another. But there are also complaints about poor communication, of*

### **The Museum and its Staff:**

- "this is something I've done better than anything before in my life"
- the city has such a bargain .. everyone gives 120% ... we're a tight team ... god forbid anyone should leave"
- "I need to slow down ... (the pace) is not sustainable .. I need to get more people involved"

*people working in isolation, and of personality conflicts that seem to lie just beneath the surface.*

*The paradox is that the Manager is a superb facilitator and communicator in meetings inside and outside the institution. It is the day-to-day communication and people skills that seem to elude him and are missed by both staff and the board.*

**Do these issues evoke any thoughts or any suggestions about ways to address these issues?**

*Ironically the story fell victim to precisely what Appreciate Inquiry was supposed to avoid - framing the "world as a problem". This reflected both the Manager's and my own interests and analytical inclinations. Some of the larger visions of what the Division might be that emerged in interviews and in individual stories, were not captured in the composite document.*

Tension around the Manager's management/leadership style continues. The Manager is frustrated himself with this ongoing issue.

- "If I manage the process I'm accused of being manipulative. If I don't, things don't get done".

But The Manager's own story demonstrated his willingness to acknowledge these issues.

- As the primary architect of the Division ... I take considerable pride in the infrastructure that exists for the new division but am still concerned about the level of community involvement and support. I am also faced with two nagging questions: how long we can sustain our current level of activity; and - perhaps most importantly - how much will this infrastructure protect us in the next round of municipal cuts expected in 1997. Ironically, my vulnerability does not stem from either of the above but rather from stepping back and letting go. This is a big step but a crucial one. I'm looking forward to this project as a vehicle to both share and test that vision".

Based on the interviews each team member constructed a story introducing them and expressing their hopes for the Division. These individual stories were compiled by the Manager and the researcher into a Team Story that benchmarked a set of perceptions about the Division.

Core issues identified in the Team Story included:

- What is the relationship between the institution (PCMA) and the Division?
- Can the staff and resources of the PCMA actually be the implementation arm of the Division, or is the PCMA simply one client organization among other clients of the Division?
- If the two are to be integrated how do the broadened Divisional responsibilities relate to the more traditional collections and facilities of the institution? How can choices and priorities be determined?
- How does a broadened view of culture and heritage in the community affect expectations in the institution, and in the Division?
- Is another governance structure needed to more effectively broker partnerships and facilitate community-based cultural activity?
- How can the work of the CHB be re-oriented from its current focus on museum issues to a broader planning function for culture and heritage?
- How can culture and heritage issues be integrated more effectively into municipal planning and decision-making?

- How can capacity be built to realize the potential of both the PCMA and the CHD?

## The Learning Forum

The Learning Forum brought six teams from museums across Canada together in Toronto June 6-9, 1996. The Forum was part of a pilot project of the Canadian Museums Human Resource Strategy (1995), entitled *Learning Across Organizational Boundaries (LAOB)*, which explored organizational learning and change in Canadian museums.

Prior to the Learning Forum, a participant from another museum expressed their hopes for the project:

- I hope this project will encourage museums of all kinds and sizes to seriously reflect on what they're doing, how they're doing it, and who they're doing it for, with the hope that this will result in enhancing the value of museums within our society. Our work is really about providing greater meaning and value to the people we serve. I hope that we challenge traditional practices, to keep or modify those which serve our purpose, and to get rid of those that don't. I would be pleased if this project encourages this process of *organizational self-reflection*. I would be even more encouraged if this project helps museums to work together on this and to share our successes and challenges.

During the three days teams used a series of organizational learning techniques: community dialogue; paired team reflection; appreciative inquiry, Eurythmy (a discipline of physical movement ... to the consternation of many).

The Forum was nothing if provocative. Some members of the team found it frustrating, others moving, others productive, no one was indifferent.

At the end of the Learning Forum teams were asked to reflect on the following questions:

- i. what progress has your team made on its task?
- ii. what insights or tools to have you gained about organizational learning that will be the most useful to your team?
- iii. what insights have you gained into how you work together as a team that will be most helpful in the future?
- iv. what will your team commit to giving or receiving from other teams after you return home? have we established a community of learners that can support one another during and after the project?

The following were key learnings expressed by members of the team and in each of these categories members of other teams.

### ***Advancing the Team's Work***

The team came to know one another and understand their task or challenge better over the course of the three days.

*The relationship between personal and interpersonal issues of trust and team effectiveness seemed to please and surprise some members especially staff to board.*

*After two years of the CHD's existence the Learning Forum was the first focused opportunity for staff and board members to discuss the challenges and opportunities connected with the enlarged mandate.*

*The Manager clearly began the event with a clearer sense of the task and the challenges facing the CHD than other members of the team. This comment suggested he may have underestimated the time required for others to "get up to speed". There was also some tension between the Manager wanting to "get on with the work" and the time needed for the team to get to know one another and learn how to work together*

- "we've built up a lot of trust here this weekend, I feel like we're a team now"
- "I hadn't spent 10 minutes with any of you before ... now I feel I know you"
- "I wasn't interested in the structural issues before but now I understand these are important"
- "we got past the chalk board ... we have a clearer sense of where we want to go"
- "we've begun to delineate roles"
- "we've got to find a concrete project to demonstrate the potential of the Division structure to more people"
- "I'm frustrated we didn't get further on our task this weekend"

### ***Insights Into Organizational Learning***

The team found Appreciative Inquiry the most useful, and potentially applicable of the organizational learning tools to be taken home and applied. Paired team reflections surfaced some powerful, and not always comfortable insights. Community dialogue was uncomfortable for some team members, meaningful and emotional for others. Eurythm, well enough said ...!

- "we've learned new ways of learning and working together ... skills that we've learned this weekend can be applied in building relationships with the new division .. and with the community ... (these) skills are can also be applied to staff and the board"
- "We've learned more about ourselves and our process of interacting"
- "the purpose of the weekend was not to complete the task but to learn how to tackle the task"
- "the point of learning across organizational boundaries is about how we learn not what information is acquired ... we should

*These were exactly the kind of*



*learnings the researchers hoped participants would take from the Learning Forum. the team seemed to have difficulty hanging onto these insights when they returned to the frantic pace of work.*

*Poor communication is a recurring theme.*

*Comments about the Peterborough team by other teams in the paired team reflection sessions reinforced some of the themes about team dynamics, weak communications and leadership tensions. Hearing that these were immediately apparent to others outside the organization provoked some powerful learning.*

*One insight that emerged from several paired team interviews that had not surfaced before was the comment that the team's working style was hyperactive, one that tolerated little or no silence, and seemed characterized by people competing for "air time". The Peterborough team commented on what appeared to be the "calmness" of the working style of one other team.*

*The Manager and several other team members were preoccupied in these paired team sessions with issues related to structural administrative and political issues. A woman on another team commented that the male voices on the Peterborough team were dominating and drowning out a female voice that was trying to move the discussion away from administrative structural issues.*

have learning across organizational boundaries with any kind of organizations - banks, other community organizations - as well as other museums".

### ***Insights Into Individual and Team Learning***

Some old issues resurfaced and some new issues emerged.

- "we work with one another but we don't communicate well across our division or functions in the museum"
- "there are team members who seem able and eager to take on additional responsibilities but aren't being asked"
- "you need to rotate the leadership from (the Manager)"
- "but the team is protective of (the Manager)"
- "there is vertical communication between team members and (the Manager) but little horizontal communication among team members"
- "there's good energy on the team but the hyperness may be closing-down thinking about alternatives"
- "does there have to be as much anxiety as there is? ... don't you guys get together much ... there seems like a lot of catching up to do"
- "the team meeting was really a conversation between two people debating bureaucratic procedures"
- "(Manager) draws people back to politics and structures which needs to be acknowledged but can't let this focus drown-out other voices and other issues such as the potential for building new community partnerships"

*One exchange with another team seemed to crystallize many difficulties experienced by the Peterborough team, and drew a connection to the Division's larger role in the community.*

- "we (Alberta) work on some principles of community development - one is that power grows when you give it away; we have to step back and let others in the community take ownership ... this seems important principle for the Peterborough team itself - it might also be a useful principle for thinking about the CHD's role in the community"

### ***Forming a Learning Community***

The team did experience a very powerful experience of what it means to come together as a learning community not so much as the researchers had hoped with others outside the organization but with one another internally. This was most evident on Sunday morning in the team's last working session. Paradoxically the sense of community emerged around some difficult moments on a familiar issue of leadership tensions.

After having his leadership style challenged by other teams the Manager, to his credit, put the issue on the table:

*This was the first acknowledgment of vulnerability or self-doubt from the Manager and it evoked an immediate and emotional response.*

- "this weekend has been painful for me .. you've all been very gentle ... I've been an obstacle in our process because I've been so close to it ... I wonder if my leadership style is appropriate for the evolution of the organization in the next stage ..."

People expressed admiration and a desire not to lose the Manager

- "we would never have gotten here without (the Manager) ... but your leadership style does leave you alone at the top"
- "it's painful for the creator to let go of their creation"
- "one set of skills have gotten us this far, all of us may need a different mix of many skills in the future".

**What recollections do you have of this moment? What relevance, if any, does this incident have today?**

At this point there was a tremendous feeling of openness and trust in the session.

*It was almost as though there was a need to re-establish the control lost in acknowledging his self-doubts.*

This was undermined somewhat when the Manager said one of the reasons he was not able to establish closer personal relationships with any of them was because "I might have to fire you one day". This reduced, but did not destroy, the sense of community in the room.

*I recorded these reflections after the event.*

- "the weekend was a very powerful and moving experience for me. It gave me a visceral and direct and emotional experience of a lot of ideas about organizational learning I'd read about that I 'knew' intellectually but didn't

*really understand ... I learned: the value of silence; slowing down so more things happen; that the most productive and satisfying meetings are those in which someone has managed to 'take the temperature down', not 'crank it up', allowing more people contribute. Taking the temperature down also seems to relate to moving from intellectualized, abstract discussion to people speaking more from direct experience'. Most important I learned a deep humility about the collective wisdom of others'*

*Unfortunately I was unable to hang onto these insights in as powerful a way as I'd experienced them at event. I found myself lapsing back into old patterns of thinking and interacting with others, as witnessed in part at the team planning retreat (below).*

**What (if any) insights have you been able to hang onto from the Forum that continue to have meaning for you today?**

*The team was beginning to move past the analysis of problems to propose practical and concrete strategies for dealing with issues. For example:*

*finding ways to involve more people*

## **Second Interviews**

In early July 1996, several weeks after the Learning Forum, the researcher conducted repeat interviews with the team. The purpose of the interviews was to assess the impact of the Learning Forum on two things: the team's understanding of their substantive task; and how they were learning and working as a team.

### ***Insights Into Divisional Challenges***

It was immediately apparent the team had gained considerable insight into the challenges facing the CHD and overall had greater optimism about its potential

- "I feel more hopeful ... there is an opportunity to expand participation to include more organizations ... I have a better sense of why it (CHD) exists"
- I initially thought our task was should there be a Division and how should it work .. now I think it's how can it be improved ...

how do we increase vitality .. bring in more people ... I understand we need to build the new vision before we worry about the bureaucratic aspects ... we need a more dynamic board that's less focused on museum business"

*moving to formalize people's Divisional roles more;*

- "the factors holding us back are shortage of staff and resources"... and we need to involve more people .. maybe there should be a process looking at the future ... broaden discussion and establish more relationships with others .. develop skills of staff in building these relationships'
- "I'll happily take on more Divisional responsibilities ... we need to involve (museum) staff more outside their specific responsibilities ... in board liaison and the bigger picture.. we also need to formalize everyone's Divisional roles more"

*recognition of the different operating environments and expectations of the Division in municipal government and the community.*

- "consensual management may be ok in the museum but you can't operate that way at City Hall"
- "we need to be working better inside the City and outside in the community ... the (Peterborough) Arts Umbrella can take on part of the external role ... it doesn't represent the heritage community at the moment ... I need to do some thinking on this"

*This comment about management and decision-making styles at the city seems important. The Manager commented he felt the style of management at the city was changing as older politicians and managers were replaced with younger ones who seemed better able to work in more consensual ways. But the differing leadership requirements in the community-based and municipal parts of the Division's work are an important insight.*

*There continued to be concern about work load and over extended resources. One team member had been consistent from the beginning about the central issue of priority-setting.*

- "I'm still uncertain about our task.. we've basically been doing the work of the Division, now we have the title for it .. we're not involved at the board level, that's (the Manager's) arena ... we're too busy at our own jobs now .. we can't take on more .. how do we establish priorities .. maybe this is the task ... we have to make some tough choices, what's the process for doing this ... do I neglect exhibitions over collections ... there are ethical issues here"

*One team member commented that they felt the team shared a remarkably similar vision of heritage and culture in the community, but also acknowledging some of the limiting traditions of the museum.*

- "all of share a remarkably similar view of culture and heritage ... despite the permanent exhibits being very traditional ... we really see the work of the museum as community interaction, education ... (the Manager) with the changing exhibitions has tried to pull in First Nation stuff, the multicultural stuff, the AIDS exhibit ... he's always tried to have a very broad kind of activism approach .. but what you see in the permanent exhibits is very conservative ... I don't knock it because it gives me something to work with

that's predictable year to year (with school groups)".

### ***Insights Into Team Dynamics***

Beyond these substantive insights into the task it also became quickly clear that there had been a "cooling" of enthusiasm for many of the insights related to leadership and interpersonal dynamics. These were being downplayed, although not entirely swept away.

One team member indicated there had been no discussion of these issues at the staff meeting following the Forum. This despite one team member saying during the drive home from the Forum that the team should not let too much time pass before coming together to discuss what had occurred and what they had learned.

There seemed to be a desire to "put the lid on" the emotional issues raised at the Forum.

**What prevented these issues from being raised? Why didn't the person who felt not too much time should not be allowed to pass not raise these issues? Why didn't others? This seems to have been a pivotal point in the process. Why was there no follow-through on what were clearly vitally important issues for people personally and for the organization?**

- "there was a lot of pent-up emotion, a lot of intensity ... I'm not sure this was healthy ... the personal issues didn't get raised at our staff meeting after ... the criticisms of (Manager) I'm not sure were fair ... he felt badly"
- "I wouldn't trade anyone ... it gets better and better ... the communications issues are sniping and griping ... it's improved ... (the Manager) is the fairest boss"

There was some reaction to critical conclusions about the team's style of working.

- "I took exception to the criticism that saw our team's intensity as negative ... it was really passion ... how they interacted didn't seem real to me"

On the other hand some conclusions regarding team dynamics were reaffirmed, and some concrete steps taken to address them.

- "it's true we do need to work harder at communicating in the organization, especially horizontal communication ... we've committed to having more staff meetings ... I suggested we establish a binder that contains all the materials for the Culture and Heritage Board that would be available to staff"
- "the communication issues are real ... but staff themselves have to take more responsibility for this ... I'm still a believer in a 'need to know' policy on information sharing"
- "giving power away ... each team member needs to take on some responsibilities ... people began to relate to one another more, not just to (Manager), this is important, we started talking about this and need to continue"

**It is true that staff must themselves take on more responsibility. But how can they do so if information is not shared widely? How can one person decide on what people "need to know"?**

*This is a real and legitimate distinction, but it can also be justification for maintaining tight control. A helpful analogy relates to teaching someone to drive. If you hang onto the wheel (i.e., over manage) the person never learns to drive. On the other hand if you don't grab the wheel when you need to, you both die.*

*This insight also reveals the strong role the Manager played in directing the museum toward more contemporary issues and museum practice. The downside may be that the institution came to rely on this person which may partly explain why it is difficult to sustain progress.*

But there was some reassertion of old patterns.

- “I know my staff well ... not all of them are ready for some of this ... I've been delegating more responsibility ... but it's still my responsibility to allocate resources.. leadership is a shared responsibility but management is not”
- “(the Manager) saw that his leadership style may not be what was needed ... I'd been frustrated ... (another staff member) was frustrated ... but was it all genuine? ... I sense we're lapsing back into old roles”

One team member felt the Manager's focus was shifting.

- “(the Manager) is shrewd ... he is not like the dinosaurs at city hall ... but he can work with them .. his gender is right and he's very bright ... that's where he gets his satisfaction .. he's a political guy ... he's sensitive too .. he's always been very sensitive to the Native community, to the whole race relations stuff ... he's really good at that sort of thing ... he's interested in the right stuff. He's politically bang on and he can play the game”.

## **The Team Retreat**

A one-day “retreat” was held on July 22 (away from work).

In an effort to encourage shared leadership the Manager asked two team members to plan and coordinate the retreat. The following goals were identified for the day.

By the end of this retreat it was hoped the team would have:

- a shared vision of the Division;
- shared vision of culture and heritage;
- a critical path, plus a method for recording and evaluating progress;
- exciting ideas;
- sunburn.

### ***Shared Divisional Vision and Purposes***

Most of the morning at the retreat was spent on what were described as “big picture” questions of vision for the Division: the meaning and interrelationships among concepts of culture, heritage, identity; questions of diversity in the community. A lengthy discussion took place on exclusion and prejudice in the community, the first time these issues had been explicitly raised by the team.

There was agreement that as long as cultural issues remained focused on “safe” and non-controversial ideas - for example, on early community history, on “the K-factor” and cultural tourism, on safe arts and culture activity - both municipal government and Peterborough’s “old guard” (the two are closely linked) were comfortable with culture as an issue in local governance. But as soon as cultural activity got a little more challenging - “something a little beyond, a little more intellectual, then the hands go up”.

*This was a rich conversation, worthy of being revisited by staff and the board. It is a central issue for museums in trying to define a more relevant, contemporary role in their communities.*

- “they want to celebrate who we were - not examine who we are”
- “there is really a definite line between what we can accept, things that are easily accessible or don’t challenge us much or make us think more about our identity. But as soon as you take one step beyond that, people turn away”

There was a lengthy discussion about the museum and the division’s responsibility to “lead or follow” community norms.

- “Peterborough is certainly becoming a retirement community and that’s shaping it. One of the negative sides of that is that people are moving to Peterborough to get away from the multiculturalism of Toronto. The perceived violence of Toronto ... to preserve the WASP thing that they grew up in when Toronto was for them”
- “what’s the culture of Peterborough we’re charged with perpetuating and maintaining? ... should we be the Peterborough Museum of Cultural Intolerance? ... the Museum of Racism? ... is our role to just reflect community views ... or to challenge those views?”

The Manager described an incident several years before when a former board member pushed for a policy on ethno-cultural equity.

*Tator et. al. (1998) in an examination of racism in cultural production in Canada argue the cultural sector is in a state of denial about systemic racism in artistic and cultural production. They argue that liberal democracies like Canada are caught in tensions between a belief system that emphasizes liberal values of “tolerance”, “acceptance”, “equity”, and the reality of a society with systemic structures of discrimination. The language of liberalism lulls us into a false sense of complacency that acts to reinforce rather than challenge racism. They call this phenomenon “demo-racism”.*

- “the biggest problem was the way she tried to bring it about ... that’s when the board really dug in. Like the work we’ve done with First Nations and the AIDS exhibit, those things were OK, they were seen to be politically correct and therefore safe and appropriate. But as soon as we started challenging, saying there is racism in Peterborough, then they resisted: “no there isn’t ... we don’t see that sort of thing in Peterborough”. For that and other reasons (the board member) resigned from the board and the board went back to their view of Peterborough”.

One vocal board member pushed for stronger political stands on community issues. The Manager and others were more cautious, agreeing the institution could not remain neutral, but not wanting to push the status quo too hard.

- “there’s always a tension between continuity and change if you want to frame it that way, some things we want to hold onto in the community and other things we want to let go and redefine. But there is something about the Division not explicitly defining what values need to be promoted but helping engage people in a

dialogue out of which might emerge a clearer sense of what those values are ... what we want to be at the heart of the community”

- “I think the only way there is going to be consensus in the community is by forcing people to think about things. And that’s only going to happen by us holding up a mirror (to the community)”
- “but who are we to decide what the values are at the heart of the community? ... besides if we declare ourselves it gives them something to shoot at”
- “I think there *are* some universal values that should be reflected in the way this community behaves ... like ethno-cultural tolerance and respect for diversity ... we (the Division) do not have a belief or value statement and I think it would be an interesting exercise to move towards trying to articulate what the shared beliefs are at the board level, at the institutional level”.

**Should the Division have such a statement? If so, how might it go about developing one and what challenges might be anticipated to confirming it?**

The Manager felt the organization must be pragmatic and watch for opportunities to push a more progressive agenda forward. He and others were less inclined than the board member to adopt broad principles and commitments. They pointed to the weakness of the Social Planning Council in the community. The Council had been stereotyped and marginalized by Council and by the business community as “radicals and troublemakers” which undermined their ability to move an agenda ahead. The fear was expressed that cultural issues would get tied up in this conflict.

### ***Management and Governance Issues***

The primary issue discussed here was the feasibility of the Division simultaneously forming part of the administrative and political structure of municipal government, while also acting as a representative body for community interests. A tension was identified between the problem-solving and conflict-resolution mode of the municipality, and the need for strong external advocacy - sometimes against city positions on cultural issues. Several members pushed for a resolution of this issue in structural terms. The Manager and several others took a more pragmatic view.

- “I remember something I read about municipal cultural policies which was the need to balance the benefits of arm’s length relationship to government with the need to work inside city structures better. This is what I was trying to create with the Division. The participation of the PAG or PACAC in the Division doesn’t mean they can’t continue to take independent stands on some issues ...but we also have the potential to speak with a collective voice when it’s in our interests...”
- “my attitude is always ‘if it ain’t broke don’t fix it’ ... understand the tensions, the paradoxes you’re managing but accept they’ll never be completely resolved.



The team wrestling with how to define outcomes for the Division. With the museum attendance figures, the numbers of school tours, etc., performance measures based on museum functions or activities, were relatively straightforward. But it was less clear what constituted "success" for the Division.

- "politics are a recurring theme here ... political outcomes are what the CHD delivers ... much of this is solving problems for the city ... if important issues come to Council in other areas they always take it under advisement and refer it to staff for study and sober second thought ... in the past when cultural issues came to Council they were either seen as too marginal to warrant study or Council didn't seem to have confidence staff could provide sound advice ... we can be valuable problem-solvers but it means playing politics on several levels ... if we can prove our value we can maybe justify additional resources"

But it was acknowledged:

- "recording and tracking Divisional activity is harder to record than attendance figures ... we need to find some way to report annually on Divisional accomplishments"

**Are there ways of creatively reporting on Divisional achievements and outcomes, especially those related to the second and third facets of the Division's responsibilities (support to the municipality and community cultural development)?**

**Could a reporting system for all cultural activity in the community be devised based on the above?**

This led to a discussion about the need to be reporting on cultural activities and resources throughout the community, and the possibility that one function of CHD could be to establish a consistent format and template for reporting on this activity - and a channel for funneling that information to the city.

The relationship between the museum and the Division also took up a great deal of time. The Manager agreed the Division needed to have a higher profile, but cautioned about underplaying the museum.

- "without the museum there is no CHD ... the city really still sees us institutionally ... connected with this building ... several years ago the Recreation Division gave up responsibility for managing facilities in order to focus more on planning, facilitating, and so on. They got almost entirely shut down in the last round of budget cuts. The view is 'how much can it really cost to facilitate a few meetings?' Also when the downsizing started it was the planners that were the first to go ... remember this is a municipality where the city budget is the corporate plan"
- "council makes lots of nice pronouncements about their commitment to culture and heritage .. but they would close us down in a minute if they had to"

*Recognizing the need to balance this "soft" planning function with "harder" facility maintenance and direct service delivery responsibilities seems astute.*

The composition and structure of the CHB was discussed. The Manager proposed thought be given to a more “federated model” in which half the members would continue to be appointed by the city and the other half elected by at an annual community forum.

The Cultural Strategic Plan for South Etobicoke (1997) organizes its recommendations around the following functional needs: community design, education and instruction, audience development, culture and economic development, cultural facilities and open space, cultural organizations infrastructure (coordinating administrative and governance structures), marketing culture, funding cultural initiatives, and tools for updating the strategic plan.

Rather than having people representing specific institutional interests the board might be organized functionally, with different sub-groups taking responsibility for different aspects of local cultural development - for example, cultural education, festivals and events, community-wide strategic planning, information and communications systems, advocacy, fundraising, etc.

There was also continue debate about whether museum staff should have their Divisional responsibilities formalized, or whether there was strength in not nailing down a rational model.

The Manager adopted a pragmatic perspective:

- “what we have is a really broad framework which I think everyone feels has some real strengths to it. It’s broad and flexible and there’s an ability to find whatever you want to find there. Rather than trying to come at it from the front-end and defining the Division in the abstract maybe it’s about becoming more aware of what activity falls into the museum and what is divisional. In part we’ll figure out the role for the Division by looking more carefully at what’s already been done on the ground”

Several team members, and the researcher, were uncomfortable with this “messiness”, pressing for a more systematic understanding of how things work and how people fit in.

### ***Leadership Issues***

The Manager’s leadership style was raised again as both a strength and a liability for the Division.

- “we need to grapple with this leadership question. It keeps coming up. It’s a real problem”
- “I think as a consensus emerges about the operating framework and priorities of the CHB (the Manager) is going to have to say how do I fit into this? What’s my role going to be? This is hard ... the Division is the lifeboat (the Manager) created for the PCMA ... he inflated it, people climbed on board and now we

need to decide which way to row”.

The Manager himself sent mixed signals, acknowledging the need to work more collaboratively, but demonstrating his inclination to be drawn back to more familiar ways of working.

*Is this definition of leadership compatible with working in more team-based, collaborative ways?*

- “I see an important part of my job as providing leadership and the analogy I like to use is that of an artistic director. That I have a vision and how that vision develops depends on input from staff and my perception of the community. And then I try to shape a program or a series of programs that reflect or advance that vision. And if at some point the board doesn’t agree with that vision then I either back off or it’s time for me to move on and the institution gets another artistic director who then brings their vision”
- “one of the distinctions I’ve tried to make is that I share leadership in terms of how the team works, how we work with the community, but the responsibility that’s harder to share is not leadership but management. In terms of the city, I’m the manager of the Division. That’s what I get paid to do. Some of those things are more difficult or impossible to share”.

*Being specific about the contexts in which consensual decision-making is appropriate and those in which it is not is important. The line is not always easily drawn*

Several team members agreed with the management/leadership distinction.

- “that’s helpful for me ... sort of collaborative direction setting but the management buck has to stop somewhere ... you can’t have shared leadership in stick handling things through the municipality ... somebody has to do that who knows the players”
- “the city not only does not encourage consensual decision-making it actively discourages it. There is very little communication between departments or divisions. And there is no decision-making between them either. It’s all various little empires and the dominant management style is autocratic as opposed to democratic ... it’s changing slowly but the people in senior positions - both council and staff - operate this way”.

Another dimension of leadership was revealed in an exchange between the pragmatic Manager and the more vocal and confrontational board member.

- “I remember the woman at the (Learning) Forum who talked about being a smooth stone ... less resistance” (Manager)
- “keep your head down you mean” (board member)
- “yes, but also adaptable”
- “don’t make waves ... that is just cop-out stuff. Sorry if that’s out of line”
- “I think what she was saying was not that you shouldn’t take positions but that she can be more effective in her job by not always taking confrontational stands on things. That there was a

*There are obviously no "right" or "wrong" answers to this debate. Cultivating the judgment needed to know when to take stands and when to accept compromise is an important facet of leadership.*

way to have the waters still flow down stream and get things done but not always to feel it has to be done in an atmosphere of confrontation”

- “... depends on whether you read that metaphor as the water being the status quo. That stream may need to have its direction changed. And being a stone that let’s the water flow over it is not going to change that direction”
- “but it may also not be productive to be the boulder or stone that takes the heroic stand ends up getting swept downstream. There may be another way to redirect the stream that takes a little longer ... its important to choose your battles and realize you’re likely more effective to be effective if you can reach consensus and get agreement to take small steps in the direction you want to move”

### ***Clarification of Team Task***

Through discussion the following goal statements for the team were identified:

- i. engage more people in the process of shaping a vision for the Division (i.e., needs assessment);
- ii. raise the public profile of the CHD;
- iii. identify priorities within the existing CHD mandate; and,
- iv. deal with internal administrative, governance, and resource allocation issues.

The team broke up into pairs, each one agreeing to work on one of the four goals. Appreciative Inquiry was used in each pairing to define propositions for moving ahead on the four goals. Each pair was to bring back a “provocative proposition” to the group as a whole on each goal.

The following four proposals emerged from this work:

- i. in order to engage more people a Culture and Heritage Festival should be organized, a high profile event that would involve every group possible;
- ii. in identifying Divisional priorities it was also suggested an event be organized, in this case a multicultural heritage festival;
- iii. to raise the Division’s profile it was proposed that a Divisional logo be developed that could be used by groups to promote events and signal support and encouragement from the CHD; further that at an award ceremony be organized (to also double as a fundraiser event) at which the work of the Division and other local cultural groups could be profiled;
- iv. to deal with administrative and governance issues it was proposed that the organization more clearly delineate Divisional and institutional roles and responsibilities; restructure the board by eliminating representation from local cultural organizations and replacing at least half the members (the other half still to be appointed by council) with elected representatives from the culture and heritage community, to be selected at an annual Culture and Heritage Forum. There was also the suggestion that

the Division push for a fixed percentage of tax to be dedicated to the work of the Division, similar to that of the library community.

Individual team members were recruited to be lead on the four proposals. The Manager offered to complete a critical path based on these priorities. The team determined that a presentation should be made to the Culture and Heritage Board (CHB) at its September meeting.

At the end of the afternoon the team conducted a team dialogue.

In the community dialogue the researcher commented that based on the first round of interviews he had expected the group to be further apart on some of the "vision-level stuff", and his surprise how close together people were on these issues. He said he thought some of this excitement seemed to dissipate in the afternoon when discussion turned to concrete details.

One team member said they felt just the opposite:

- "It's funny because I felt a lot more energetic this afternoon thinking about real concrete things ... Thinking about possibilities and ways of doing things. And I know that's me. I want to do a job and be able to see what to plan. The discussion this morning is important and meaningful but it's still a theoretical exercise to me. It's applying those ideas that gets me excited and interested. So it's when you started the timetable that I really started to get wakened up"

*My own analytical need to get at the "big picture" clarified wasn't shared by others and was forcing a level of analysis that wasn't helpful. Others had a clear enough grasp of the big picture to get on with it.- "ready, fire, aim" not "ready, aim, fire".*

*Also germane: "We can't think our way to new ways of acting, we can only act our way to new ways of thinking" (Orr, 1997).*

*Organizational change literature makes a strong point about groups needing to have concrete, early success to stay motivated. In retrospect many of the proposals that came forward from the retreat may have been too long-term; all were important and most quite concrete, but few that the team could see some quick results on*

Several other team members agreed that energy was higher when talking about concrete activities "rather than ideas and goals". One commented that they found the one-on-one interviewing and conversation at least as stimulating as group discussions

Another team member:

- "I'm really tickled at the thought that we're finally on to brainstorming about some concrete ideas and the direction we want to head is a direction of boosterism for the Culture and Heritage Board. It's like we've hit a point where we are feeling like this is a worthy thing and we really want to start pushing a high profile for it and giving energy to having it take its place in municipal affairs. I really firmly believe that culture and heritage in a lot of ways is the future of Peterborough. It doesn't have an awful lot left that can sustain it as a vibrant place. Culture and heritage is one of those things that could and I get excited when I see concrete steps being taken like let's plan an event, lets talk about recognition programs, lets hit those things"

## The Approaching Storm

The team met on September 5 to plan their presentation to the CHB the following week. It was clear momentum and continuity of interaction had been lost over the summer. In late August the Manager prepared a critical path summarizing the conclusions of the team retreat and establishing tasks, milestones and responsibilities of team members. But people were less engaged with issues than they had been at the retreat.

Frustration was expressed with the process that seemed to have involved a tremendous amount of talk and reflection, but little concrete action.

Two staff members were dealing with serious family illness which, in addition to the ongoing stresses of over commitment at work, was contributing to high levels of stress.

*The difficulty with information flow on the team, and in the organization more generally, keeps recurring in feedback.*

One board member expressed frustration about such long periods between meetings, and so little information or communication between meetings.

**Are there strategies the organization might try to address this issue of information flow?**  
**Are there some creative uses of technology that might help?**

When the Manager focused on the critical path, which people had received but not digested, anxieties were reduced and the team was able to move forward. But a level of frustration remained.

**This was a central insight, and especially important coming from someone who admitted difficulty delegating and investing time in involving others.**

The Manager proposed that rather than trying to do all the work the team had identified at the retreat they might use appreciative inquiry to involve more people to build a shared vision and commitment to the Division by interviewing key stakeholders.

**Is this still an operating assumption for the Division? How might it be built on?**

- “One of the challenges that we had as a team is that we keep trying to do it ourselves. And correct me if I’m wrong but I think the best use of our time and energy is to try to come up with a process to get other people to help do it. To involve more people in doing it ... I keep coming back to it’s nice to try to solve this problem myself or for use to try to solve it but then it’s only our voice and it’s not the community board or the board voice for that matter”.

The proposal was that the team would identify individuals to interview, including members of the CHB. The results of these interviews would be brought back and consolidated into a series of “provocative propositions”, part two of the appreciative inquiry process. The individuals interviewed would then be invited to a community meeting at which these propositions were tabled an

discussed. Someone compared this to “bringing the Learning Forum to Peterborough”

It was decided the team would take a number of issues to the board:

- i. an update on the team’s work to date;
- ii. a draft definition of culture and heritage;
- iii. the proposal regarding the use of Appreciative Inquiry for engaging more stakeholders
- iv. the initial proposal for a Divisional logo and a special event to build profile; and,
- v. some initial work on distinguishing the work of the PCMA and the Division.

Another team dialogue closed the meeting.

- “it’s getting easier ... we’re working better as a team ... I listen better”
- “we’re moving from solving problems to identifying tasks”
- “we’re beginning to share responsibility, not taking it all on ourselves ... we’ve changed from trying to figure-out everything about the Division and the board to designing a process for figuring it out”
- “our meetings are still too far apart ... we need to be prompted by someone between meetings ... we need to keep the momentum going”
- “I feel good about going away with concrete tasks”.

## **The Storm - The Cultural and Heritage Board Meeting**

The Manager requested an extended meeting of the CHB on September 12 to report on the team’s work. A memo distributed in advance of the meeting provided an agenda and background material on the team’s work for review. This included copies of: the critical path; the interview protocol including a brief description of Appreciative Inquiry; a chart intended to support an exercise aimed at distinguishing institutional (PCMA) from Divisional roles and responsibilities.

*At the time I thought “these guys have really hit their stride”. You spoke clearly about the issues, worked as a team, were all involved in discussion with the board. I remember thinking wow! Then is all came unglued .....*

One team member provided background on the LEARNING FORUM project, describing it more clearly than the Research Team was ever able. Another team member presented a definition of culture and heritage, dealing with an abstract and difficult issue with great clarity. Another team member had prepared a presentation on appreciative inquiry that was superb. Here the team was “firing on all cylinders”.

Then, several long-standing members of the board, including the Chair, “revolted”.

- “We are putting the cart before the horse. We have accomplished nothing that in any way responds to why the board was put forward. Why the board was changed in the first place. ... That’s why I’ve been contacting people over the summer because I’ve felt we’ve been sitting here for two years .. we can’t even define what the board is to our own satisfaction. If we can’t define it ourselves and we can’t find our own direction and what this board feels is its mandate, how can we add fifty other people to the mess?”

*There seemed to be many factors at play here:.. problems of communication between staff and the board, differing views on the priorities, some sense that the Board was not playing as active and high profile a role as several had hoped.*

*Another factor may have been simply different views of the world. Several of the board members seemed to be like concrete projects and found the discussion about appreciative inquiry and definitions of culture just too theoretical.*

*I wondered after the meeting if the order of presentation might have made a difference. Would the board have reacted differently had the team started with the more concrete issues about separating museum and the Divisional activity, and on the tangible event. The discussion of appreciative inquiry, coming hard on the heels of the discussion about the definition of culture, may just have been too much to digest.*

The team responded, defending the process. It was clear the board was not aware of the many of the initiatives undertaken by staff. These communications issues seemed compounded by some personality conflicts between the Manager and the chair. The meeting resulted in all the issues that had been brought forward by the team being tabled. There was great frustration on the part of everyone.

A member of the team described the encounter as follows in notes from the meeting.

- “... the meeting was a disaster. Board members responded hostilely to the concept of conducting Appreciative Inquiry interviews and felt that the approach we advocated involves too much talk and not enough action. ‘We already know who we are, let’s just do it’. Some board members seemed resentful that they hadn’t been already involved in the process every step of the way. On the whole it seemed we took a big step backwards in our task, as it seemed the most important job ahead of us now is to mend fences”

## **The Aftermath**

The team met several times through the fall to continue work on the goals identified at the retreat. But the momentum and confidence of the group carried into the September 12 meeting seemed diminished. The team expressed frustration that more wasn’t able to be accomplished between meetings and people continued to be frustrated with the lack of time available to move work ahead.

Nonetheless, a great deal of productive work took place.



Appreciative inquiry interviews were conducted with the mayor, the Chair of the Social Planning Council, the local Chamber of Commerce, a Quality of Life Coalition, and with a newly formed committee leading the Greater Peterborough Area (GPA) 20/20 exercise, a community economic development strategy. All generated valuable insights and suggestions.

There was some slippage on planning for the special event but eventually an ad hoc committee on the special event met and proposed an evening event with live entertainment that would celebrate recent cultural accomplishments and serve as a fundraiser for the Division. There was considerable enthusiasm about these concrete plans.

It was decided to use appreciative inquiry to interview and “recruit” a steering committee for the proposed Culture and Heritage Forum scheduled for the spring.

There was also work done on the administrative and governance issues of separating Divisional and institutional functions and staff responsibilities. There was also good thinking done on distinguishing Divisional activity on the basis of those that staff were expected to take a lead on, those responsibilities fell to the board to lead, and those that were shared. The board was not being used effectively, too much of its time was being taken up with administrative matters and not enough with external advocacy, networking, profile building - all activities they were anxious to undertake.

*In retrospect the Researcher might have clarified that teams operate in different modes for different purposes. Starhawk (1987) identifies four different groups tied to four different group purposes: task groups, support groups, intimate groups, learning groups. The team was working in all four at various points in the process but came to associate LEARNING FORUM with only the learning and reflective activity.*

In January 1997 the team decided the formal team process should “go into hiatus”. The team had come to see the research solely in terms of the reflection and reporting on the team’s learning style and interaction, rather than also on the tasks themselves.

The team discussed the upcoming Reflection Forum. There was only moderate interest expressed in participating. The notes from the meeting report the following:

- “Members expressed growing frustration with the project, the process and the rate of progress. We’ve had virtually no contact with the other groups (following the Learning Forum). It was suggested that the focus for the Forum should have been with different types of institutions rather than other museums. The team was reminded that we are attempting to do this through our application of appreciative inquiry. The team felt increased pressures both internally (within the group) and externally (from the September board meeting) to move from planning and analysis to action: from talking about it to actually doing it. It was suggested that by following a more rigid process that we’ve lost the flexibility to respond quickly to change in the political and economic environment and opportunities. There was general recognition that by trying to apply the practices of the Learning Forum to our task both processes suffered. The group is very product oriented and there is no sense of personal fulfillment because there is little tangible product at this stage. There was

**Were there other factors that accounted for the cooling that the learning history hasn’t captured?**

**Are they insights that might**

**inform other processes and activity in the institution today?**

consensus that our dissipating energies be focused on the Special Events Committee and the Cultural Forum. The team should meet only to support and/or advance these projects or to honor its basic commitments to the research project”.

**Recurring Dialogue With Manager - 1997-98**

Bi-monthly (on average) conversations with the Manager continued through 1997-98. During this time the Manager was steadily building support at City Hall and in the community for the work of the Division, this despite continued financial pressures on all municipal departments. He believed one reason for the growing trust and support was that

“I wasn’t seen as a team player before, now I’m seen as an ally”.

The most significant development for the CHD during 1997 was the resignation of the Director of the Peterborough Public Library and the Manager’s appointment as the (part-time) manager of the institution. The relationship between the city and the Library Director and Library Board had grown progressively worse through the budget cutting and downsizing process. In the Manager’s words.

- “They just don’t get it, they haven’t read Politics 101 ... they’re marginalizing themselves, winning the battle and losing the war”.

*This seems paradoxical given some of the tensions over leadership style at the Division. It may have been that the Manager had begun to apply some of the lessons he had drawn from LEARNING FORUM.*

The Manager was seen as someone who could manage internal operations in a more collaborative and democratic fashion. The institution was organized in a hierarchical way, with narrow staff specializations and little ability to work outside these areas. He described the organizational culture at the Library as “closed and insular”.

He decided to use appreciative inquiry as a method for interviewing library staff, and securing their buy-in to the change in the organization.

*It was clear during this period that the Manager’s professional satisfaction was being drawn increasingly from the broader work with the Division, in particular his work with the municipality, and less with the museum. He acknowledged this one day in reporting that in a conversation with a museum colleague the colleague had observed that the Manager would surely be moving on soon to a larger institution. He replied that the more exciting challenge for him was in the municipal arena, integrating culture and heritage issues more effectively into community*

The Manager was also seen by the city as someone with a more community-oriented approach to library services, a priority if it was to build support and the possibility of alternate sources of revenue. A strategic planning process led by the Manager involving library staff and board identified the following priorities: higher public profile, stronger community links and stronger advocacy, improved ties with city council, updating of internal policies and procedures - all similar priorities for the CHD.

In return for taking on management responsibilities at the library the museum was provided backfill money to enable part-time staff person to be hired to take up some of the administrative and other responsibilities of the Manager.

Linking the library and the Division more closely also opened up opportunities for synergy. The library staff’s expertise in information technology brought valuable additional skills and perspectives to those existing in the Division. Web site linkages and support was

*development.*

*The Manager was being validated in his new role in the Division. However, other staff found themselves in a changed context, and one for which not all felt prepared. Others were not getting the same reinforcement and validation as was the Manager. He reported that morale was not great.*

negotiated with a local Internet service provider; this brought a donation of hardware and free Internet service to interested organizations. The Manager was able to represent the interests of a network of stakeholders in negotiations with the local company.

Other accomplishments (not exhaustive) during the 1997-98 period, organized according to the three broad CHD roles:

Responsibilities related to *management of PCMA*:

- continued praise for the museum's education programs;
- upgraded PCMA (and CHD) web site, and growing community use of the site;
- the Archives assumed formal responsibility for the historical records of the City Clerk;
- leadership with a consortium of community museums in Ontario in the production of traveling exhibitions for rotational use through their own institutions and for use by other museums (an initiative funded by the federal government);
- improvements to the physical plant - an upgraded driveway and a new roof for the museum;
- construction of the Heritage Pavilion outside the museum to serve as a site for museum programming and a performing arts venue;
- secured resources for part-time Program Assistant, Museum Clerk and contract cleaners.

Responsibilities related to providing *support and assistance to the City* on culture and heritage issues:

- the inclusion of a CHB member on the Civic Awards Committee;
- coordinated input from the culture and heritage community to the GPA 20/20, a key municipal priority (the cultural community had a larger turnout at community meetings than any other sector);
- the addition of representation on the CHB from the library and the Native Friendship Centre;
- successful mediation of a conflict between a downtown property owner and a cultural organization that would have meant the loss of a performing arts space (served as mediator at the request of the City);
- protected Community Project grants slated for elimination by the City; a representative of the CHB invited to join the Committee;
- at the request of the United Way assisted in adjudicating community grants;
- at the request of the mayor joined a Waterfront Development Taskforce, a key municipal priority linked to downtown redevelopment;
- at the request of the Mayor appointed to the City's Millenium Project;
- more applications were received to serve on the CHB than any other municipal board or advisory committee;
- the Manager was invited to give a presentation and lead discussion at a meeting of the Mayor's Committee on the Future of Peterborough;

- the CHD and the library moved from the bottom to the top of the list of agencies in line for computer upgrading;
- mediated negotiations between the city and the Peterborough Art Gallery that resulted in the Gallery returning to previous funding levels,

Responsibilities related to *community cultural planning and development*:

- supported and facilitated a cultural tourism and joint marketing strategy for local culture and heritage groups under the umbrella of “Celebrate Canada in the Kawarthas (this initiative was seen as one of the most positive concrete results to emerge from the GPA 20/20 process);
- organized and facilitated a “Culture Matters” Roundtable for the visiting provincial Liberal culture critic;
- organized and coordinated a Mayor’s Reception for the visiting Ontario Minister of Culture;
- participated in planning the Pathway of Fame, an initiative to recognize local artists and community leaders;
- coordinated a meeting with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to organize public art and heritage exhibitions in a local MNR building.

*How does this list of accomplishments make you feel about the work of the PCMA and the work of the Division?*

*Do pride in the accomplishments in one carry over into the other? If not, what prevents them from doing so?*

The Manager was increasingly sought out by cultural organizations to serve as a “broker and facilitator in dealing with the city”.

The Cultural Forum took place as a joint initiative with the Peterborough Arts Umbrella. Although not ruling out the possibility of continuing the Forum as an annual event the Manager felt some of these ongoing activities and relationship building might well have as significant an impact as a more formal process.

He reflected on the team’s frustration with the research process:

- “in light of all the uncertainty and financial pressures there is no time to sit back and reflect or plan, we have to seize opportunities as they arise and run with them. It’s hard to stay focused on rethinking your mandate when you have doubts if you’ll even exist tomorrow”. He did acknowledge that he felt the Division was still trying to figure-out “what business we’re in. It was easier in the museum, we had some sense of the museum business. I think people are less clear just exactly what the business of the Division is, but I think we’ll figure it out as we do it”.

*The pressures are real, and impossible to deny. But the best managers somehow find ways of creating the time and “psychic space” needed to reflect and plan.*

*The Manager acknowledged that one of the reasons he was as prepared as he was to exploit opportunities with the new Division was because he had spent time reflecting, “theorizing” about*

Despite the disillusionment he felt the experience had been positive. There had been a need for

*issues of local cultural governance over many years. This combined with his involvements outside the community in the museum and heritage fields gave him access to new ideas and perspectives that increased his capacity to act effectively and decisively when opportunities arose. Leadership was possible because time for reflection and new ideas.*

- “much better communication within the Division about our activity and the larger context for the change in mandate and the project has forced us to confront this ... I think we’re better for being involved, but you can’t assess the changes overnight”

He reflected that as a result of the process he felt

- (he was) “listening better and delegating more ... if I’m to survive in the new position I have to delegate more, give away more responsibilities”.

In meetings with staff, the CHB and community groups,

- “rather than managing the meeting and assuming responsibility for follow-up I ask them what they want to accomplish and help lead a discussion about the options for doing so”

Again on the Learning Forum and follow-up:

*The answer to the first question I believe is no. The link between the concrete, real task facing the institution was critical.*

*Might it have worked better if teams had been working on similar tasks? Possibly. This was rejected because we didn’t want to force institutions into a pre-defined box.*

*Several things were learned from the Learning Forum. First, technology can supplement but not replace physical proximity and the opportunity for people coming together face-to-face at regular intervals to renew relationships, learn from one another and generally generate enthusiasm.*

*Second, that communities can’t be willed into existence. If there is a felt need for them they will form. The project failed to generate a sufficient experience of felt need.*

*The research might also have been clearer about was the distinction between “single-loop” and “double-loop” learning. In the more familiar single-loop learning a group tries to understand specific issue or problem and attempt to solve it. In double-loop learning*

- “I think we really got confused about what were Learning Forum activities and what were our tasks ... in other words could you have had the Forum without each team having specific tasks. I think it might have worked better if teams had been working on a similar task ... human resource issues, revenue strategies, new community expectations”.

*the team moves back through the process they've just used to solve the problem to try and understand the assumptions that lay behind the group's thinking. Double loop is more difficult and demanding, and not productive for everyone. The bias of the researchers was that many of the intractable problems facing museums required the kind of fundamental re-framing of issues double-loop learning makes possible. But people must have confidence they are first dealing with concrete problems. At the very least the researchers might have been clearer about the distinction and possibly have identified our hypothesis more clearly.*

*We all cling to the (false) hope that learning and change will be straightforward and linear. The world doesn't cooperate.. Cooper et al. (1997) refers to learning as "slow sedimentary activity"; a seed planted one moment may not germinate until years later. This is difficult to keep in mind and appreciate in the pressure of day life and work. "psychic space"*

Due to the high number of people wanting to serve on the CHB the Division was able to benefit from a "crop" of young, energetic community representatives who were bringing energy and fresh perspectives to the Division. The Manager describes them being better able and more interested in larger policy perspective, more "big picture people", and interested in getting involved in a hands-on way in specific activity. They were also "young Liberals" more connected to the new mayor than the old. At the Manager's urging Board members were increasingly replacing him on key committees, such as the Waterfront Development Committee. He saw his job increasingly as

- "building a web ... it's about public relations, its about politics, its about building relationships".

There were still challenges bringing cultural issues into municipal government's consciousness. Despite the strong turnout from cultural groups in the GPA 20/20 planning exercise there was no mention of cultural issues in the vision and strategy. There also continued to be stereotyping and balkanizing of different interests in the community. For example, the Social Planning Council did participate in the strategic planning process but came to feel, with some justification, that the process had been "captured" by the business community.

One indication of the change in perception of the Division was reflected in coverage in the local paper. At the beginning of 1997 the Manager was still being called the Manager of the Museum, even when he was doing Divisional business. By the beginning of 1998 he was described as “the city’s leading cultural bureaucrat”.

The cultural area was the only area in the municipality where there were recommendations for increases in budget in the 1998 budget review process. During the Division’s intervention in support of restoring cuts to the Peterborough Art Gallery there was some discussion about the possibility of the institution reporting through the CHD. The ideas were rejected as premature but there was also concern expressed at city hall about the Manager having too many facilities to manage. As the Manager commented reporting relationships were not the same as line management. Council still had difficulty separating the Divisional planning function and reporting relationships from functional operations. The “edifice complex” was still alive and well.

In light of the facility-bound perceptions of the city he wondered “how do we put a building around the Division?”

The difficulties signaling the unique work of the Division also reinforced the need to find ways of reporting on Divisional activities in a more powerful and compelling way that might help challenge these perceptions

This led the Manager to wonder if the time had come for him to move to his office out of the museum and library to in city hall, in order that “I’m seen as more of a city person”. He had considered this step a year before and rejected it as premature. He now felt it might help to change perceptions and build support for the view that as he took on more city responsibilities some additional resources were needed at the museum.

### **Third and Final Interviews**

The Peterborough Story, as it had been compiled to this point in the research, served as the basis of one part of the final interviews. utilizes the Learning History format to present the results of research to date as the basis for final interviews with team members. On the basis of the Story People were asked to reflect on when the team had been at its best, when the Division had been at its best, and when they as individuals had been at their best during the Story. So as not to filter out negative facets of the process people were also asked to identify the most difficult or frustrating moment, and anything they felt in retrospect might have been done to overcome those frustrations.

The second part of the interview focused on three more focused issues and themes.

Interviews were conducted with the four full-time staff and one of the original three board members that formed the original learning team.

## General Response to Learning History

### Positive Response to Learning History

All team members found the Learning History a valuable synthesis of the team's work, both the substantive issues and challenges facing the CHD in fulfilling the mandate, and insights gained into organizational learning and team dynamics. Negative feelings about the process had fallen away. People seemed pleased and proud of the distance they had traveled as a team during the period covered by the Learning History.

- "the story is beautifully documented ... it brought back lots of ideas and insights from the process that I'd lost sight of ... we need to review it as a team ... it isn't enough that you're reviewing this with us as individuals"
- "this could serve as an extremely valuable resource for the board ... many people still don't have enough context or history on where the Division came from and some of the issues it faces"
- "this is a frank, fair assessment ... I found it hard to put down ... I want to use it with my students ... it provides an accurate picture of what happened to this museum ... but it also serves as a really useful introduction to museum leadership issues, to the evolution of museum roles in the community ... to governance issues... it was also good therapy for me ..."

The Learning History rekindled interest in discussing issues facing the organization, together with matters related to interpersonal relationships and team dynamics.

### Structured Questions

#### i. Team at its Best

This question evoked fond reflections on the learning process. Earlier cynicism and alienation about "too much reflections" had fallen away.

*This response came as a surprise. This team member was the person at the retreat who commented that she had been energized by pragmatic discussion about action and discouraged by "abstract and theoretical" questions like definitions of culture and heritage. When and how people learn is unpredictable; ideas may surface at one moment but only later take on relevance and meaning for the learner.*

- "at the retreat ... especially when we were discussing different definitions of heritage and culture ... that felt like we were really together as a team ... people were relaxed and comfortable and productive ..."



*This response from the Manager is also revealing. I felt the board meeting had been a major blow to the confidence and momentum of the team. This reminds us again that the meaning and significance of events are never fixed or static. Meaning turns on the needs of the observer in a specific context at a specific moment in time.*

*The individual played a grounding role for the team, continually urging it to return to focus on pragmatic, everyday concerns and problem-solving. This relates to differing leadership roles and requirements in the organization addressed below.*

- “we were at our best at the Culture and Heritage Board meeting ... we were all pumped ... everyone was performing well ... we were supportive of one another ... and we took the setback in stride ... this last part was as important as the first part for me ... it demonstrated we were a team and could come back from a setback...”
- “we were at our best when we were pragmatically solving problems together ... getting the work done ... we were also good when we were supporting (the Manager) and helping him stop second-guessing himself”

## ii. Division at its Best

People responded enthusiastically and with pride in the achievements of the Division. This was the case even among those staff whose professional identities had been more closely tied to the museum and to traditional museum functions. Confusion regarding Divisional roles and operations had not disappeared but there was greater optimism and commitment expressed to resolving them. A common theme was the centrality of the Division’s role in building relationships and networks in the community.

- “... Celebrate Canada in the Kawarthas<sup>4</sup> ... it was a concrete event, it built profile for the Division, for culture and heritage issues in the city generally and for participating organizations ... it showed the benefits of collaboration ... it’s about building relationships”
- “... a meeting last week of educators from cultural organizations in the area ... 21 people came out ... it showed that a lot of work building relationships with people over the years paid off .. at the time I wondered if the time invested was worth it ... this proved it was”
- “during the Roy Studio Collection<sup>5</sup> ... here you had a volunteer committee of the CHB coming together to lead a community fundraising campaign, raising a lot of money ... with no previous experience with fundraising ... it built profile for the Division ... we didn’t succeed at the time but it showed the board and the community could pull together .. the irony is we may still get the collection”.

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<sup>4</sup> A joint marketing and promotion project facilitated by the CHD.

<sup>5</sup> The campaign to purchase a local historical photography collection.

*The different kinds of accomplishments people took pride in also reflected the different leadership roles identified in the Starhawk (1987) framework, discussed below:*

*This individual saw the interpersonal issues more clearly than anyone else but was unable to raise them in the organization. At the Learning Forum, for a variety of reasons - including the Managers' acknowledgment of his own vulnerability this team member was able to overcome these inhibitions. It was not to last.*

*This shift seems an incredibly important symbol of the changed perception of the organization on the part of the City.*

*This seems an important insight. The Manager identified the three board members because they were seen as younger members, with fresh perspectives and new ideas. This was a logical decision at the time but did serve to reduce buy-in from others on the board more connected to the past traditions of the organization and the community.*

### iii. Personal Best

People were more hesitant and tentative in offering moments when they themselves had been at their best.

- "last week when all the educators came together ... this is the stuff that really interests me ... also when we were confronting the personal issues at the Learning Forum ... that stuff is scary and we were confronting it together ... I was at my best when I was hopeful we could change the way we worked together ... I'm not so sure anymore we can ..."
- "getting the clerk's records was the most satisfying ... we've built a lot of credibility with the city in the last year ... we'd tried (to get the record) before and the city stonewalled ... this time they saw us more *as part of the city* ... so now in their minds all we were doing was changing the location ... this is symbolic ... the most personally rewarding thing for me is my role professionalizing the archives ... they used to be pretty hokey ... mostly used by genealogists but not really serving others in the community ... like academics and scholars, other researchers ... this has changed"
- "during the Library strategic plan ... I took a lot of what I'd learned from our process and from the museum and was able to apply it ... I think I can now take some of what I've learned at the Library and bring it back to the museum and the Division"
- "when I was able to get together with other people who do my job ... other curators and talk about job specific stuff ... I was disappointed we didn't have more time to do this at the Learning Forum".

### iv. Worst Moment

There were no generalized complaints about the process overall, such as "too much reflection". Instead the focus was on quite specific incidents that had been setbacks for the team and its work.

- "the Culture and Heritage Board meeting ... I couldn't believe the response ... we made a mistake only working with keepers on the board ... it we'd had one of the old guard who were more skeptical and who reacted so negatively at the meeting we might not have been taken by surprise ... we might have built some buy-in from the old guard".

*My own interpretation of this moment was very different and more positive. I felt the Manager's intent was to signal that he felt he did feel supported, while still acknowledging he had to learn to work more collaboratively. The more decisive negative moment in terms of undermining trust from my perspective was the Manager's "I may have to fire you someday" comment of the Manager later in the meeting.*

- "at the Learning Forum just after we got the scary personal stuff on the table ... I felt really inspired ... then the Manager shut it down ... I said something about his leadership style leaving him alone at the top ... and he said he didn't feel alone ... I thought he was shutting me down ... that's when I lost hope about us working together differently"
- "my frustrations are never with people ... the worst moment was the downsizing ... here we are going through this really progressive process that's invigorating for everyone and then you get hit with the cuts ... but I'm convinced that had we not been so outward looking as an institution we'd be a part-time facility today ... and maybe not have any of the current staff ..."
- "the moment (the Manager) announced he was going to manage the Library ... we're still not clear how to deal with his responsibilities ... the delegation and responsibility is not clear"

#### **v. Overall Accuracy of the Learning History**

People generally felt the story accurately captured the experience the team had moved through. There were certain elements they felt might have received more emphasis.

- "the story doesn't really describe education programs or give enough indication of how much work goes into developing programs ... I disagree that exhibitions are mostly collections driven ... many of the temporary exhibitions are brought in from other institutions ... we build a program around every temporary exhibition.. it's a collaborative process with a group of interpreters"
- "greater emphasis on the Fleming program ... it's an incredibly important part of the organization ... we couldn't do what we do without them ..."
- "the deaccessioning incident in the 80's needs to be emphasized more ... it was really a blow to the organization ... our credibility suffered a big blow ... we had a lot of rebuilding of trust to do ... the Manager has done that"
- "more on the management and leadership issues ... this is a really important part of the picture for me ... the Learning History has made me reflect more on this again".

*This is a useful reminder when there is a tendency to disparage the growth in professional and operational sophistication at the expense of probing missions and "first principles"*

#### **vi. Overriding Themes from the Interviews**

##### **Significance of Group Dynamics**

There was no explicit prompt for people to reflect on the team's working style and group dynamics. But people nevertheless felt compelled to reflect on these issues. Comments reflected pride that some progress had been made, while acknowledging there were still problems to address.

*This comment has enormous resonance for the shift in perspective that some people, including me, had at the Learning Forum. For example, valuing silence, greater humility, "taking the temperature down" and respect for the views of the other, among others need to achieve is a major barrier to thinking and relating to others. The observation that it is deeply rooted in the culture, is also insightful.*

*The practical constraints in small organizations are an important reality check in considering alternative work models.*

*This is a valid criticism of the story. Although the story points to problems of traditional leadership style, in some ways it fell victim to the very models it criticized.*

*This seems an extraordinarily telling observation of the isolation of activities, as well as a practical suggestion for getting at change - i.e., the review of job descriptions.*

- "we *are* communicating better ... the Manager *has* changed ... he now asks at the beginning of meetings who wants to chair? we still don't have enough meetings ... but when we do they're better ... (the Manager's) trouble is he just thinks too fast ... he sees an issue and the best and fastest way to deal with it and it's just really tempting to say 'here's what we should do' ... he's trying not to do this as much but when you see your way through something it's hard to keep silent ... sometimes the group will find its way through ... sometimes it won't but you have to let it try ... we all have to have more humility about having the right answers ... we all have such a personal need to achieve ... to get recognition for our work as individuals ... it's so deep in the culture it's really hard to fight"
- "we still have issues to get back out on the table ... the leadership issues that came up at the Learning Forum ... we need to get back to this ... but we need some kind of skilled facilitator ... it not easy to do on your own ... you need someone with specific skills"
- "we still have issues of trust to face ... it's a lot better than it used to be ... but it's still not there yet ..."
- "we still work in isolation ... in a small institution everyone is so busy we just end up saying 'OK I'll do this, you do that' ... you divide up the responsibilities instead of thinking about how we might function as a team ... it tends to separate you because it seems the most efficient use of time ... it isn't always right but that's what happens"
- "it read like an accurate description of the process ... my only criticism is that the voice of the Manager is more prominent than other staff ... I'd have liked to see a little better balance"

### **Functional versus Mission Focus**

The tensions between traditional functional responsibilities and a more mission-driven organization continue. Several staff with specific functional responsibilities argued, convincingly, for not "throwing out the baby...", a better balancing of functional and mission-driven focus.

- "we do function as a cross-functional team around some of the public programs ... but with collections issues you have more specialized attention ... both the museum collection and the archives ... there are issues of professionalism and the integrity of the collections that we can't lose sight of ... it's important that city hall and the community see that not just anyone can walk in off the street and do these jobs"
- "no one on staff has ever seen an education program ... they really don't know what I do ... they don't know what goes into these programs ... the choice of temporary exhibitions really falls to (the curator) ... it's in her job description ... sometimes we talk about possibilities .. but it's really her job ... we could be collaborating more planning exhibitions"

Yes, yes, yes.

*This was a new, and important, insight. Again emotional issues proved inseparable from more "rational" forces for blocking change.*

*Several suggestions related to staff's relationship to the CHB.*

*Although there was hesitancy in formalizing Divisional roles earlier in the process the time may now be right to revisit this decision through mechanisms like job descriptions.*

*An educational function for the Division is in keeping with the shift in cultural planning addressing the functional to needs of the local cultural system, see categories in south Etobicoke Cultural Strategic Plan (above).*

- "it isn't just about missions and organizational theory ... it's about who we are as individuals and how we work together ..."

An unanticipated link was made between professional insecurities and the functional focus.

- "some of the staff feel insecure about our degree of professionalism ... I see students coming out of the Fleming program with all these skills and all this talent and I think it makes us feel "what do I really know?"

### **Institutional (PCMA) and Divisional Roles**

People were still struggling with how to balance roles in the museum and the Division. But rather than simply analyzing the problem concrete suggestions emerged about what might be done.

- "staff still feel pretty isolated from the board ... I've only been to two board meetings in two years ..."
- "from the perspective of the board I think the staff with the exception of (the Manager) still think of themselves mostly as staff of the museum not the Division ... we still need to do some work here"
- "we need a sub-committee of the board to deal just with museum issues ... the Culture and Heritage Board needs to focus on larger issues ... not get dragged into the detail of the museum ... but there *are* museum issues we need to focus on ... PCMA should be like the other organizations represented on the board ... each of them have their own boards or management committees ... the museum should too"
- "we can still do more work just bringing the different groups together ... building the network ... I'd like to see a bigger role for both PACAC and the Art Gallery in the Division"

Other practical suggestions and observations:

- "we need to be looking at the possibility of Fleming students helping with the work of the Division as well as the museum"
- "we need to go back to look at job descriptions ... these really haven't been reviewed since the Division was established ... revisiting job descriptions might help us get at the separation of functions... might help us look at ways of working together differently ... it could also help clarify Divisional responsibilities ... the Division needs more of a operational structure"
- "(re. the meeting of area educators) ... I was confused because I saw this as me doing the work of the Division but the Manager said afterwards the Division didn't have any mandate for education ... that this was institutional ... I thought I was doing the work of the Division .. and was happy to be doing it".
- "the board has also begun to talk about a cultural master plan and I find that an exciting prospect ... we still aren't functioning cohesively as a board ... I think the planning might help us pull together"

## Priority Setting

There was much more confidence and determination on the part of all staff to make choices and establish priorities, and specific suggestions for how to do so.

*The eagerness of staff to be more involved in Divisional planning is a striking change from the beginning when anxiety about increased workloads overshadowed all other considerations.*

- "... we have too ambitious an exhibition schedule ... we invest a huge amount of work developing programs and then sometimes the exhibitions are only here for a few weeks ... we don't exploit them as much as we could for attendance, revenue ..."
- "... once a year at least we should review what we said we'd do, what we did, what things we did that we didn't expect, and what we want to do next year ... both staff and the board need to do this ... staff don't interact with the board enough"
- "the Division is spread too thin ... (the Manager) at first felt we had to build the profile of the Division at the city ... so we got involved in everything ... sitting on this committee, that task force ... we have enough credibility now to say 'no ... we'll pass on that one ... I have these things on my plate that are more important' ... I think our involvement with many projects is pretty shallow ... they're not really our initiatives ... the staff and the board need to more involved in priority setting"
- "we need someone at city hall who can focus exclusively on all these city projects and committees, that should be the focus of (the Manager's) job ... we need more of an operational structure for the Division"
- "we're still not facing the resource issue and the level of activity ... we're still trying to do too much and keep too many people happy ... we need to identify what the priority issues in the community will be over the next year and commit to them ... then when the board or the city come and say 'here ... do this' we need to be able to say 'no that's not a priority now' ... the work in the community is Divisional ... we need a clearer separation of institutional and Divisional work"

The need for priority setting was linked in the mind of one member with the need to be able to report more clearly on outcomes in both the museum and the Division. The latter were still felt to be more difficult.

*This is revealing. Numbers of visitors, exhibits, education programs are not outcomes, but rather outputs. They describe the activity undertaken but not the impact or results of that activity in terms of public benefit. Much of the reporting of performance in museums and other cultural organizations remains focused on outputs rather than more meaningful outcomes or public benefits. This is again related to*

- "we knew what the outcomes were we were trying to achieve for the museum ... numbers of visitors ... exhibitions, education programs ... we're a lot less clear what they are for the Division ... maybe if were clearer we'd be able to define priorities ... we might also be clearer about how to report on the activities of the Division ... it's hard to capture what the deliverables are for the Division"

*the traditional functional definition of organizational identity in museums.*

*This is not to minimize the difficulty capturing the outcomes of the Division, which is a recurring theme in discussions.*

**Can you think of some way to approach the issue that might also provide a framework for reporting cultural activity across the community?**

**Are there ways of addressing these leadership issues in the absence of new money to hire a replacement Manager at the museum?**

## **Management and Leadership**

The Manager reflected on these issues at some length.

- “(the Learning History) made me reflect again about differences at the two institutions .. at the museum I feel like I’m still micro managing ... paying more attention to the details of operations .. where as at the Library it feels more like macro management ... more big picture stuff.. both are needed ... it’s not either/or ... I find moving back and forth between the two gives me perspective on both”
- “I think about managing as a continuum of activity ... from planning to organizing to leading to controlling .. you need to be doing all these ... I also think about the skills of a manager ... you need conceptual skills, technical skills, people skills ... no one on staff (at the museum) has all these things .. but there is a mix of skills there”
- “there is a leadership vacuum at the museum .. I’m not sure what the solution is ... people don’t seem willing or able to assume different roles .. ”

Leadership issues were also an issue and a concern for staff..

- “morale suffers because there’s a vacuum of leadership ... the Manager’s more tied up at the Library and we don’t get as much of this focus ... I feel the difference when’s he’s not here ... we need more opportunities to get together to work through issues and to get our frustrations on the table”
- (the Manager) is only here half as much as he used to be because of the Library and we haven’t fallen apart ... people can take on more responsibility ... but we’re stretched pretty thin ... and we still work pretty much on our own”

## **Managing Change**

This theme was the primary focus of the Manager’s reflections.

- “I found myself thinking that the word ‘change’ isn’t precise enough ... it doesn’t convey the different kinds of change an

*These reflections seem an insightful summary of some of the central conclusions of the research.*

*Overall I was struck by how powerful a tool the Learning History had been as a catalyst for organizational learning. This raises the issue, noted repeatedly in the literature review, of the need to systematize organizational learning practices. More formal channels for sharing information, reflecting individually and collectively on issues, and acting on the results of this learning activity are needed in organizations. The call on the part of several staff for more frequent planning sessions for the staff and the board are one mechanism, but there need to be others that are integrated more into day-to-day work.*

*There continues to be a tendency on the part of most staff to underplay the importance of emotional issues and dynamics. People on the whole are still more comfortable examining questions related to organizational purposes, structures and priorities. One staff person, while thoughtful and insightful about these issues, seemed unable or unwilling to raise them with others.*

organization goes through ... I was reminded of the article on evolution and revolution in organizations ... change is never constant or predictable ... you can have slow evolutionary change like the evolution of the PCMA into the Division over time ... but then you get revolutionary change being thrust upon you ... like the Library changes, like budget cuts ... like losing staff ... you have to be ready for both and not be frustrated that things don't proceed in a linear way ... the world isn't like that although sometimes I think we think it will be"

## **vii. Summary of Themes**

Overall the interviews provided strong evidence of organizational learning having occurred. There was greater clarity about and support for the Divisional mandate. Although issues remained about and the balance of institutional and Divisional responsibilities there was consensus that all staff had responsibilities to both.

There had been progress in altering interpersonal dynamics. There was greater confidence on the part of staff to define priorities and insistence on the legitimacy of doing so. This represented a growth in willingness and readiness to challenge organizational authority. The Manager was working in more consultative and democratic ways, although seemingly with greater success at the Library, where he was less encumbered by organizational history.

Lateral communication across museum functions had improved but still had some distance to go.

## **Focal Research Themes**

### **i. Ideological Paradigms and Belief Systems**

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) matrix of ideological paradigms and belief systems formed the basis of these questions. It is a useful tool here because it speaks to two dimensions of the "identity crisis" facing the organization. The subjective-objective axis is relevant to



the traditional functional orientation of the museum, an orientation more focused on physical collections and care of these collections rather than on the knowledge and meaning that can be derived from them. The second axis addressing power relations is relevant to the fundamental conservatism and reluctance to challenge authority and local power relations that characterize most community museums.

### **Subjective-Objective Orientation**

Traditional museum purposes and practice would predispose individuals to fall on the objective side of the continuum; these are people for whom the world is an objective reality, where things can be understood in straightforward ways, and where causal relationships can be defined and understood. Three members of the team saw themselves just slightly on the objective side of the continuum. The two staff members responsible for collections were two of the three, the Manager the third.

The other two team members located themselves on the subjective side of the continuum, although only modestly so. These individuals signaled a greater interest in subjective experience and a more constructivist approach to human understanding. For them knowledge exists "in here" not "out there".

The objectivist perspective:

*The challenge of dealing with oral history and non-physical collections is a practical explanation of why most museums have concentrated physical artifacts.*

- "the central resource of the institution is the collection ... but the collection needs to be relevant to people ... and I realize the collection isn't representative of the community ... the story of unions, ethnic groups and other themes are missing ... a lot of this collecting is trickier ... involving oral histories etc. ... archives are actually further ahead on this than museums on dealing with these issues ..."

The more subjectivist view:

*The ice cream metaphor is powerful, especially so because it was made by the board member who had been the most critical of the conservative community values and norms in Peterborough.*

- "I'm more interested in exploring relationships and multiple meanings in the community ... I want to challenge people's comfortable assumptions about Peterborough ... it's a much more complex place than anyone acknowledges ... it has a much more sophisticated mentality than we give it credit for ... it takes real sophistication and care to interpret it... when I was working on the heritage inventory and collecting oral history I was amazed at the richness of insight ... at the public wisdom ... it was like Hagendaz ice cream ... the first few spoonfuls are great ... but then you get overwhelmed at how rich it is".

### **Challenging Power Relations**

All team members saw themselves challenging rather than accepting existing power relations. The two members who saw themselves on the subject side of the horizontal continuum were also the most

radical on the vertical power relations axis.

- “I see myself as a radical humanist ... I believe in the power of the group ... I don’t like hierarchies ... only responsibilities ... the municipality is all about power and hierarchies ... so I’ll never feel comfortable there”
- “the museum needs to challenge the community a little more ... but we need to be careful ... we should be able to challenge issues like racism ... to show this has never been an idyllic community ... the truth doesn’t usually come out in local histories ... I don’t believe museums should be radical but they should be open and have a social conscience”
- “I’m a radical structuralist ... I think the institution is too ... we keep trying to challenge and move away from the temple ... but we keep getting pulled back ... we need to understand why this is ... we are taking baby steps ... but I think in the right direction”

*This team member interpreted the question in the context of organizational dynamics and resources, rather than larger socio-political dynamics in the community.*

- “I respect authority ... I respect (the Manager) ... but sometimes challenge him ... so just slightly above the line ... I’d like to see the organization have more power ... more power would translate into more resources to do the job better”

*Personal convictions seemed to reflect some level of political consciousness. But as earlier there was very little indication given how a willingness to challenge authority might be translated into organizational or professional practice. Whether people would actually “walk the talk” in practice remains a question. Most people like to think of themselves as challenging authority but not everyone acts on these convictions.*

*The other issue raised by the vertical axis is the different approaches to challenging authority. One team member was a consistent and vocal critic of municipal authority. The Manager’s approach, in part due to professional responsibilities but also seemingly due to temperament, tended to be less confrontational. Which was more effective is open to debate. A local cultural governance system likely requires both - working effectively and in less confrontational ways inside government, and maintaining pressure from outside. Labonte (1990) refers to this as a “pincers strategy” aimed at facilitating change..*

*The collective portrait of the organization confirms the hypothesis that organizational reform is constrained by a dominant ideological paradigm of functionalism. Individuals are intellectually aware of the need for change but their individual pre-dispositions act against this reform.*

## ii. Leadership Needs and Requirements

Starhawk (1987) provides a mapping of differing leadership styles needed in organizations at different stages of their evolution.. A group or organization or even a movement moves through stages that have different goals, problems and pitfalls.

At different stages the roles and tasks of leadership vary. Starhawk assigns names to different leadership roles: crows, graces, snakes, dragons and spiders.

**Crows** fly high and see far, from above. They take the long view, see the long-term vision, keep in focus the group's goals. They suggest new directions, make plans and develop strategies, and look ahead to anticipate problems and needs.

**Graces** are continually aware of the group's energy, helping to raise it when it flags, and to direct and channel it when it is strong. Graces provide the group with fire: enthusiasm, raw energy, ability to expand. ... They furnish inspiration and generate new ideas.

**Snakes** are connected with feelings and emotions, and also fertility and renewal. Snakes cultivate an awareness of how people are feeling. ... (They) keep current with the group's gossip. They become aware early of conflict, and bring it into the open, where they may help to mediate or resolve problems. ... Snakes violate the censors, bring into the open what others may not see or prefer to keep hidden.

**Dragons** keep the group grounded, in touch with the practical, the realistic. Dragons also live on the boundaries of the wild, guarding hordes of treasures ... (they) guard the groups resources and its boundaries and articulate its limitations.

**Spiders** spins the web that connects points across a stretch of empty space. Every circle needs a centre, a way in which people feel connected. A group's centre may be a spiritual hear, a common goal or vision, or it many manifest in a person. (If assigned to a person) the spider is most effective ... not by monopolizing communication but by asking the questions that can create and strengthen, a true and complex web of interactions.

All team members described themselves as hybrids of two or more leadership styles. People's self-perception largely matched how others saw them and collectively the organization had a balance of leadership styles. The shortfall if one existed was a spider that knit the various leadership styles together; this is consistent with lack of lateral communication and information sharing.

One member saw themselves as a spider but more in the context of knitting relationships within the Division and the larger community, rather than more narrowly in the institution. Several staff members were pleased that their own perspectives were being acknowledged as part of this spectrum of types of leadership.

All but one member of the team saw the Manager as a crow. This person argued that crows were individuals with long-term vision, who could see twenty to twenty-five years out. Few organizations had crows according to this view. More common were leaders like the Manager who were effective strategists in the short- to medium-term, and strong at problem-solvers. These political and strategic insights were valuable in the municipal context

The Manager was described by this team member as someone whose strengths were his political and analytical instincts that operated in the short- to medium-term, skills that served him well in the municipal environment.

The Manager saw himself as “a crow caught in a web”, torn between providing the long-term view and knitting the various parts of the organization together. His sense was that the crow was the leadership style he had used the most in the past and he was trying to share that role to a greater extent with others and work harder at knitting people and activity together.

### **iii. Planning and Governance Structures**

Fielding and Couture (1998) describe a systems view of municipal planning that is used by the City of Winnipeg..

Municipal government is envisioned as a system of interrelationships between three principal groups: *the community, the city council and the civic administration*. There is a triangle of primary products that emerge from the relationships between these groups as a result of give-and-take between the parties: leadership, strategy, and value. Managing the city system is a matter of managing the processes that produce these three products.

Reaction to the system model of local planning and governance was mixed. Everyone felt it was helpful in mapping different dimensions of local planning and governance. But most felt that it grossly simplified the complexities of these processes. One said the dynamics were more “like a web” than what they interpreted as a linear and causal system model.

There was general consensus that city council had in the past been the weak link in planning and governance on issues of culture and heritage in Peterborough. There was some optimism that the new mayor and council might reverse this pattern and provide stronger leadership.

*This shift in the culture of City Hall that seems to have accompanied the new mayor and council is striking, and hopeful.*

- “the current council is stronger ... they refuse to get drawn into the minutia ... they have more respect for the knowledge of civic administration .. they’re less suspicious of staff ... they’re demanding and getting a more democratic and inclusive approach to decision-making from city staff .... the city used to be driven completely by the budget ... the budget was the city’s corporate plan ... the current CEO was the former Director of Finance and

that was how he managed ... the new council is demanding a broader perspective .. and getting it "

Many felt that arrows between the three components needed to go in more than one direction. "Knowledge" flowed both to and from the community from council; "direction" flowed both to and from council from civic administration. There was a general sense that the model underestimated the role of civic administration, that both the council and the community relied on the knowledge and continuity provided by city staff. The board member who had been critical of local planning decisions held this position, but was especially critical of the planning department for not staying abreast of current thinking in community development. Other parts of civic administration, in particular Community Services, he felt were stronger and more knowledgeable.

Several commented on the arrow related to taxes needing to flow from the community to council as well as civic administration, that ultimate accountability on taxes lay with council not with civic administration.

All saw the Culture and Heritage Board in the middle of the diagram, being fed by and feeding council, civic administration and the community. Two team members saw the board, as distinct from the Division, needing to move closer to the community, and to be driven more by the needs of that community.

*This is a legitimate perspective, but also seems to set up an unnecessary dichotomy. Surely the Managers' leadership skills and insights are a valuable resource to the Division, but he must also encourage greater community input and ownership.*

- "the board needs to be telling the Manager what to do not vice versa ... if more direction and leadership flowed from the community I think other organizations would be more willing to report through the board ... it needs to be clearer where the Manager is located and where leadership comes from..."
- "the average age of the board dropped thirty years with the recent appointments ... it operates better with more of a strategic perspective ... although we still don't have a strong cohesive sense of context and direction"
- "the board needs to organize itself more around the culture and heritage community's needs ... those things that everyone needs ... advocacy, marketing and promotion, communications and information sharing, strategic planning, fundraising, partnerships ... things like that"

Others saw the board and the Division closer to civic administration, and needing to remain there. This was in part a pragmatic recognition of the Manager's strong role vis-a-vis the board and the location of the Division within civic administration. All agreed that the board could function more effectively and could wield greater influence in local decision-making.

The Manager's strengths in the municipal context were seen by one member as a liability in the community.

*The leadership tensions here are familiar, but one senses progress has been made both in acknowledging the different contexts, and a shift in the style and behavior of the Manager.*

- “he’s a very skilled power broker ... this is essential in the municipality but you can’t operate that way in the community ... I’d contrast his role to (the head of a local arts umbrella group) ... who knows everyone but doesn’t play the power games ...”

One team member felt the Manager should move his office to city hall to signal the shift in his focus.

## Wrapping Up

*On a more personal note I hope the experience was a meaningful for each of you individually. It has been for me.*

*The process gave me a glimpse of a different way of seeing the world - a perspective I’m not yet able to hold onto but one I catch a glimpse of now and again. It came most sharply into focus at the Learning Forum. It has something to do with seeing my place in the world differently and with more humility. I only know that when it comes into focus I feel less apart, less aware of me, and more aware of others - others who in turn, paradoxically, seem part of me.*

*I hope this account does partial justice to this rich experience. It’s been a privilege and I’ve learned a lot.*

The team has helped move the organization through a pivotal period in its history. Building on strong foundations they have established a new and broadened vision to guide the organization into the future. This vision is grounded in a deepened understanding of the place of culture and heritage in civic life. It acknowledges that with new purposes must come new practices, new structures and new leadership capabilities.

The vision will only be realized if it animates the work of all those committed to the work of the organization - staff, volunteers, board members, supporters. Success will also require a commitment to the same process of continuous learning and change - with all its joys and frustrations - that the team experienced in the course of their work.

***Appendix E: Secondary Research Themes***



## **Ideological Paradigms and Belief Patterns**

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) provide a useful tool for analyzing organizational theory, describing four ideological paradigms - which they understand to be comprehensive patterns of beliefs about social reality. The mapping of these four paradigms is illustrated in the attached chart.

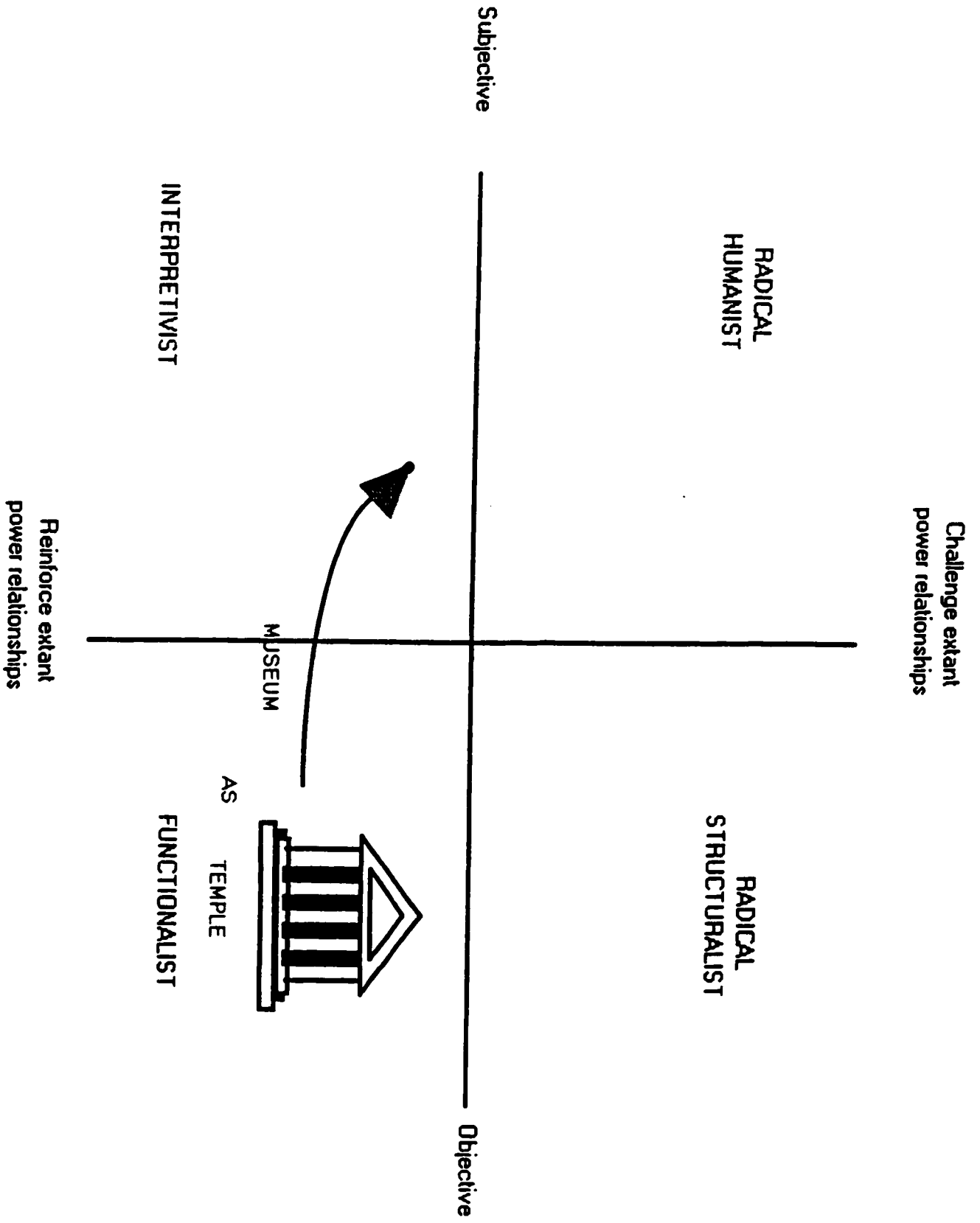
A subjective-objective dimension forms the horizontal axis, or continuum. This represents an individual's understanding of reality, knowledge and human nature. At one extreme, an objectivist approach views the world as an external, objective reality, where knowledge can be explained and predicted with regular and causal relationships. At the other extreme, a subjectivist approach places reality in the human consciousness, stressing the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in creating the social world, and is concerned with explaining and understanding. All of us exist somewhere between the two poles on both axes, the issue is simply where.

The vertical dimension represents assumptions about the nature of society, and illustrates the extent to which activities reinforce (at the lower end) or challenge (at the upper end) existing power relations.

The four quadrants represent different paradigms that predispose one to see the world in a particular way.

### ***Questions:***

1. In which quadrant would you place yourself? Can you tell me a little about what thoughts went through your mind as you considered this?
2. What would you say are the implications of these different perspectives for the roles played by museums or other cultural organizations in communities?
3. Does the chart provoke any other thoughts you'd like to share?



# Leadership Needs and Requirements

Starhawk (1987) analyzes differing leadership roles in the context of an organization's life cycle. A group or organization or even a movement moves through stages that have different goals, problems and pitfalls.

At different stages the roles and tasks of leadership vary. Starhawk assigns names to different leadership roles: crows, graces, snakes, dragons and spiders.

**"Crows** fly high and see far, from above. They take the long view, see the long-term vision, keep in focus the group's goals. They suggest new directions, make plans and develop strategies, and look ahead to anticipate problems and needs.

**Graces** are continually aware of the group's energy, helping to raise it when it flags, and to direct and channel it when it is strong. Graces provide the group with fire: enthusiasm, raw energy, ability to expand. ... They furnish inspiration and generate new ideas.

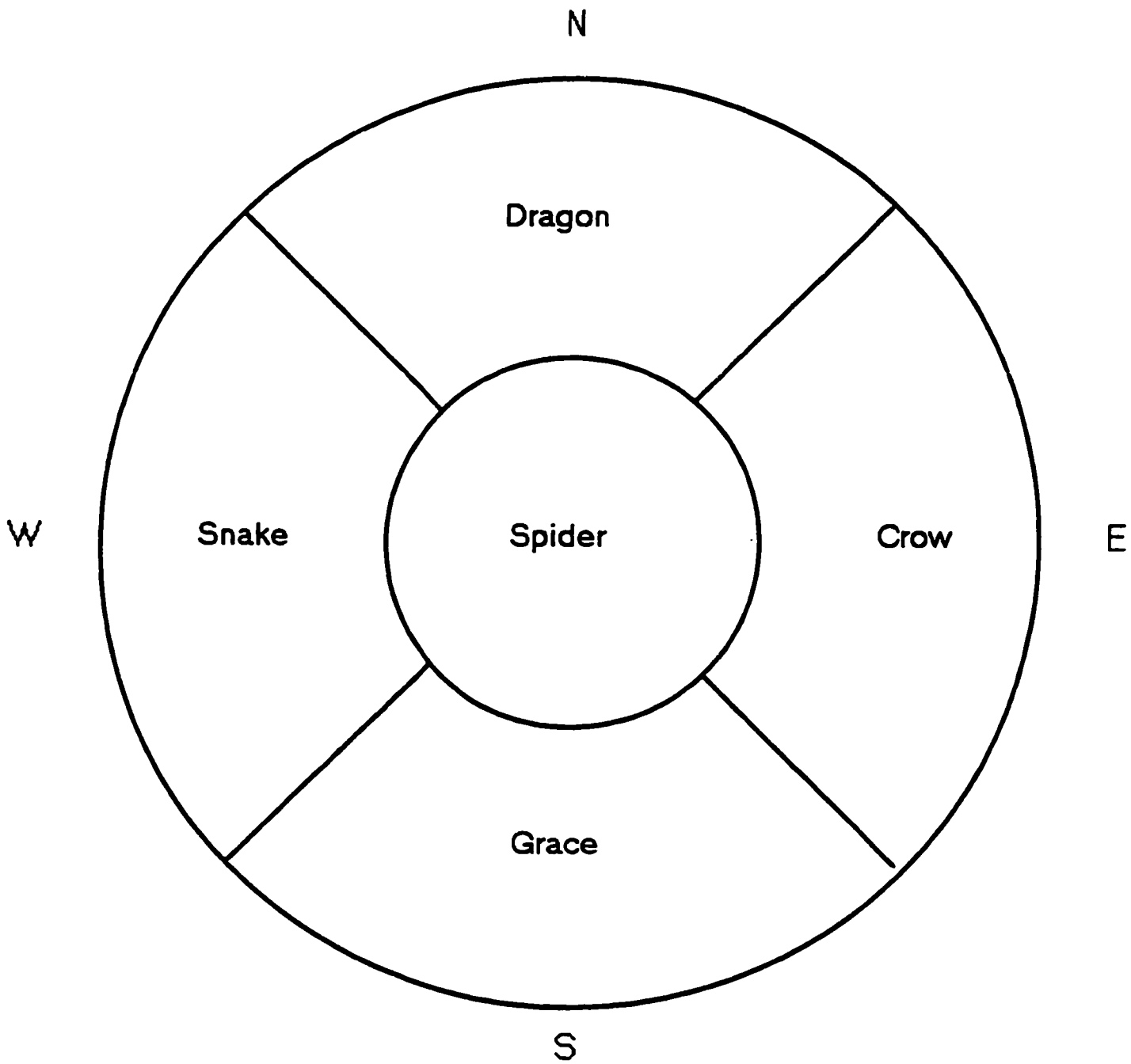
**Snakes** are connected with feelings and emotions, and also fertility and renewal. Snakes cultivate an awareness of how people are feeling. .. (They) keep current with the group's gossip. They become aware early of conflict, and bring it into the open, where they may help to mediate or resolve problems. .. Snakes violate the censors, bring into the open what others may not see or prefer to keep hidden.

**Dragons** keep the group grounded, in touch with the practical, the realistic. Dragons also live on the boundaries of the wild, guarding hordes of treasures ... (they) guard the groups resources and its boundaries and articulate its limitations.

**Spiders** spins the web that connects points across a stretch of empty space. Every circle needs a centre, a way in which people feel connected. A group's centre may be a spiritual hear, a common goal or vision, or it many manifest in a person. (If assigned to a person) the spider is most effective ... not by monopolizing communication but by asking the questions that can create and strengthen, a true and complex web of interactions" (1987, 278-282).

## **Questions:**

1. What leadership role do you think best represents the role you play in the Aurora Civic Museum?
2. Do you think others would be surprised by how you see yourself? Were you?
3. Can you think of times in an organization's life that the leadership perspectives you bring would be especially important? When might they be less critical?
4. Does the Aurora Civic Museum have a good balance of leadership styles? If not, how might it be strengthened?
5. Have these questions provoked any other thoughts you'd like to share?



## Planning and Governance Structures

Fielding and Couture (1998) describe a systems view of municipal planning that is used by the City of Winnipeg. Senge (1990) defines systems thinking as “a discipline for seeing wholes” - a framework for seeing interrelationships and patterns of change. Senge defines a system as a “perceived whole whose elements hang together because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose”.

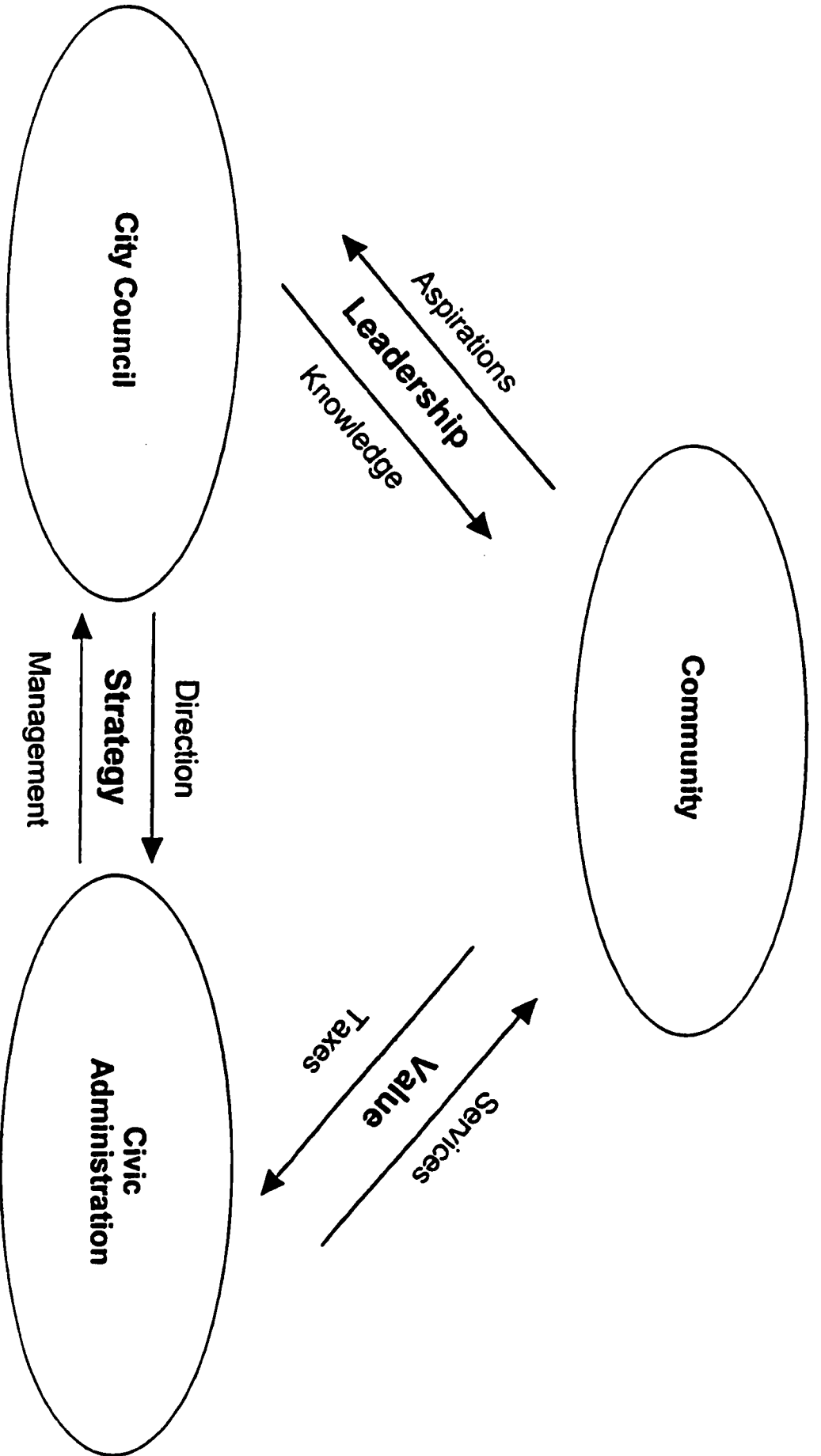
“At the highest level, municipal government is envisioned as a system of interrelationships between three principal groups: *the community, the city council and the civic administration*. There is a triangle of primary products that emerge from the relationships between these groups as a result of give-and-take between the parties: leadership, strategy, and value. Managing the city system is a matter of managing the processes that produce these three products” (1998, 15).

The traditional role of the planner has been one which facilitates city council’s understanding of the community it serves on the one hand, and provides direct public services in various facets of civic life on the other. The authors argue these roles must be broadened by becoming more involved in civic administration. “Our conceptual and analytical skills together with our understanding of communities and their citizens have, in the past, demonstrated our ability to build better communities. Now we must use those same skills to help shape better government and better services” (1998, 14).

The Aurora Civic Museum and the Aurora Historical Society have some civic responsibilities for heritage and culture in the town.

### **Questions:**

1. Does this mapping of responsibilities make sense to you in terms of the Museum and the Society and their roles? Do you have any questions about the model that might help clarify its implications?
2. Given the history of the Museum and the Society, its current resources and talents, in which dimension or dimensions of the model can they make their most important contribution to Aurora?
3. Given its history and current resources where might the Museum and the Society’s weakness lie? Can you think of some strategies that might help to address these weaknesses?
4. Has the diagram provoked any other thoughts you’d like to share?



***Appendix F: Kitchener and Aurora Interview Materials***

# Memo

**To:**

**From:** Greg Baeker

**Date:** July 29, 1998

**Re:** Interview

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Thanks for agreeing to speak with me at 1:30 pm Thursday.

Let me give you a little more background on the research as a context for the call.

As I told you I have a background in museums and public policy. I spent 10 years at the Ministry of Culture working on heritage and cultural policy. I felt strongly by the end of my time there that "the future" lay at the local level; that it was here the next breakthroughs in cultural development had to occur.

This was the reason for choosing to do doctoral work in Planning at the University of Waterloo. The dissertation title is "Museums and Community Cultural Planning: Strategies for Change". The work draws together some of my past academic and professional experience with the doctoral studies. The thesis explores changing understandings of culture and cultural planning in cities, and roles for museums in this new context.

The research focuses on three broad areas, each addressed graphically in the attachments that follow. The premise, not altogether surprising, is that there are new purposes that cultural planning must address in cities, and that with new purposes must come new practices and professional competencies, and new governance structures.

- i. *New Purposes* - four "ideological paradigms" or belief patterns related to museums and cultural development.
- ii. *New Leadership Needs and Requirements*; and,
- iii. *New Planning and Governance Structures*.



There are obviously no "right" or "wrong" answers here. Although I'd like to get your general reactions to i. and ii. - which are really more focused on the museum side of the research - I'd like in particular to concentrate with you on iii., getting your thoughts based on your perspective in Kitchener. You might start and have a look at iii first.

The Culture Plan is really impressive. I like the mix of a solid framework with very concrete recommendations and "doable" initiatives. I have several questions about your process, critical success factors, barriers encountered along the way, etc.

I hope the conversation can be an informal one. Any and all comments or feedback will be confidential.

I'm happy to share the results of the research with you as soon as I'm finished.

I hope the total time I'll need to spend with you on the phone will not exceed one hour.

Thanks again for your time and interest. Speak to you at 1:30.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg", with a long horizontal line underneath it.

## **Ideological Paradigms and Belief Patterns**

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) provide a useful tool for analyzing organizational theory, describing four ideological paradigms - which they understand to be comprehensive patterns of beliefs about social reality. The mapping of these four paradigms is illustrated in the attached chart.

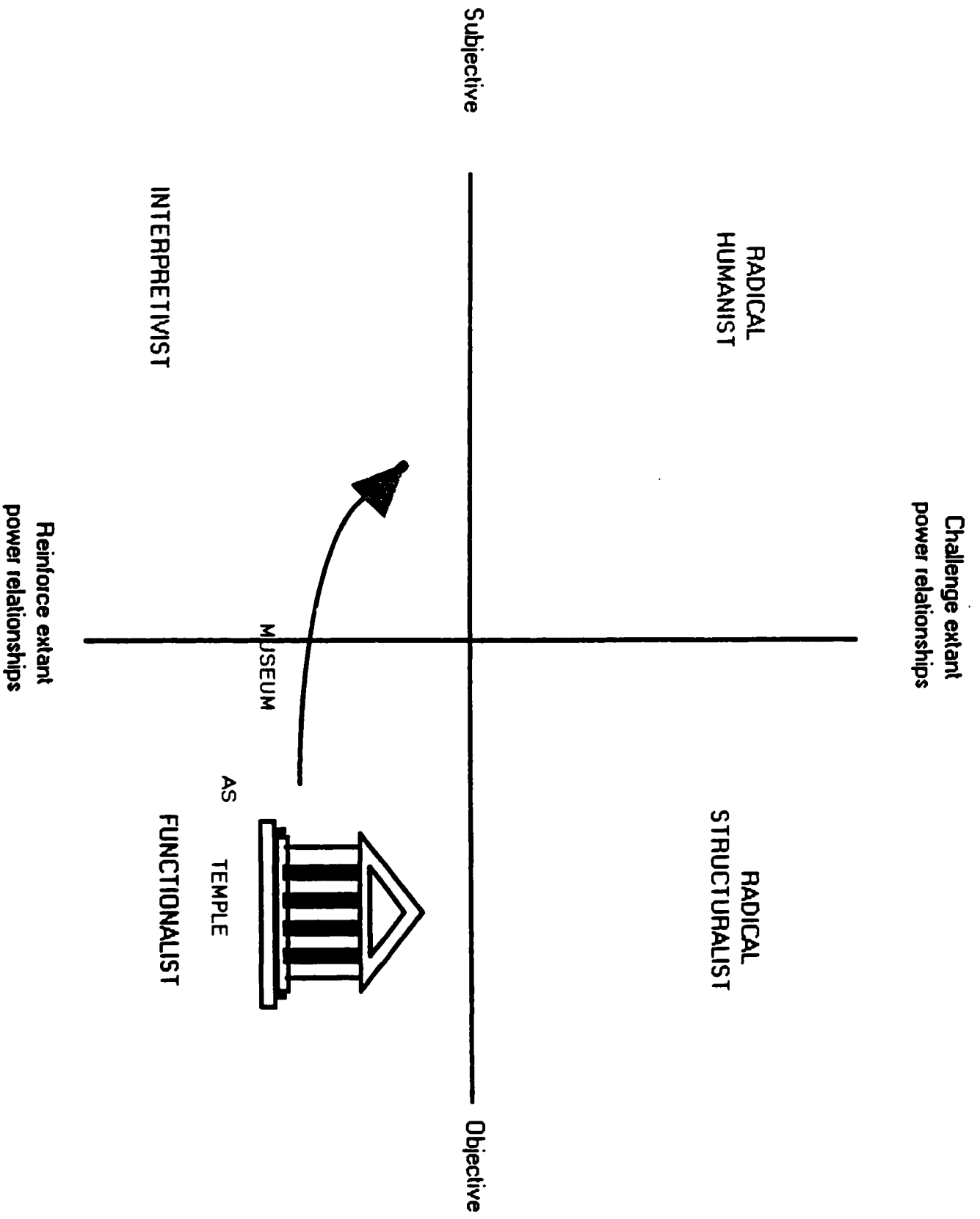
A subjective-objective dimension forms the horizontal axis, or continuum. This represents an individual's understanding of reality, knowledge and human nature. At one extreme, an objectivist approach views the world as an external, objective reality, where knowledge can be explained and predicted with regular and causal relationships. At the other extreme, a subjectivist approach places reality in the human consciousness, stressing the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in creating the social world, and is concerned with explaining and understanding. All of us exist somewhere between the two poles on both axes, the issue is simply where.

The vertical dimension represents assumptions about the nature of society, and illustrates the extent to which activities reinforce (at the lower end) or challenge (at the upper end) existing power relations.

The four quadrants represent different paradigms that predispose one to see the world in a particular way.

### ***Questions:***

1. In which quadrant would you place yourself? Can you tell me a little about what thoughts went through your mind as you considered this?
2. What would you say are the implications of these different perspectives for the roles played by museums or other cultural organizations in communities?
3. Does the chart provoke any other thoughts you'd like to share?



## Leadership Needs and Requirements

Starhawk (1987) analyzes differing leadership roles in the context of an organization's life cycle. A group or organization or even a movement moves through stages that have different goals, problems and pitfalls.

At different stages the roles and tasks of leadership vary. Starhawk assigns names to different leadership roles: crows, graces, snakes, dragons and spiders.

**"Crows** fly high and see far, from above. They take the long view, see the long-term vision, keep in focus the group's goals. They suggest new directions, make plans and develop strategies, and look ahead to anticipate problems and needs.

**Graces** are continually aware of the group's energy, helping to raise it when it flags, and to direct and channel it when it is strong. Graces provide the group with fire: enthusiasm, raw energy, ability to expand. ... They furnish inspiration and generate new ideas.

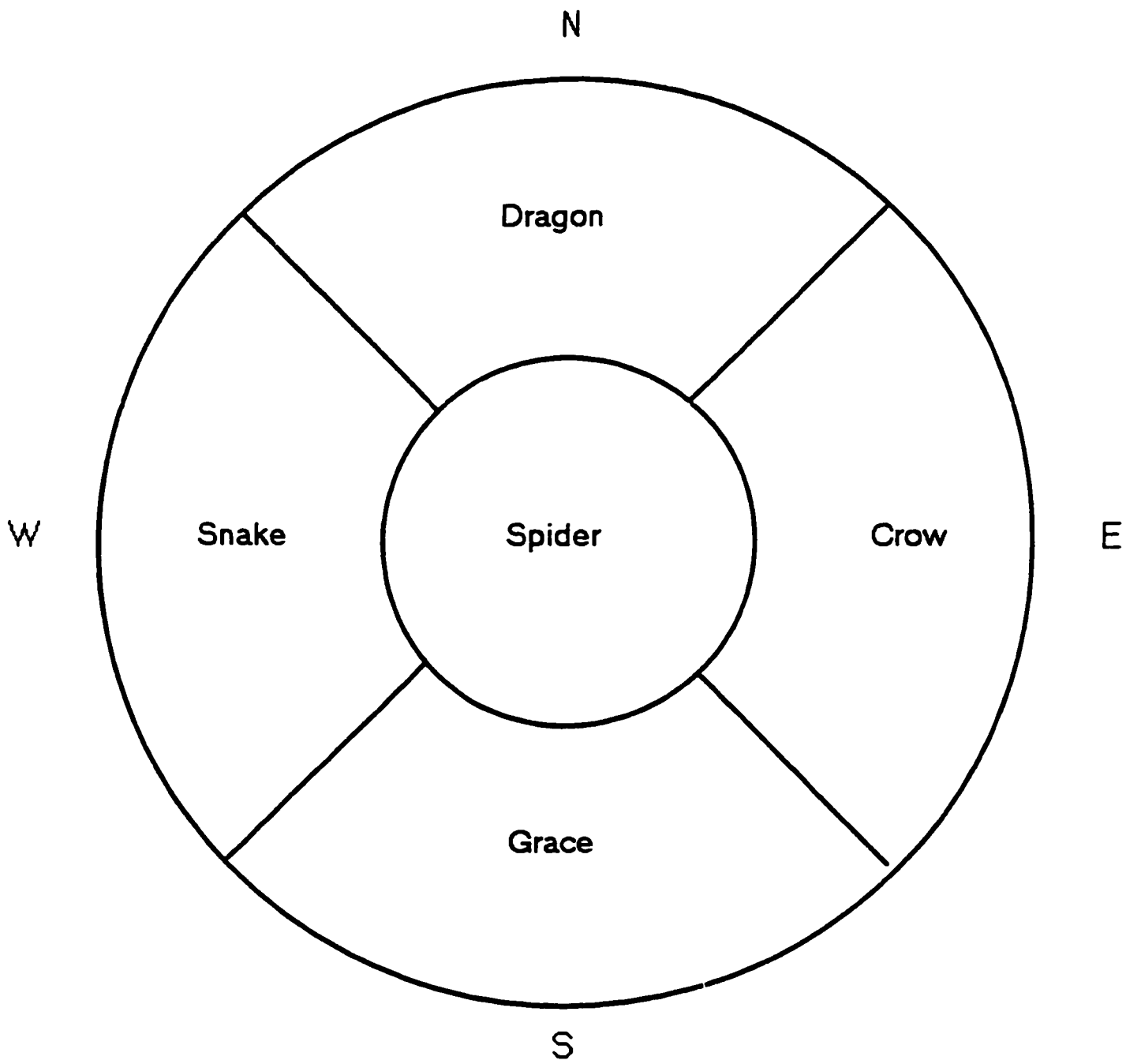
**Snakes** are connected with feelings and emotions, and also fertility and renewal. Snakes cultivate an awareness of how people are feeling. .. (They) keep current with the group's gossip. They become aware early of conflict, and bring it into the open, where they may help to mediate or resolve problems. .. Snakes violate the censors, bring into the open what others may not see or prefer to keep hidden.

**Dragons** keep the group grounded, in touch with the practical, the realistic. Dragons also live on the boundaries of the wild, guarding hordes of treasures ... (they) guard the groups resources and its boundaries and articulate its limitations.

**Spiders** spins the web that connects points across a stretch of empty space. Every circle needs a centre, a way in which people feel connected. A group's centre may be a spiritual hear, a common goal or vision, or it many manifest in a person. (If assigned to a person) the spider is most effective ... not by monopolizing communication but by asking the questions that can create and strengthen, a true and complex web of interactions" (1987, 278-282).

### **Questions:**

1. What leadership role do you think best represents the role you play in arts and cultural development in the City of Kitchener?
2. Do you think others would be surprised by how you see yourself?
3. Can you think of times in an organization's life that the leadership perspectives you bring would be especially important? When might they be less critical?
4. Does the City of Kitchener have a good balance of leadership styles contributing to good governance? If not, how might it be different?
5. Have these questions provoked any other thoughts you'd like to share?



## Planning and Governance Structures

Fielding and Couture (1998) describe a systems view of municipal planning that is used by the City of Winnipeg. Senge (1990) defines systems thinking as “a discipline for seeing wholes” - a framework for seeing interrelationships and patterns of change. Senge defines a system as a “perceived whole whose elements hang together because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose”.

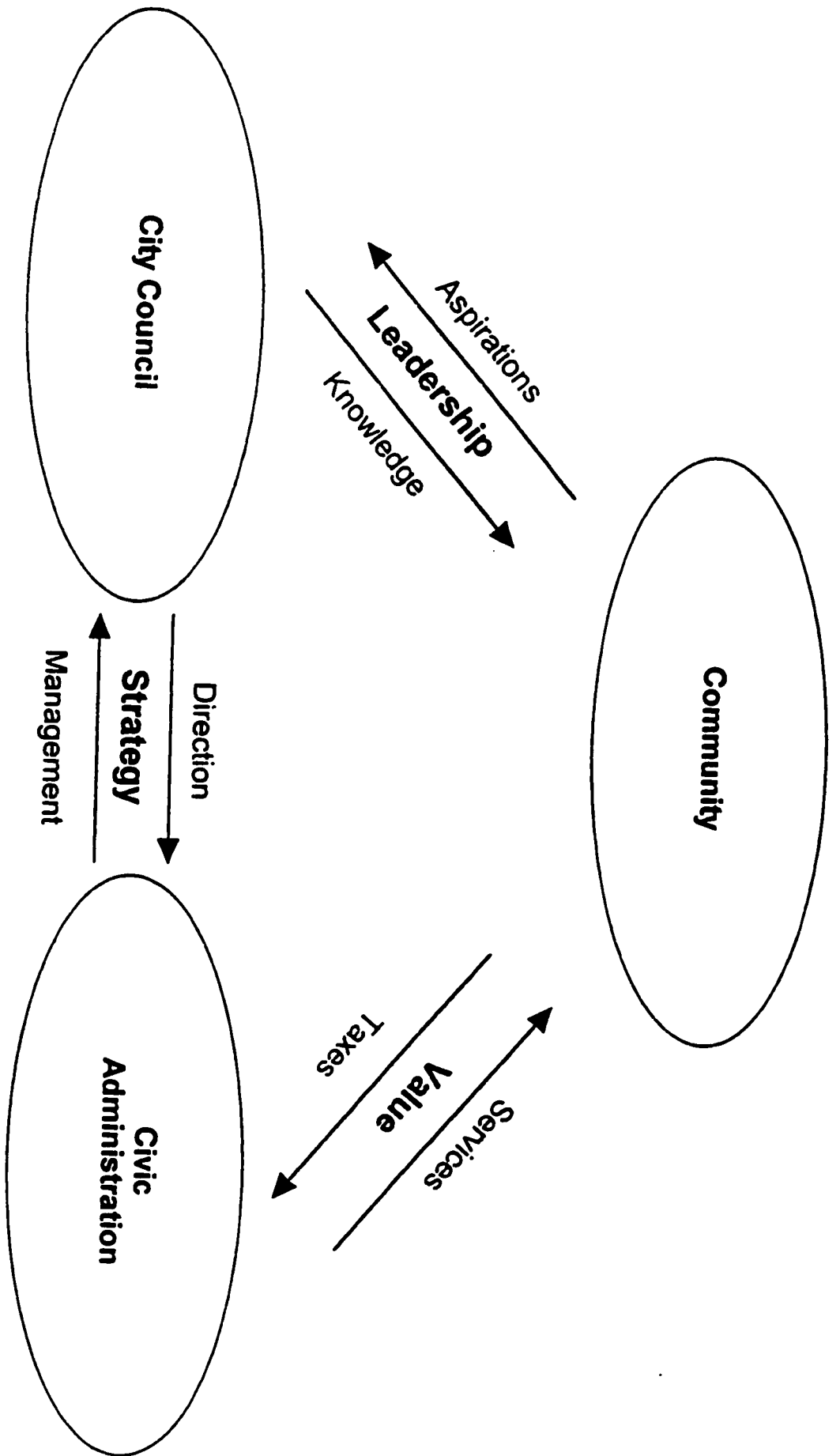
“At the highest level, municipal government is envisioned as a system of interrelationships between three principal groups: *the community, the city council and the civic administration*. There is a triangle of primary products that emerge from the relationships between these groups as a result of give-and-take between the parties: leadership, strategy, and value. Managing the city system is a matter of managing the processes that produce these three products” (1998, 15).

The traditional role of the planner has been one which facilitates city council’s understanding of the community it serves on the one hand, and provides direct public services in various facets of civic life on the other. The authors argue these roles must be broadened by becoming more involved in civic administration. “Our conceptual and analytical skills together with our understanding of communities and their citizens have, in the past, demonstrated our ability to build better communities. Now we must use those same skills to help shape better government and better services” (1998, 14).

The Arts and Culture, Special Events Department has responsibility for planning in matters of culture for the city. The Department, together with the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee, comprise the management and governance structure for cultural development.

### *Questions:*

1. Does this mapping of responsibilities make sense to you in terms of the Department’s mandate? Do you have any questions about the model that might help clarify its implications?
2. Given the history of the Department, its current resources and talents, in which dimension or dimensions of planning do you think it makes the most important contribution in Kitchener? Contributing to Leadership? Contributing to Strategy? Contributing to Value?
3. Given its history and current resources where might the Department’s weakness lie? Can you think of some strategies that might help to address these weaknesses?
4. Has the diagram provoked any other thoughts you’d like to share?



# Memo

**To:**  
**From:** Greg  
**Date:** July 29, 1998  
**Re:** Interview

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Thanks for agreeing to speak with me Friday morning. I wonder if it's possible we might make it 9:30 instead of 10:00 am? If I don't hear from you I'll assume 9:30 works.

Let me give you a little more background on the research as a context for the call.

As you know my background is in museums and heritage policy. After 10 (long!) years at the Ministry of Culture I came to feel strongly that "the future" lay at the local level; that it was here the next breakthroughs in heritage conservation and cultural development had to occur.

This was the reason for choosing to do doctoral work in Planning at the University of Waterloo. The dissertation title is "Museums and Community Cultural Planning: Strategies for Change". The work draws together some of my past academic and professional experience with the doctoral studies. The thesis explores changing understandings of heritage and cultural planning in cities, and roles for museums in this new context.

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- ii. *New Leadership Needs and Requirements*; and,



iii. *New Planning and Governance Structures.*

There are obviously no "right" or "wrong" answers here. I want to get the benefit of your lengthy experience in the field, and in Aurora, working with wonderful folks like Les.

The materials Les sent along on the work the Society is doing in re-examining its roles and functions are really inspiring. I have several questions about your process, critical success factors, barriers encountered along the way, etc.

I hope the conversation can be an informal one. Any and all comments or feedback will be confidential.

I'm happy to share the results of the research with you as soon as I'm finished.

I hope the total time I'll need to spend with you on the phone will not exceed one hour.

Thanks again for your time and interest. Speak to you Friday.

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