

A painting of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a calm, blue lake reflects the sky. The middle ground shows a dense forest of evergreen trees on the left and a dark, forested hillside on the right. In the background, majestic mountains with snow-capped peaks rise against a blue sky with soft, white clouds. The overall style is that of a classic landscape painting.

# Arts, Cultural and Heritage Tourism Strategy

2007-2009

**TOURISM**  
**WHISTLER**

1<sup>st</sup> Working Draft  
July 3, 2007

**Forward**

"In an economic climate where we hear so much about crisis in health and education, it is important to remember that culture, too, is an essential element of a healthy society. It's not an either-or situation. Health is necessary for life; culture makes life worth living...

<http://www.culturematters.ca>

**Cover Page: Oil on Canvas – by Karen Love, visual artist; courtesy of Whistler Arts Council Web site**

**Side Bars located in the plan reflect images/works by the following artists from Whistler and surrounding area:**

**Visual artists: Helen Wojcik, Katherine Kerr**

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## References

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

Whistler has become an internationally renowned destination resort known for its outdoor recreational activities. It is consistently rated among the top 10 mountain resorts in North America and has also been voted by various magazines as the #1 Ski Resort in North America. These accolades are well deserved and recognize the exceptional setting of Whistler; its village, its people and its spectacular terrain. In 2010, Whistler will be the Host Mountain Resort for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter games, a dream that has been in the making since the mountain first opened in the 1960s.

The 2010 Olympics and Paralympic Winter Games offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the community to strengthen its world-class image and create lasting legacies. To this end, The Resort Municipality of Whistler [RMOW] has taken the lead in spearheading the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Strategic Framework. This framework serves as an important blueprint to help the community leverage the 2010 opportunities and work with partners to deliver an outstanding experience for all participants. While the games focus on athletic excellence it also provides an opportunity for the host communities to raise awareness of their cultural diversity. Whistler's Strategic Framework identifies the opportunity to enhance and further its arts, culture and heritage offerings. While the Whistler Arts Council is the lead agency to help define Whistler's cultural image, Tourism Whistler has the role of marketing that image to the world.

Tourism Whistler has also identified cultural tourism as an emerging niche market that has the potential of enhancing the visitor experience and encourage repeat visitation. In Tourism Whistler's 2005 product survey cultural tourism was ranked as having a medium level of interest which may not necessarily increase visitation but certainly enriches the resort experience. Tourism Whistler has also recognized the need to diversify and augment its product offering to ensure long-term sustainability. Market diversification will also help Tourism Whistler achieve its overall mission to establish Whistler as a premier four-season destination.

The purpose of the plan is to establish a strategic framework that will:

- Help define Whistler's cultural and heritage tourism sector
- Develop and grow a vibrant and sustainable cultural and heritage "tourism" sector over time

The analysis of Whistler's current offerings, other destinations and stakeholder interviews confirm two important realities that will drive the strategic approach:

- Cultural and heritage elements in Whistler provide an enhancement to the visitor experience; they are not necessarily the primary focus
- Cultural and heritage stakeholders need to be part of the mainstream tourism industry and where possible partner and build upon existing programs

This plan also serves as a basic first step to what will be an evolving process. It is hoped that the strategic recommendations will lay the groundwork for elevating Whistler's cultural offerings into the visitor experience year-round. If it is done right with cooperation, passion and foresight among the partners, cultural tourism can be a powerful addition to Whistler's core product mix.

## **2. Business Review**

### **2.1. What is Cultural and Heritage Tourism?**

Cultural tourism is growing around the world and trends point to an increasing demand for cultural and experiential types of experiences. The term cultural and heritage tourism is interchangeable with cultural tourism, art tourism and heritage tourism and denotes all those activities and experiences associated with a destination's culture and heritage. For the purpose of this plan, the term cultural and heritage tourism will be used to signify arts, cultural and heritage tourism.

There are many definitions of cultural and heritage tourism; some are very broad and others are specific.

The UN World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] defines cultural tourism as "the movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art and pilgrimages."

The European Commission and the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education [ATLAS] defines cultural tourism as "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention of gathering new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs."

The Canadian Tourism Commission states that "cultural and heritage tourism occurs when participation in cultural and heritage activities is a significant factor for travelling. This includes visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution." [Canadian Tourism Commission: Packaging

the Potential: a five-year business strategy for cultural and heritage tourism in Canada 2000]

Whistler does have components of cultural tourism based on the above definitions. Visitors are drawn to Whistler for the Telus World Ski and Snowboard Festival, for the Whistler Film Festival and for Cornucopia-signature events that showcase Whistler and Canadian culture. They are also drawn to Whistler's natural heritage and mountain culture that offers a myriad of outdoor experiences. Whistler has other cultural and heritage elements but they are not considered primary travel motivators. They do however have the potential of enhancing the visitor experience and extending the length of stay in Whistler.

## **2.2. Benefits of Cultural Tourism**

Travellers are interested in learning and experiencing what is special about a place's culture and heritage. In a 2003 report of the Travel Industry Association of America and Smithsonian Magazine, 29% of US travellers felt that it is important that the trips they take for vacation or leisure provide cultural experiences and 26% believed that such a trip is not complete without visiting a museum or attending a cultural event or arts performance.

There are numerous benefits and opportunities for Whistler in elevating its cultural and heritage elements within the overall visitor experience. For Whistler's tourism industry it offers the opportunity to:

- Enhance the visitor experience
- Increase customer loyalty
- Overcome the challenges of seasonality
- Capitalize on the market demand for unique experiences that cannot be found elsewhere

For Whistler's cultural and heritage stakeholders it offers the opportunity to:

- Increase audience size and revenues
- Raise profile for its programs and offerings and hence generate more support and sponsorship
- Reduce operating costs

For both it offers the opportunity to partner with each other for success, one of the key priorities identified in Whistler's 2020 Vision.

### 2.2.1. Guiding Principles

While there are various principles that seem to define and direct cultural and heritage tourism all of them have similar characteristics which focus on authenticity, integrity and preservation. For Whistler's cultural and heritage tourism experience the following principles are presented for consideration:

- It involves a quality visitor encounter with a cultural or heritage experience that is authentic and that is not created solely for the purpose of attracting tourists
- It must be sustainable and must ensure that the quality and integrity of the cultural/heritage resource are conserved
- It is based on a mutually beneficial partnership between Whistler's tourism and culture and heritage sectors and must be a revenue-generator for both.

These principles align themselves closely with Whistler's overall 2020 vision and support Whistler's 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games strategic framework. Both of these major initiatives focus efforts around five key areas:

- **Enriching community life** [authentic cultural and heritage experiences]
- **Enhancing the resort experience** [a quality visitor encounter with a cultural or heritage experience that is authentic]
- **Protecting the environment** [It must be sustainable and must ensure that the quality and integrity of the cultural/heritage resource are conserved]
- **Ensuring economic viability** [It is based on a mutually beneficial partnership between Whistler's tourism and cultural/heritage sectors and must be a revenue-generator for both]
- **Partnering for success** [It is based on a mutually beneficial partnership between Whistler's tourism and cultural/heritage sectors]

### 2.2.2 Components of Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Cultural and heritage tourism is made up of many various components. For the purpose of this plan, they are narrowed down to five main categories to help promote and package the components. They are:

- Performing Arts – theatre, dance, music,
- Visual arts – film, painting, photography, sculpture, and crafts
- Museums, cultural centres, historic and natural heritage sites, built heritage, interpretive centres, re-enactments
- Arts and cultural festivals
- Wine and culinary

Aboriginal culture is integrated in the above. These categories will form the basis for Whistler's own review of its cultural and heritage components.

### 2.3. Industry and Market Overview

Tourism is considered an important economic pillar to the global economy creating employment and opportunities for development. In 2005, tourism generated US\$680 billion in revenues worldwide with over 800 million tourist arrivals. This represents an increase of 42 million tourist arrivals from 2004. Key reasons for travel were for leisure and recreation [50%], business [16%], visiting friends and relatives [VFR], religion/pilgrimages or health issues [26%] and the remaining 8% did not specify. **[UN World Tourism Organization 2005 highlights]**

In Canada tourism spending totalled \$63 billion in 2005, a 7.2% increase over 2004. Canadians accounted for 72% of that spending [\$45.2 billion] while foreigners spend \$17.5 billion or 28%. **[Canadian Tourism Commission 2005 Snapshot]**

It is difficult to assess the true impact of the cultural tourism sector within the overall tourism industry. The World Tourism Organization estimates that cultural tourism is growing at a rate of 15% per year and that 37% of all international travel includes a cultural component. This however would be looking at cultural tourism in its broadest term. Others say that the market size is between 5-8% if one includes only those who specifically go on holiday to visit a cultural attraction. **[Johan & Joppe, Cultural – Heritage Tourism: Review of Existing Market Research]**

While primary market research is still quite limited on cultural and heritage tourism, it is becoming increasingly important and is recognized both in Canada and worldwide as a significant tourism trend.

In Canada many provinces and cities have devoted resources to developing strategies around cultural tourism which will be highlighted later in this plan.

Europe is a strong proponent of cultural tourism and of course historically is well-known for its cultural and heritage destinations. In fact, Canada is at a disadvantage worldwide as it is not ranked or perceived as a cultural destination. Europeans consistently rank Rome, Paris and London as the top three major cultural centres of Europe in that order, followed by Athens, Florence and Barcelona. New York is the only North American destination represented and ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 29 cities worldwide. Other non-European cities ranked included Hong Kong [21<sup>st</sup> place], Buenos Aires [24<sup>th</sup> place] and Capetown [25<sup>th</sup> place]. **[Atlas Cultural Tourism Research Project, 2004]**

Europeans tend to favour European destinations for cultural and heritage tourism. In North America, Americans seem to have a higher participation rate in cultural and entertainment activities than Canadians and are more likely to be classified as culture

seekers and knowledge seekers than Canadians [Travel Activities and Motivation Survey Overview Report 2003]. This could be because the United States has more cultural activities available serving a much larger population.

Various Travel Activities and Motivation Surveys [TAMS]<sup>1</sup> indicate however that cultural and entertainment activities in Canada and in the United States have gained in popularity.

The common cultural activities during vacations are:

- Visiting museums [35%]
- Attending local festivals or fairs [34%]
- Visiting art galleries [32%]

General culture tourism has been fragmented into niche segments with their own specific characteristics and trends. This is evident in the numerous TAMS reports highlighting specific sub segments of cultural tourism. For example in the report **TAMS Heritage Tourism Enthusiasts, 2000-2001**, the most popular activities during a holiday include:

- Visiting museums [86%]
- Farmers' markets [67%]
- Festivals and historic sites [65%]

For the performing arts enthusiasts, the two top activities are theatre [87-92%] and classical music concerts [60-66%]. For the visual arts enthusiasts, the three top activities during a holiday include local arts & crafts studios [96-99%], art galleries [98-99%] and international film festivals [8-12%]. For the wine/culinary segment the top three activities are going to wineries for day visits [73-85%], touring a region's wineries [60-74%] and dining at internationally acclaimed restaurants [58-70%]. [Sources: TAMS Performing Arts Enthusiasts (2003), Visual Arts Enthusiasts (2003) and Wine/Culinary Tourism Enthusiasts (2003)].

For a number of cultural tourism destinations, the focus is not just on any one activity but a combination of several activities to showcase the breadth and scope of the cultural offering and diversity.

The TAMS 2003 reports also pointed out that Québec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada attract disproportionately high levels of Americans in these cultural segments and BC has lower appeal for its cultural related activities. This does not mean BC attracts less Americans, it means only that the primary reasons to go to BC are not culturally motivated. In fact another interesting fact highlighted in many of the studies reviewed, is that most travellers to cultural sites and events do not generally consider themselves

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<sup>1</sup> Travel Activity and Motivation Survey(s): TAMS examines recreational activities and travel habits of Canadians and Americans. TAMS provides detailed information on travellers' activities, travel motivators, places visited, type of accommodation used, impressions of Canada, its provinces and territories, demographics and media consumption patterns and helps identify existing and potential travel markets in North America. It is conducted by Stats Canada in partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission and four provincial and territorial agencies responsible for tourism.

to be cultural tourists. There is evidence that including a cultural experience during a holiday is increasing. The number of visits to art galleries, to performing arts attractions and to festivals has increased since 1997 according to the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Project, 1997-2002. The report found an increase of 7% in cultural- based travel activities between 1997 and 2002.

Canadians rate Canada much higher in terms of its cultural offering than do American and Europeans. They view Canada as having many historical sites, vibrant city life and places where there are ample entertainment opportunities. Canadian travellers appear however to have a stronger outdoor orientation than do their American neighbours. There seems to be a significant overlap between Canadian travellers who participate in cultural activities and those who have an outdoor focus. Similarly, about 50% of Americans in the hard outdoor adventure and other outdoor segments are heritage/culture enthusiasts [TAMS Overview Reports, 2003]. **These overlaps present good potential for Whistler in raising awareness of its cultural offerings among its core products.**

Another key finding both in the TAMS reports and the European studies is that there is a strong correlation between participation in various cultural activities while on vacation and at home. Travellers who visit art galleries, attend theatres and festivals at home are 48% likely to do so during vacations [correlation of 0.48]. **This suggests that the growth in cultural tourism will come from those segments for which cultural activities have become a way of life.**

The TAMS Overview Report 2003 indicated that 50% of cultural and heritage tourists to the United States believed that their hobbies and interests influence where they choose to travel. Interestingly, the same report found that 75% of Generation X and Y [ages 18 to 34] agreed that trips where they can learn something new are more memorable and that trips that include cultural, arts, historic, heritage activities or events are more enjoyable [39%].

The European Cities and Capitals Culture program found that the type of event has a strong influence on the "type" of visitor attracted. Local residents are more strongly represented at theatre performances and visitors/tourists are more strongly represented at exhibitions. Information and language barriers appear to be the main reason why tourists are less likely to attend theatre performances.

In a survey to visitors to Ireland, respondents were asked what would influence a greater level of attendance at cultural and artistic events. Majority suggested the following:

- Experiences of traditional Irish culture
- Sites of historic significance
- More live performances included in their "tours" or as elective options
- Most common reason for not attending cultural events were that there were not part of their tour or no advance info on schedules and programs

This same study also highlighted the important role of the travel trade in influencing attendance at cultural and artistic events, distributing information on what is available and in some cases selling tickets to performances.

In Europe, North America as well as in Australia and in New Zealand, cultural tourism is becoming very important and this is evident in the various activities and programs undertaken by these areas. For example, in Europe the European City of Culture program was created to raise the international profile of the city and its region. 21 cities have held the title European City of Culture [ECOC] since 1995 and the overall key objectives of the program are:

- To attract travelers and to enhance community pride and self-confidence
- To expand the local audience for culture, and make improvements to cultural infrastructures
- To develop relationships with other European cities and regions
- To promote creativity and innovation and develop opportunities for local artists

The program it seems has been successful in developing new images for participating cities and regions in terms of cultural awareness. However cities did note significant drops in visitation in the year following the event [around 4%] after strong growth during the year [on average 13%]. ECOC cities overall have performed better than other European cities and while cultural tourism continues to be dominated by the established "culture capitals", there is evidence of a shift towards more trips to smaller destinations and new regions of Europe. **[Culture-Heritage Tourism-Review of Existing Market Research; Johan & Joppe, 2005]**

In North America there has been a concerted effort on behalf of national tourism and cultural organizations to heighten the awareness of arts and culture both to residents and to visitors. The Canadian Tourism Commission has commissioned various studies on cultural tourism and has coordinated various national symposiums on cultural and heritage tourism products to encourage and stimulate the growth and development of this sector. Numerous states in the US have also devoted significant resources in developing arts and culture tourism. In 2005, the United States Department of Commerce and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities developed a position paper on Cultural and Heritage Tourism presented at the US Cultural & Heritage Tourism Summit. This paper recognizes the growth of cultural and heritage tourism over the last decade and encourages the ongoing development of national and state strategies to sustain that growth in the future.

Overall we have seen the following occur across North America:

- Formation of arts, culture and heritage centres
- Creation of package tours around arts, culture and heritage
- Establishment of a system of standards and certification for cultural and heritage tourism products
- Education to residents and travelers regarding cultural preservation

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- Creation of itinerary planning aids
- Cultural heritage maps, guides and publications
- Development of cultural tourism strategies
- Formation of arts, culture and heritage groups
- Declaration of Culture Tourism Week
- Ongoing communication between arts, culture and heritage stakeholders and tourism stakeholders
- Development of endowment fund to support cultural programs and events

Australia and New Zealand have also developed national strategies on cultural tourism. New Zealand in particular has identified cultural tourism as a sector worthy of further development to maximize its potential.

There is ample evidence that cultural tourism is growing. This growth seems to be fuelled by an interest in experiential tourism where visitors want a complete participatory experience providing new knowledge and authentic experiences. [Canadian Tourism Commission: Canada: Destination Culture 2004]

### **Demographic and behavioural characteristics**

The profile of the cultural traveller and those who are seeking cultural components during their travels seem to be more educated, wealthier and younger than those surveyed a decade ago based on TAMS reports. The general cultural tourists however in North America tend to be older than the average outdoor enthusiasts and in all cultural sub-segments Americans are considerably older than Canadians. There is also a growing segment of the Generation X and Y target markets that are culturally oriented and represent the single largest age group that is a very important component of the cultural audience. Baby boomers are important but the younger generation will become equally important and will influence future tourism offerings.

Generally, culturally oriented visitors possess the following characteristics:

- Tend to stay longer and spend more
- Well educated
- Employed and high incomes
- Participate in more activities than other travellers and are interested in other activities e.g. outdoor activities
- Attracted to "personalized" services
- Obtain their information through recommendations of friends, the internet and travel guides; however traditional media channels such as newspapers and magazines are also important to reach the "cultural traveller" specifically for the domestic and US markets
- A minority purchase all-inclusive packages

The overlap between cultural and outdoor activities bodes well for Whistler in integrating its cultural elements into its core offerings. Similarly, the importance of baby boomers and of the Generation X and Y markets segments in cultural tourism align very well with Whistler's current target segments.

## **2.4. Global Trends**

There seems to be some general trends and patterns emerging that are affecting the development of cultural tourism. These trends can help direct marketing efforts and product development. Key findings are:

- Growth of cultural tourism is not just linked to cities and towns but is also occurring in more rural and remote areas
- Preservation effort has become an important consideration in choosing a destination. 61% of Americans believe that travel experience is better when the destination is a well-preserved natural, historical or cultural site. One in three American travellers is influenced by a region or company's efforts to preserve the environment, history or culture of the destination.
- Demographic characteristics are also shifting towards a younger audience who have a high level of education and income
- Motivations and decisions regarding cultural and heritage tourism are increasingly based on education/learning, wanting to try new experiences, enjoyment of a hobby or interest- so their own values, daily interests, topics of education etc. could prove to be highly related to their activities and preferences during travel.
- Shift is occurring from larger to smaller accommodation establishments and from standardized service towards personalized service.
- Keen desire to experience local cultures, including aboriginal culture, meet local residents, taste local food
- Shift from traditional attractions such as museum and monuments towards theatre and festivals [**Cultural-Heritage Tourism: Review of Existing Market Research; Johan & Joppe 2005**]

## **2.5. Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Whistler**

Tourism Whistler [TW] has identified cultural tourism as an emerging market. Based on its own primary product development research, cultural tourism presents an opportunity to enhance the visitor experience and encourage repeat visitation. It is difficult to highlight Whistler's cultural tourism in the context of number of visitors and revenue. This is mainly because there is no current definition of what the cultural tourism offering is or at least not categorized to help effectively market it and secondly it hasn't been historically tracked. In addition there is no widely accepted definition of Whistler's culture and heritage assets. There is however the will to define Whistler's culture as evident in the activities undertaken by the 2020 task force on Arts, Cultural and Heritage and the various cultural groups responsible for showcasing Whistler's cultural image for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. All of this will certainly help develop "cultural tourism" in Whistler.

There are some interesting findings that confirm a growing interest in cultural tourism and the need to define it more clearly to the visitor. In TW's summer 2006 Visitor Survey visiting an arts and culture centre and or event was ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> most popular activity- well ahead of golfing. This same activity however showed low influence [66%] on the participant's decision to visit Whistler. In TW's Winter 2005/06 Skier/Snowboarder Survey, 24% of respondents participated in some arts and cultural activity. It also notes that these people stayed longer and spent on average 20% more than those who did not participate in any cultural activity. The geo-markets with the highest participation rate in culture activities were Ontario, BC, Washington, Australia, the UK and other international destinations [not specified]. The challenge with these findings is that the cultural activity/event in the survey is not defined and hence it is not known what activity was pursued.

It is not the scope of this plan to define Whistler's culture and its cultural and heritage assets. It is recommended that this be done to effectively market and develop this sector. It is hoped that through the efforts of the various working groups around arts, culture and heritage for the 2010 Olympics and Whistler's 2020 vision, Whistler's culture and heritage will be clearly articulated and celebrated. It is equally important for the purpose of this plan that current cultural products be identified and categorized to help with this process.

As outlined earlier, five components have been identified to help package and catalogue Whistler's cultural and heritage tourism products. The products or experiences listed under the various categories are based on stakeholder interviews and on a review of internal documents. This list is by no means exhaustive and does not represent a thorough analysis<sup>2</sup> of capacity which would go beyond the scope of this plan. It does serve as a starting point to assess the tourism offering.

The five categories are:

- Performing Arts – theatre, dance, music,
- Visual arts – film, painting, photography, sculpture, and crafts
- Museums, cultural centres, historic and natural heritage sites, built heritage, interpretive centres, re-enactments
- Arts and cultural festivals
- Wine and culinary

### **Performing Arts**

- ARTrageous – this is a multi-media event and does encompass both visual and performing arts.
- Strong musical scene at bars/clubs
- Whistler performance series- a program of theatre, dance, music and comedy presented throughout the year

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<sup>2</sup> A thorough analysis would entail more than an inventory of products/experiences. It would assess each in terms of market readiness, usage, audience, location, venue, key organizers etc. This process would be part of a more comprehensive cultural plan.

**Visual Arts**

- Artwalk- a month-long event that showcases Whistler's local artistic talent; the works of 38 visual artists and artisans are displayed throughout the resort during the month of July
- Out of Bounds: Tales from the Backcountry- a photographic exhibition and competition that features scenes of skiing and snowboarding in BC's backcountry. Showcases well-known and emerging photographers from the Sea-to-Sky Corridor and the Lower Mainland
- RMOW Public Art Program- a program sponsored by the municipality to encourage the development and the display of art in public places
- Reel Alternatives- a monthly independent film series featuring screenings of some of the best independent films of the year [Jan to April and Sep to Nov]
- Whistler's Art galleries – mainly private however there are local artists' works in various public places including Millennium Place, restaurants, and cafes and some retail outlets
- Art Workshops on the Lake- a summer program that features one to three day workshops from introductory to advanced level instruction in oil, acrylic and watercolour painting
- Whistler's Farmers Market [it is mainly an artisan market and hence is listed under visual art]
- Bizarre Bazaar- Pre-Christmas artisan market showcasing artists and artisans from the area including the Sea-to-Sky corridor, Vancouver and other parts of BC
- Painting on the Peak- a one-day workshop with acclaimed BC artists; occurs on Whistler Mountain in August; sponsored by private art gallery [Adele Fine Art Gallery]

**Museums, Cultural Centres, historic and natural heritage sites [this category needs to be reviewed and expanded as it provides good story telling opportunities]**

- Whistler Museum & Archives – exhibits and interactive programs that reflect the community's heritage: past, present and future; runs innovative programs to highlight the personality of the local community [e.g. Local Faces, Local Spaces- a photographic exhibit that examines what it means to be a local in the community]. The Museum also depicts early settler, mountain resort and Whistler community history.

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- Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre [to open in spring 2008] - an exceptional venue to showcase First Nations art and culture but specifically the Squamish and Lil'Wat Nations' culture. Both of these First Nations were intensely involved in the 2010 Olympic bid as a majority of the games will take place on traditional territory of the Squamish and Lil'Wat First Nations, as well as on the shared lands of the Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam First Nations.
- Whistler Mountain- alpine fauna [bears, mountain goats]
- Whistler Black Bear project
- Whistler's Trees/Forests [Emerald Forest]
- Crater Rim Trail
- Lava Lakes
- Pemberton Trail
- Sacred Sites on Whistler and Blackcomb Mountain
- Heritage signage along Valley Trail

### **Arts & Cultural Festivals**

- Children's Art Festival- one of the longest running Whistler festivals that feature a variety of workshops by local artists for the whole family
- Celebration 2010: Whistler Arts Festival – a month long event in February that features art and photographic exhibits, live performances, literary events to celebrate and profile the cultural component of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. The long-term goal is to continue with this "Winter Arts Festival" after the Olympics.
- Whistler Music & Arts Festival- features four-days of live street entertainment, music and interactive art activities for the whole family in August
- Whistler Writers Festival – a four day event in September that features workshops, roundtables, reading and lectures [organized by the Whistler's Writers Group, aka The Vicious Circle]
- Kokanee Crankworx – a mountain bike festival that runs for nine days in July. The festival mainly focuses on free ride competitions and on the sport of mountain biking but the goal is to expand the cultural component of the festival.
- Whistler Film Festival [WFF] – one of Whistler's signature events that have garnered extensive media attention in North America. The festival provides an educational and entertaining environment for the film industry professionals and film enthusiasts. The WFF is considered a key cultural event that has grown significantly over the last six years. The Whistler Film Festival Society's future plan sees the

development of the Whistler Institute which will offer excellence in professional development for the film industry.

- The World Telus Ski and Snowboard Festival- this is Whistler's largest annual celebration of edgy mountain culture. It runs for 10 days/nights and features over 50 live concerts, pro ski and snowboard camps, art events, fashion shows and gear demos. It attracts approximately 250,000 participants.

### **Wine & Culinary**

- Cornucopia - a four-day event that focuses on wine and food and features seminars, workshops and parties. It draws mainly from the Vancouver and Seattle food scene market and has a good concentration of wine makers; Whistler's restaurants are heavily involved.
- Slow Food Cycle Sunday- while this occurs in the Pemberton valley, it offers a unique opportunity for Whistler visitors to connect with local producers- some of the hotels, particularly Westin and Fairmont, are creating packages around Slow Food Cycle Sunday.

Festivals and events in particular do provide visitors with the opportunity to enjoy and experience local culture. There are studies that show that when events and festivals are organized in a "holistic" manner; that is the social, environmental, economic and cultural aspects of an event is considered, then this can lead to a good event and good relationship between the event and the local community. It is also clear that when the community is involved with the event and are key participants, the visitor experiences an authentic local encounter. Events and festivals have helped communities develop tourism and the emphasis for most that have used festivals and events as key strategies is on the economic impact. The ability of major events perceived to attract economic benefits often provides the political justification for hosting and organizing the events. Whistler is already a major tourist destination. The focus should be perhaps on enhancing the events rather than creating more events. The Telus World Ski and Snowboard Festival is one example of the cultural aspect diversifying and enhancing the event. While the role of events in tourism development will be further explored in **Tourism Whistler's Event Strategy document**, it is important to acknowledge that events do play a key role in cultural tourism if, as mentioned above, all aspects are taken into consideration. It is also critical to highlight that unique cultural attributes of a place are not necessarily always packaged in the forms of big events. Whistler's sense of place can be found in all those smaller unique cultural components that are connected to the community.

Whistler does have an active cultural community. The Resort Municipality of Whistler [RMOW] currently provides between \$1 million to \$1.5 million in grants to the community's arts, culture and heritage organizations. Whistler actually invests more money in cultural organizations/events per capita than Vancouver. Vancouver invests close to 9 million and has a population of 600,000. Whistler has a population of 10,000.

In a recent document prepared for the RMOW it is noted that close to \$30 million has been committed to construction of “cultural” facilities and annual operating budgets of cultural organizations are in excess of \$4.8 million which includes \$3.1 million in event-related activities. The community boasts 12 key art-related organizations and over 300 local artists [Popma, Anne; The Whistler Cultural Landscape, August 2006]. Significant resources are also being allocated and committed to enhancing the cultural aspects of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. Tourism Whistler also currently markets and promotes key events to the visitor. The festivals all have an active media relations program. There is need however to define the resorts’ cultural tourism products more clearly and increase their profile.

## **2.6. SWOT Analysis**

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified during stakeholder interviews and review of internal documents.

### **Strengths**

- Talented artists, writers, film makers, photographers, musicians
- A passionate mountain community
- A growing cultural community
- Cultural tourism is not always weather dependent
- Established events such as the Whistler Film Festival and Telus World and Ski Snowboard Festival
- Good music scene
- Sculpture Walks
- Great gallery tours
- Dedicated and committed Arts, culture and heritage professionals
- Supportive RMOW
- Supportive tourism marketing professionals at Tourism Whistler
- Sustainable approach to future planning
- Edgy mountain environment

### **Weaknesses**

- Unsure how to leverage the cultural opportunity into the overall visitor experience
- Limited collaboration between the cultural and heritage community and the tourism community
- Limited collaboration between the various cultural and heritage stakeholders; work in isolation and very individually driven
- Too much focus on the outdoor and sports
- Limited budgets both from the cultural community and the tourism community
- Limited human resources
- Limited venues
- No cultural planning process
- Very calendar and event driven
- Not known for any historical/heritage elements
- Different opinions on culture

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- Lack of a single definition of Whistler's culture
- Lack of understanding on behalf of the arts and cultural community to create a tourism related experience/product

### **Opportunities**

- 2010 Opportunity
- Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre
- Innovative programming
- A cohesive cultural and heritage tourism group
- Celebration Place – lot 1/9- outdoor amphitheatre with flexible staging, art precinct and new Museum
- New Library
- Regional cultural tourism opportunities- using the sea to sky corridor
- Art and Cultural plan for the community
- Investment in product development
- Incorporate the arts and cultural mix into the current tourism marketing mix
- Strong winter/summer theatre scene
- Stronger connections with the trade and group business
- Define Whistler's mountain culture
- Increased partnership between the cultural community, TW and RMOW

### **Threats**

- Unrealistic expectations
- Limited engagement or cohesiveness between the various groups
- Individual goals and objectives not aligned
- Confused mandates
- Not leveraging the 2010 opportunity effectively
- Limited funding and commitment

The Swot analysis depicts a strong talent base and potential for a thriving arts and cultural tourism experience. Challenges evolve around the lack of strong linkages between the groups and perhaps the fear of setting unrealistic expectations for Whistler as a whole. These challenges or barriers are for the most part easy to overcome if there is a strong willingness by the stakeholders to work together and explore different models of cooperation. The arts and cultural community cannot expect tourism to do all the marketing and similarly the tourism sector needs to understand the challenges facing the arts and cultural community and the creative opportunity that they offer. Collaborative cultural tourism initiatives don't happen by magic or goodwill. It requires a commitment of resources and effort over a number of years. These types of initiatives also work best when the cultural and heritage experiences are already at a high level of market-readiness or there is a commitment towards product and market development.

## **2.7. What are other areas doing in Cultural Tourism?**

The following section highlights some of the areas and projects that have been identified as best practice in the area of cultural tourism. Most of the areas examined parallel to some degree Whistler’s situation to allow for a comparable analysis. There are some areas/jurisdictions also mentioned that are very different to Whistler but offer interesting perspectives and realities that could prove useful for Whistler’s cultural tourism development.

### **2.7.1. Okanagan Cultural Corridor [OCC]**

[www.okanaganculturalcorridor.com](http://www.okanaganculturalcorridor.com)

Most of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned the OCC as an example of a successful visitor strategy in cultural tourism. The OCC is one of Canada’s largest cultural corridors covering basically three geographic regions. It represents over 200 art galleries, art studios, museums, heritage sites, agricultural sites, performing arts, wineries, festivals and events and aboriginal experiences. According to the web site its mandate is to identify, develop, package and promote authentic, sustainable, market-ready four-season cultural tourism experiences. The OCC has developed a web site, a guide and offers both self-guided itineraries and guided excursions. The central focus of the corridor is the City of Kelowna’s cultural district.

The OCC is run by a board of directors who represent various groups including the museums, tourism, city council, and various arts organizations. The OCC has full-time staff and is funded primarily by Tourism BC and the various Destination Marketing Organizations. Attractions pay to be in the guide.

The concept of the OCC began in 1995 when the city of Kelowna created its first arts development office. The cultural officer saw potential for cultural tourism and played a key role in spearheading the initiative. It really began when the city focused its efforts on developing the arts and this led to a major investment in the forms of grants for buildings and venues, public arts, programming and festivals. The cultural officer also had the idea of promoting and packaging all the cultural attractions in the Okanagan together.

The OCC was officially launched in 2000 as a cultural development and tourism initiative and a pilot project in cultural tourism marketing. It received funding from the BC Ministry of Community Development and Tourism BC. The first phase involved a detailed inventory of products and an analysis of the area. The second phase involved developing the marketing and strategic plans. The OCC has also held packaging workshops and other activities. While the focus has been on tourism marketing, the need for product development is recognized.

### **Key observations**

- Long time frames are required for cultural, heritage tourism initiatives and collaborations. The corridor is six years old but the planning work started over 10 years ago.
- The main draw in the Okanagan is the wine industry and the cultural/heritage efforts have aligned themselves with the wineries
- The corridor benefits from a central nucleus which is the city of Kelowna
- Commitment of long-term funding by various DMOs and governments
- Leadership is a key factor in successful collaborations/initiatives. In this case the cultural officer, a key position, had an affinity for both the arts and tourism sectors and championed the OCC.

#### **2.7.2. Cultural Cascades Corridor, British Columbia [www.culturalcascades.com](http://www.culturalcascades.com)**

The Cultural Cascades Corridor is a partnership between Vancouver, Seattle, Tacoma, Portland and Eugene which have formed a strategic alliance with the Amtrak Railway Company. It was formed five years ago to highlight an array of cultural experiences along Amtrak's Cascades routes.

It currently has a web site which provides information about what the various cities offer by date and by theme. There are five key themes: On Fire, On View, On Stage, On the Table and On Board. Each theme highlights different cultural aspects of each city; On Fire focuses on glass art, pottery, ceramics and "fire" art which also includes celebration of lights and other festivals; On Stage showcases the array of theatre and stage performances in each city; On the Table highlights the culinary side and On Board provides the amenities on Amtrak and the Cascade route.

The Cascades Corridor represents another good example of a regional approach but it has yet to realize its potential. According to Tourism Vancouver officials, it is non active and has not been fully implemented. Key reasons are due to lack of funding and focus. Tourism Vancouver [TV] acknowledges that it doesn't have enough funding to devote to a "niche" market and TV's objectives were different from the partners. It seems that everyone is still doing their own thing and it has been difficult to engage the arts and culture sector which has limited resources and can't manage to maintain listings on the web site and update information on what is available. The web site has hyperlinks to each of the DMO's web sites which in turn try to involve various cultural partners. The Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture was a key partner with Tourism Vancouver. Amtrak is revisiting this and most likely will take more ownership of the project. There is interest in increasing Amtrak's rails service to double its capacity along the PNW and thus they feel there will be more potential to develop the service and the initiative down the road.

### **Key observations**

- Different objectives and commitment levels have led to limited success
- Several cultural and heritage products were not market-ready and work experience with the tourism industry was limited
- Tourism Vancouver and other DMOs had different goals; Tourism Vancouver wanted access to partners' database to engage in direct marketing efforts around the various themes; other partners were not prepared to do that right away and wanted to focus on building the web site and get their guides/publications out.
- While the DMOs wanted to be included in this initiative, they still did their own thing and thus didn't really value the idea of group marketing and developing the initiative.
- No shared vision or goal

#### **2.7.3. Banff, Alberta**

Banff is also a well-established international resort destination and does have a reputation of providing an authentic cultural and heritage experience. This is mainly attributed to the fact that it is located in a UNESCO world heritage National Park. It is only recently however that Banff Lake Louise Tourism has integrated the cultural and heritage aspect more dominantly in their overall message. At the time of writing this plan, Banff Lake Louise Tourism officials advised that the re-launching of their web site will feature more cultural and heritage offerings and they are looking at working more closely with the Banff Centre to ensure that the cultural and artistic perspectives are considered within their overall tourism messages. The details on how this would evolve or what it would entail are not clear at this time.

The Banff Centre is a world leading arts, cultural and educational institution. It was founded in 1933 and currently has an operating budget of \$50 million; 28% is funded by the Alberta Government and the rest is self-generated. The campus is undergoing expansion and re-development at a cost of \$133 million with \$50 million committed by the Province of Alberta. The Banff Centre holds many events and concerts throughout the year to showcase its alumni and professionals. The two main events are the Banff Summer Arts Festival and the Banff Mountain Film Festival. The Summer Arts Festival attracts an estimated 35,000 people mostly regional and some international. The Banff Mountain Film Festival attracts approximately 12,000 visitors and focuses on mountain culture. The Mountain Culture program at the Banff Centre is a unique program that promotes understanding and appreciation of the world's mountain places and creates an opportunity for leaders and other professionals to share ideas and experiences. It also produces many conferences and think-tank sessions and the annual Banff Mountain Book Festival.

The Banff National Park environment has shaped and influenced how tourism is developed and promoted. The restrictions placed on development have for the most part worked to the tourism industry's benefit and has allowed all stakeholders to appreciate the intrinsic value of their natural heritage. Six years ago, the various tourism and town stakeholders formed

the **Banff Heritage Tourism Corporation**, a separate entity that has four key objectives:

- To make all visitors and residents of Banff National Park and the Town of Banff aware that they are in a national park and World Heritage site by actively fostering appreciation and understanding of the nature, history and culture of Banff National Park, the Town of Banff and surrounding areas
- To encourage, develop and promote opportunities, products and services consistent with heritage and environmental values
- To encourage environmental stewardship initiatives upon which sustainable heritage tourism depends
- To strengthen employee orientation, training and accreditation programming as it relates to sharing heritage understanding with visitors.

The Corporation comprises a volunteer Board of senior representatives including six representatives from each of the following organizations: the town of Banff, Banff Lake Louise Tourism Bureau [Julie Canning CEO], Parks Canada, Lake Louise Community Association, Banff Lake Louise Hotel Motel Association, Banff Small Business Association and six directors at larger. The Corporation has an Executive Director.

The Corporation is registered as a not-for-profit and 50% of its funding comes from the Tourism Bureau.

The Corporation organizes an annual Heritage Tourism Award that recognizes those businesses that celebrate and incorporate the local heritage and culture in their business and visitor experience. Their Executive Director advised that they are re-thinking the way they administer the awards and are looking at recognizing all nominees not just the winners.

Other programs of the Corporation include:

- Partnering with businesses that want to develop projects/initiatives devoted to heritage tourism
- Coordinating the **Banff's Best** program which focuses on training employees and residents on the historical and heritage aspect of Banff and the surrounding areas. The goal is to ensure everyone has "local" knowledge because to a visitor everyone is a local who works in the Town of Banff and the surrounding areas.

### **Key observations**

- Cultural and heritage tourism is a key selling factor for Banff
- Parks Canada plays a vital role in preservation and conservation of the parks' heritage aspects
- Banff Lake Louise Tourism funds the lion share of the Heritage Tourism Corporation and also will provide funding for specific cultural/heritage tourism initiatives
- The Corporation is not bureaucratic and has a specific mandate that is supported by all founding partners

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- The Banff National Park designation and the Banff Centre are key advantages for the Tourism Bureau's cultural and heritage tourism
- The Banff Centre is a 75 year old institute whose reputation and programming has taken time to develop

### 2.7.4. Aspen, Colorado

Aspen is a renowned resort destination like Whistler known for its great outdoor amenities. However, unlike Whistler, Aspen is also known for its arts and culture and in fact claims to have the widest array of arts and cultural events in the state of Colorado.

Aspen is home to many key art and cultural institutions which have contributed to Aspen's vibrant cultural climate. Some of the arts, cultural and media organizations in Aspen are:

- Aspen Music Festival and School- founded in 1949, the School is known for its excellent training and development programs for pre-professional musicians. Its annual program culminates with the classical summer music festival that spans nine weeks and comprises more than 350 events, including orchestral concerts, chamber music, opera, and contemporary music, lectures and kids programs. Concerts take place in their 2,000 seat Benedict Music Tent which is an award-winning permanent structure built in 2000, in the Victorian Wheeler Opera House and the Harris Concert Hall as well as in smaller halls in Aspen.
- Aspen Santa Fe Ballet company – A 10 year old ballet company that makes its home in Aspen and in Sante Fe. The school directors are former Joffrey Ballet dancers Jean-Philippe Malaty and Tom Mossbrucker. It has received excellent reviews in major cities across the US and toured recently in Québec and in France. The company will perform during the Aspen Summer Music Festival.
- Aspen Art Museum- features contemporary art exhibits, education and public programs. It has 17 full-time staff.
- Aspen Film Fest- began in 1979 and has four key annual events around film making and the screening of independent films.
- Colorado Mountain College Center for Excellence in the Arts- established in 1996, this college is dedicated to enhancing and enabling excellence in programs encompassing all art forms
- Jazz Aspen Snowmass [JAS] is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1991 with a mission to preserve and present jazz, American and popular music through festivals, educational programs and performances. The original three-

day June festival has now evolved into a summer long series of both free and paid performances. Most of the performances take place under a canopy tent with reserved seating for 3,000 in Aspen at the Rio Grande Park.

- International Design Conference – an annual gathering of leaders who share ideas and information around applied design and its impact on society economically, socially and environmentally. Caters to an international audience.

Aspen also has an active Historical Society similar to Whistler's Museum and Archives' Society.

Aspen mountain resort [separate from the city of Aspen] will also partner with the various art organizations to feature musical concerts throughout the summer season.

### **Key observations**

- Arts and culture are a main fabric of Aspen's life
- The city and tourism bureau are more active in promoting the arts and culture than the mountain
- Premier arts and cultural organizations with solid funding and ample venues
- Collaboration exists between the various organizations but the funding mechanisms and how promotions are done are unknown-representatives from specific organizations were not available at time of writing this plan

### **2.7.5. Vail, Colorado**

Vail is another key competitive mountain resort that offers similar experiences to Whistler. The community puts on a series of festivals and cultural events throughout the year. Vail is home to the Vail Valley Foundation, which is a public charity that raises funds mostly through the organization of artistic, cultural and athletic events. Vail Resorts is a significant partner with the Vail Valley Foundation. The Foundation's year-long cultural events occur mainly in the 2,500-seat Gerald G. Ford Amphitheatre, and the 530-seat Vilar Centre for the Arts. Key events include the Vail International Dance Festival, the summer free concert series, the Bravo Vail Valley Music Festival which runs from June to August and features orchestral performances by their three resident orchestras-the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Other cultural events include their annual Farmers Market, Jazz Festival and Harvest Festival. Vail seems to focus more on the performing arts than any other art form and their web sites do not reflect a strong heritage component either.

### **Key observations**

- Good venues for orchestral and performing arts

- Foundation dedicated to cultural and sporting events
- Mountain is key partner for both cultural and sporting events
- Cultural tourism is very event driven

#### **2.7.6. Vancouver**

Vancouver is a major gateway and convenient jumping-off spot to Whistler. It is one of Whistler's main local geo markets and lies in a region of more than 2 million people. Vancouver is consistently ranked in the top 10 cities in North America to live and visit by various publications including Frommers, Travel and Leisure and Condé Naste. It is noted for its spectacular natural setting and modern metropolitan core.

The City has an Office of Cultural Affairs [OCA] dedicated to working with the arts and cultural sector. The OCA has 12 full-time staff, nine of whom are cultural planners. The OCA advises City Council on issues and development strategies related to the culture sector, develops and administers cultural policies and programs and participates in city planning and development process. The City supports five major exhibiting institutions that are housed in City-owned or leased facilities and managed by independent not-for-profit societies: Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Museum, Vancouver Maritime Museum, H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, Arts, Science and Technology Centre: Science World. It also owns three civic theatres: The Orpheum, the Vancouver Playhouse and the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. It provides close to \$9 million in the forms of various grants to Vancouver's not-for-profits cultural and arts organization and to specific cultural initiatives.

The OCE has just recently ventured into cultural tourism with the advent of the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Games. In the spring of 2007, City Council approved the cost to develop a cultural tourism plan at a cost of \$65,000. They have hired a cultural planner to help develop the plan in concert with various stakeholders. The planning process is expected to take six months at least. This process is also part of the City's 10 year Arts and Culture plan which they are currently developing [see [www.vancouver.ca/creativecity](http://www.vancouver.ca/creativecity)]. The City felt it was time to take on a more "proactive" approach to future culture tourism activities.

Tourism Vancouver [TV] will assist in the culture tourism planning process albeit its role has yet to be defined. Sarah Kirby Yung, Director of Marketing and Corporate Sponsorships at TV, noted that it was too early to determine what the direction will be and how TV will influence that direction. She acknowledges that there is a need to define cultural tourism and assist the city in enhancing its reputation as a cultural destination.

This past fall TV and the City entered into a four-year strategic partnership in the form of a memorandum of understanding to help raise awareness among residents and visitors of the arts and cultural activities in the City of Vancouver. Tourism Vancouver does not have a culture tourism marketing plan and feels that it is not necessary to develop one for each niche market. Cultural activities and messaging should be part of the overall marketing strategy and TV feels that they are already doing that.

Four key initiatives have been proposed for this initial four-year partnership between the City and TV:

- Tickets Tonight- TV operates the Tickets Tonight box office outlet in its Info Centre Downtown and on its web site. It encourages visitors to attend shows that they may not have otherwise. It offers the only day-of half-price tickets in town but also offers advance tickets to a broad range of performing arts and entertainment productions. Since its inception in 2002, \$2 million in tickets have been sold. Tickets Tonight was originally established as a partnership between TV and the Alliance for Arts and Culture. In 2005, the Alliance withdrew from the partnership for financial reasons. In a new partnership with the City and TV, the City will profile Tickets Tonight on its web site on a non-exclusive basis.
- Granville Street Video Screens – the City has secured air time on two large video screens located at the corner of Granville and Robson Streets to provide access for non-profit arts organizations to advertising. TV and the City are proposing to collaborate on the delivery of some of the non-for-profit advertising content. TV will develop a video production tool kit for eligible non-profit users to assist in making promotional material ready for the video screens.
- Tourism Vancouver Television [TDTV] – TV television is broadcast directly into the hotel rooms of a network of downtown Vancouver hotels as well as into the downtown info centre, at the Peace Arch border crossing visitor centre and the Canada Place visitor centre. TV will make available air time in these outlets to exhibit the non-for-profit cultural advertising segments.
- Calendar of Events- TV and the City will work together to explore the most effective delivery of event information that will not duplicate efforts

In addition to the above, TV has also agreed to promote Vancouver's cultural scene in its various marketing and communication channels:

- Toursimvancouver.com
- Ticketstonigh.ca
- Annual publications such as the Official Visitors' Guide and
- Media relations activities

There are no financial implications for the above initiatives as the City and TV are trading and leveraging each other's existing services and resources.

### **Key observations**

- A cultural tourism plan is usually the outcome of a cultural plan. In this case the City is spearheading a cultural tourism plan at the same time; some stakeholders feel that the tourism plan will not be a marketing plan but more a framework to help build capacity and further define the granting process.

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- The City has taken a leadership role in cultural tourism and has committed resources toward the planning process
- TV sees its role as strictly promoter and marketer; not mandated to develop products
- TV considers that cultural tourism is already part of TV's efforts and thus does not necessitate a specific marketing plan
- TV is a member driven organization and reports to a Board of Directors that set the strategic focus of their operations
- Christopher Gaze, Artistic Director of Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, is a former TV Board of Director and has been very successful in forging partnerships with the accommodation sector

***Honorable mentions***

**2.7.7. Seattle, Washington**

Seattle is very similar to Vancouver in its make up and its cultural offerings. Seattle's Visitor and Convention Bureau [Visit Seattle] has recently dedicated specific resources to cultural tourism. Tracey Wickersham is their Director of Cultural Tourism and is responsible for promoting Seattle and King County as a prime destination to experience arts, history, culture and heritage and to attract the "desirable and sizable" market segment known as cultural travelers. Visit Seattle sees cultural tourism as a major differentiating factor between similar cities like Vancouver and Seattle.

**2.7.8. Québec**

The province of Québec has encouraged the development of cultural tourism and has invested in culture/heritage than most other provinces in Canada. Québec sees culture as their key draw in tourism. This is evident in any region or city you visit in Québec. Culture and heritage is front and centre in most tourism messaging and images and Québec is proud to promote its unique culture. Over the last few years, the Government of Québec has taken a strong leadership role in encouraging linkages between culture and tourism. For example it provides funding mechanisms for the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications [MCC] and the Ministère du Tourisme [TQ] to fund regional and province-wide cultural tourism projects. Most of the projects take the form of three-year funding agreements that can be renewed. The formal mechanisms for approval and funding encourage carefully-planned and realistically-phased projects. There is a wide range of partnerships all over the provinces. Some examples are:

- An agreement between the Regional Tourist Association of Saquenay-Lac- Saint-Jean and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications which has resulted in 15 cultural

projects receiving \$75,000 each to invest in product development

- The Cultural Tourism Professional Development Program: a joint training program developed and delivered by the MCC and TQ. Employees from both governments have received this specialized training and it is expected that the program will be offered to cultural and tourism organizations in different regions
- A project on the development and marketing of tourism products in Québec's Museums is financed by three partners: MCC, TQ and Economic Development Canada at a total cost of \$885,000. MCC is making a contribution of \$195,000 for three years. The project aims to implement a marketing plan for Québec's Museums. The project began in 2004 and is continuing throughout 2007.

### **Conclusion**

Each area or initiative examined is different and there is no magic formula or cookie cutter approach that can be applied. There seems to be however key characteristics or features that lead to a strong cultural tourism sector. They are:

- Strong leadership by individuals who are in key positions and have affinity for both tourism and culture
- Sustained and planned funding over time which helps overcome the planning cycle barrier
- Established attractions or institutions around which themes and messages can be grouped
- Strong level of public support or partnership
- Roles and expectations by the partners or the stakeholders are clear and understood
- Cultural sector offers market-ready experiences and is willing to work together for the greater good

Lack of venues or space also seems to be an issue raised by the cultural sector. In Vancouver, the cultural community feels that until the City can offer cultural venues that are in themselves distinct, Vancouver can never really be considered a cultural city. Others disagree and believe that the cultural community first needs to engage the tourism industry and focus on the current opportunities. In Whistler, the lack of venues is also a concern, but the cultural community is more focused on using the current capacity to its fullest potential.

### **3. Goals, Volume Objectives and Strategic Recommendations**

#### **3.1. Goals**

- To integrate the arts, cultural and heritage offerings within the overall Whistler message and visitor experience by 2008
- To collaborate with arts, cultural and heritage stakeholders to promote products that enhance the Whistler visitor experience [ongoing]
- To conduct research in areas where gaps are identified [ongoing]

#### **3.2. Volume Objectives - short to mid-term**

- Increase room night stays in Whistler with emphasis on visits of two nights or longer by end 2009
- Increase visitor inquiries on arts, cultural and heritage activities via the web and toll free number [% to be determined] by end 2009

#### **3.3. Geo Markets**

The following geo markets represent the most potential for those seeking cultural experiences based on Tourism Whistler's own visitor surveys and the studies reviewed.

Immediate

- Vancouver/Lower Mainland and BC
- Washington
- Ontario

Mid to long-term

- California
- UK
- Australia
- Mexico

It is important to note that the international visitors already have a high propensity to participate in arts/culture events based on Tourism Whistler's own visitor survey. While the activities have not been clearly defined in the survey, the level of interest would indicate there is potential to strengthen the arts and cultural component within the overall visitor experience.

### 3.4. Target Market Segments

Baby boomers are certainly an important target segment for cultural and heritage tourism. Studies also show that Generation X and Y are becoming equally important overall and will influence future tourism offerings.

#### **Baby Boomers**

Married or mature couples

- 55% female, 45% male
- 40 to 60 years old
- HHI +75K
- Well-educated
- Nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts
- Interested in experiencing local culture and heritage

#### **Gay and Lesbian**

- Dual income no kids, or single income, no kids
- 70% male, 25% female
- 35 to 49 and live in urban areas
- HHI 100K+ [US]
- Well-educated, college, university
- Enjoy the finer things in life
- Interested in new experiences
- Appreciate art and culture

#### **Generation X**

- 25 to 35
- 60% female, 40% male
- HHI 50K+
- Well educated
- Interested in cultural attractions and events
- Environmentally sensitive

#### **Families**

- middle aged segment (35-45) with children
- HHI: US\$75K-100K
- Well-educated: College, University
- Propensity to travel
- Places importance on accessibility and friendliness and kid friendly programs
- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Interested in cultural events and festivals

#### **Product Segments**

Studies show there is a significant overlap between outdoor enthusiasts and heritage and culture travellers. This overlap as noted earlier bodes well for Whistler's core product segments. In addition Tourism Whistler's own visitor survey notes good potential for cultural participation. It would seem that a segment of visitors

who already engage in skiing, hiking and golfing would represent good potential for culture and heritage in Whistler.

Two other complementary product segments for culture and heritage are:

- Group business and conferences
- Organized tours such as Tauk tours and Whistler Mountaineer

### **3.5. Strategic Recommendations**

The following section provides 8 strategic recommendations based on research analysis, stakeholder interviews and Tourism Whistler's visitor and product surveys. While the recommendations cover a two half year period, starting in the fall of 2007 and ending December 31, 2009, they are intended to be part of a continuum and should be reviewed on an ongoing basis. The strategic recommendations cover four key areas: Partnerships, Marketing and Communications, Research and Product/Market Development.

#### **Fall 2007**

**Partnership~ "partnering for success"**

#### **3.5.1. Strategy: Establish an Advisory Committee on Cultural Tourism [ACCT]**

The majority of stakeholders interviewed supported Tourism Whistler taking the lead role in developing cultural tourism as part of the overall visitor experience. It is however beyond the scope of Tourism Whistler to develop the cultural sector in Whistler. It is also recognized that the cultural sector needs to work closely with various stakeholders to help identify the opportunities.

Evidence exists that supports the involvement of various stakeholders to help enhance cultural tourism opportunities. There is already a 2020 task force on Arts, Culture and Heritage that is reviewing the sector holistically. There is also a group responsible for the arts and cultural offerings leading up to and during the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. There is an opportunity to share information with these groups and benefit from their efforts in the longer term. The focus however of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Tourism would be to enhance the current visitor experience and help further develop **cultural tourism** beyond 2010.

It is recommended that Tourism Whistler, the Whistler Arts Council and the RMOW take the lead to establish this advisory committee. The creation of the committee should be done in consultation with the various key representatives of the community including:

- Arts and cultural community
- Chamber of Commerce
- Accommodation sector
- First Nations

The Advisory Committee could comprise representatives from the above.

The key actions for the Committee should include the following:

- Establish roles and responsibilities
- Adopt guiding principles for cultural tourism as proposed in this plan [page four]
- Create an inventory of Whistler's arts and cultural offerings
- Evaluate the inventory and determine which are market-ready and which require further development. A rating system provided below could help this process. Tourism representatives would have other criteria that would help determine the visitor and market-ready appeal. The following is just a suggestion for consideration.

Four key areas are proposed to help evaluate the cultural inventory. They are: Distinctiveness, Quality, Drawing Power and Travel Motivators.

**Distinctiveness** – use a rating to determine the uniqueness of the cultural offering compared to other areas. This would help Whistler define the distinctiveness of its mountain culture. For example:

- Represents an “average” attraction; one of many similar offerings in the area
- Represents an attraction/offering that is very unique, authentic [one-of-a kind]

**Quality**- an overall rating on a five point scale [poor, fair, average, good, excellent] to evaluate customer satisfaction, physical appearance, overall experiences, operating procedures and other attributes of the cultural offering

**Drawing Power** – another four point scale to evaluate how far potential tourists would travel to visit a particular attraction; for example: 1- the cultural offering has the potential to draw visitors mainly from the local community and adjacent area; 2 -from the region but not from major cities; 3- from a major metropolitan area in the region, 3- from regional and long-haul markets etc.

**Travel Motivators**- this exercise can help define the reasons why visitors would be attracted or interested in a particular cultural offering. These reasons should align themselves to the overall “brand” attributes of Whistler. This exercise would help the Committee to agree on some of the key reasons why a tourist would want to experience the cultural offerings. This would also help in message development. For example

- Knowledge- to feel mentally stimulated and learn new things
- Energized – to feel vital and alive
- Belonging- to feel balanced and enjoy time with family and friends
- Relaxation- to relax and escape
- Exclusive- to feel rewarded and personally satisfied
- Aesthetics- the environment, the scenery

The need to build consensus by the various stakeholders on what cultural offerings should be promoted is the first step towards integrating the cultural message into Whistler's overall experience.

**3.5.2. Strategy: Enhance understanding and appreciation among the arts and cultural, tourism and business sectors**

The Advisory Committee on Cultural Tourism [ACCT] would also encourage appreciation and understanding among the various stakeholders. Some cultural organizations may not fully appreciate the business models or operating constraints of Tourism Whistler and other businesses. Similarly, tourism businesses may not fully understand the planning and funding challenges of the cultural sector. The Committee could also act as an information exchange channel and strengthen relationships. The Committee would share resources and rely on the expertise of each representative.

Key actions:

- Use the ACCT as the body that brings culture and tourism businesses together for information sharing and planning
- ACCT could consider holding meetings on a regular basis [at least bi-annually] to review key challenges and opportunities
- ACCT could consider coordinating workshops for the cultural community to share information on current marketing methods and market research available
- ACCT could also consider organizing workshops for TW and other resort staff to educate them about Whistler's culture and heritage
- Determine best method of communication to keep resort informed of the development around the ACCT e.g. online newsletter

<p><b>Marketing &amp; Communications ~ back to the basics</b></p>
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**3.5.3. Strategy: Provide visitors with general information on Whistler's current cultural offerings**

It is important that visitors are aware of Whistler's current cultural offerings. Basic general information on the type of cultural activities that exist will help visitors enhance their visit and encourage longer stays.

Key actions:

- Tourism Whistler to conduct a mini audit of its marketing and communication channels to identify gaps in the cultural offerings. For example:
  - Internet- consider creating a landing page for culture and heritage and where appropriate feature hyper-links to partner sites to avoid duplicating efforts
  - E-mail blasts- begin including general arts and culture information to current customer base

**TOURISM WHISTLER Arts, Cultural & Heritage Tourism Strategy**

- o Media relations-engage TW’s media relations’ specialists to create new stories around culture and heritage
- o Print- identify opportunities to include culture and heritage offerings in visitors guides, information packages and maps
- o Visitor Information Centres- Review current information at the visitors’ centres and ensure arts, culture and heritage is integrated in the overall mix.

**2008**

**3.5.4. Strategy: Work with the culture and heritage community to market those “market-ready” cultural offerings and events to key markets.**

Tourism Whistler can build on the work done by the ACCT and promote those offerings that have the potential to increase length of stay.

Key actions

- Identify opportunities to include arts and culture in core marketing campaigns to key markets
- Engage Tourism Whistler’s sales team to identify where they can increase awareness of cultural events and offerings in their sales pitch to the trade
- Research and identify new media channels that will help raise the profile of those cultural events/offerings

**Research ~ understanding the market**

**3.5.5. Strategy: Conduct research from Whistler’s existing and potential customers specific to cultural tourism**

Tourism Whistler conducts regular visitor surveys. These survey instruments are broad and include a variety of information. The information currently collected does not provide specific information on cultural activities. There is an opportunity to include more specific feedback on cultural interests and pursuits. Research on cultural events and offerings should also be undertaken to include quantitative information such as attendance, origin of respondents, demographics, visitor satisfaction, accessibility and programming desires.

Key actions:

- Tourism Whistler to continue to conduct primary research on existing and potential visitors to determine interest in cultural activities

- Work with the ACCT to determine what information cultural groups currently collect and methods used for collection and compare how TW collects visitor data to help create a standardized survey on cultural tourism
- Develop a standardized exit survey for 1] year-round cultural offerings/facilities and 2] events
- Determine how cultural partners will collect data and when they submit data to Tourism Whistler or to a third party; this would be a shared resource.

**Product & Market Development ~ investing in the future**

**3.5.6. Strategy: Consider new packages for cultural tourism**

Increased collaboration will lead to new ideas on packaging cultural products. Partnerships should be encouraged between the cultural community, the hotels and other business to incorporate cultural experiences in the overall visitor experience.

Key actions:

- TW to encourage the cultural community to work with the accommodation sector to create and promote packages that include cultural products
- Engage the sales staff of TW to identify new itineraries for group tours and Whistler Mountaineer
- Engage the conference sales staff of TW to identify how cultural offerings can be included in their promotions

**2009**

**3.5.7. Strategy: Encourage ongoing cultural product development**

Ongoing collaboration and research will help identify and influence new program development. The short-term focus is to identify market-ready cultural products and provide marketing support. The long-term focus needs to be on keeping the cultural offerings fresh. This will require that cultural groups and businesses continually improve their existing programs and introduce new programming or new events to enhance the visitor experience, encourage repeat business and ultimately influence the purchase decision.

Key actions:

- ACCT identifies areas where cultural groups can improve the existing offering
- ACCT to encourage the creation of new programs based on research and guiding principles
- Tourism Whistler sales and marketing teams provide feedback on the consumer and travel trades needs in promoting cultural products

**3.5.8. Strategy: Explore the idea of creating a Sea-to-Sky cultural corridor.**

Many of the stakeholders interviewed felt that Whistler could benefit from adopting a regional approach to cultural tourism. They feel that the Sea-to-Sky region offers opportunities to create innovative cultural experiences that could be packaged and promoted with Whistler at the heart of the area/corridor.

Key actions:

- Determine level of interest in creating a regional cultural tourism experience among the ACCT stakeholders
- Create an inventory of the cultural products along the corridor
- Evaluate them on their market-readiness, authenticity and distinctiveness etc. and determine which ones could be packaged together
- Identify interested partners for cooperation and development
- Determine what levels of funding would be required to develop and market a regional cultural experience

#### 4. Human and Financial Resources

To be discussed with Tourism Whistler

#### 5. Evaluation

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Method of Evaluation</b>	<b>Measure[s]</b>
Strategic framework implemented	Deadlines met, regular budget review	\$ spend on the plan [ongoing]; dates strategies and tactics achieved
Culture and Heritage integrated into Whistler message/visitor experiences	Review communication channels, review tactical results	Level of presence on web site, publications, in various campaigns; # of media fms and articles
Increased collaboration with cultural and heritage sector	Support and buy-in from stakeholders	# of new initiatives
Research on culture and heritage	Exit and visitor surveys	# of participants at cultural activities origin/demographics, visitor satisfaction levels and program desires
Increase in room night stays	Review room night statistics	# of room nights during specific periods/events
Increase in visitor inquiries	Review quarterly stats on inquiries/ review tactical results	# of inquiries on culture and heritage via web/ toll free/ visitor centres

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- [Culturematters.ca](http://Culturematters.ca)
- [Culturescope.ca](http://Culturescope.ca)
- [Okananganculturalcorridor.com](http://Okananganculturalcorridor.com)
- [Tourismvancouver.com](http://Tourismvancouver.com)

**Web sites contd.**

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- [Vancouver.ca/creativecity](http://Vancouver.ca/creativecity)
- [Vail.com](http://Vail.com)
- [Visitseattle.org](http://Visitseattle.org)
- [Whistler.ca](http://Whistler.ca)
- [Whistler.com](http://Whistler.com)
- [World-tourism.org](http://World-tourism.org)

**Stakeholder Interviews**

Keith Bennett- Resort Municipality of Whistler  
Annie Burkes- City of Vancouver  
Grant Canning- Banff Heritage Tourism Corporation  
Ian Dunn- Tourism Whistler  
Karen Goodwin- Tourism Whistler  
Shauna Hardy Mishaw- Whistler Film Festival  
Dennis Marriott- Millennium Place  
John McCormack- Consultant [Millennium Place and RMOW]  
Diane Mombourquette- Resort Municipality of Whistler  
Doti Niedermayer- Whistler Arts Council  
Michelle Payette- Tourism Whistler  
Anne Popma- Consultant [Whistler Arts Council]  
Steve Regan- Tourism Vancouver  
Kurt Schroeder- Banff Lake Louise Tourism  
Sarah Kirby Yung- Tourism Vancouver