

**TOWN OF MORDEN**  
**POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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## Introduction

Culture is a broad concept that comprises many spheres of activity. It can be defined as the way of life of a people, and in fact, it incorporates all the traits and elements that distinguish a given society as it evolves over time, including its identity and its vision of the world. Culture also includes the values, beliefs, customs, languages, and traditions of a society. Culture permits members of a group to relate to each other and to the world, and to communicate and develop their creative potential. In other words, culture is a complex set of solutions that a human community inherits, adapts, or invents in order to cope with the challenges of its natural and social environment.

While the concept of culture as defined in its broadest sense encompasses most aspects of our everyday lives, the focus of this policy will be on the cultural areas of natural and human heritage, arts, cultural industries, and cultural enterprises in Morden.

Culture permeates the daily lives of Mordenites in many ways. Visits to museums and art galleries, public displays of artwork, theatrical, musical and dance performances, community festivals and appreciation of natural heritage are all examples of how culture touches our lives.

Everyone in society shares the responsibility for encouraging and supporting culture. Serving as a representative of the people, the Morden Town Council is entrusted with the task of nurturing and sustaining culture for succeeding generations.

The successful implementation of this cultural policy relies on the leadership of Council, the strength and vitality of partnerships, and more specifically, the significant contributions of our artists, volunteers, private-sector organizations, and community groups. In turn, the growth, development and quality of cultural activities and programs inspire pride and further commitment from the community.

## **Policy Context**

### **Vision**

Morden takes pride in its roots, its natural environment, its rich cultural heritage built by its past generations, and the creative work of its artists.

Morden wants to ensure that its residents and future generations can benefit from a healthy, stimulating, and unique cultural environment, one that fosters a sense of pride, identity, belonging and openness to the world.

Morden wishes to promote and value the rich diversity of its many cultures, its artistic and heritage resources, and the excellence of all forms of artistic expression found within its borders, all of which gives Morden an enviable quality of life.

### **Mission**

The Town of Morden will provide leadership and work with other stakeholders to ensure that culture in Morden continues to grow in a spirit of respect for various languages and cultures.

Morden will encourage cultural development by promoting such things as artistic excellence and intercultural dialogue and exchange.

Morden will recognize and appreciate its heritage, foster excellence in the work of its artists and promote cultural diversity.

Morden will take steps to develop a wider audience and improve access to cultural resources for its residents.

## Beliefs

This cultural policy is based on the following fundamental beliefs held by the Town of Morden.

- That culture substantiates our society, helping us to define who we are as a people.
- That multiculturalism stimulates new ideas and challenges us to look at life in other ways, and that the contributions of the Anglophone, Francophone, German and other cultures living in Morden enhance the lives of all Mordenites.
- That, beginning early in life, culture has a profound beneficial effect on the development of the individual, and that this needs to be supported lifelong learning opportunities.
- That the expertise of artists and heritage professionals must be valued and recognized.
- That artistic independence, integrity, the pursuit of excellence and freedom of expression must be encouraged and supported.
- That culture, including cultural industries and enterprises, plays an important role in the economic prosperity of our Town.
- That heritage resources are important, and that heritage stewardship encompasses our cultural and natural environment, inherited from the past, contributed to by the present, and handed on to the future.
- That it has a responsibility, in partnership with others, to protect and enhance the cultural heritage resources and artistic expression of Morden.

## Guiding Principles

The following principles will serve to guide the Town of Morden in establishing goals, developing broad strategies and new initiatives, and reviewing exiting programs.

### *Quality of Life*

Culture is a measure of the vitality, quality of life and health of a society. Cultural heritage and artistic activities play a significant role in sustaining and enhancing the social, educational, economic, and intellectual life of each Mordenite.

### *Diversity*

Each Mordenite should be proud to share with others the richness of his or her cultural background and celebrate the Town's diversity.

### *Access*

Residents of Morden need access to cultural resources and activities, given the many benefits derived from exposure to them.

### *A Competitive Morden*

The economic benefit of cultural products and activities, as well as the associated employment opportunities, are of growing importance to Morden. A supportive environment for the growth of the Town's cultural sector is a sound investment that will help position Morden competitively.

### *Leadership*

Cultural resources are essential to the vitality and growth of culture in Morden. Developing them is a shared responsibility, requiring the leadership of Council, the establishment of partnerships, and consultations with artists and cultural professionals in areas of cultural policy.

### *Creativity & Excellence*

Creativity is a source of well-being. However, it cannot develop in a vacuum; it needs a nurturing environment. Creativity and excellence can best be nurtured in an environment where there are opportunities to acquire the necessary knowledge and competencies, where the pursuit of a career in a chosen discipline is encouraged, and where excellence is rewarded.

### *Critical, Creative & Independent Thinking*

Creative, critical and independent thinking are essential for a healthy and flourishing society. These skills, acquired through education and lifelong learning opportunities are fundamental to the development of a vibrant culture.

### *Stewardship*

Our natural and cultural heritage establishes the foundation upon which our society is built, and must be passed with care from generation to generation. All Mordenites need to respect the integrity and take responsibility for the stewardship of our natural and cultural resources to ensure their preservation and enhancement for future generations.

### *Valuing the Cultural Community*

The contribution of the cultural community is valued. The need for balanced recognition among cultural sectors and arts disciplines is acknowledged.

### *Sustainability*

The strength of organizations supports artistic creation and excellence. Morden's arts and heritage organizations require the skills and resources to thrive in a changing environment and to achieve long-term viability.

## **Policy Goals**

The policy goals identified below establish the general direction that will be pursued by the Town of Morden regarding Arts and heritage, in order to move Morden toward the ideal described in the Vision for this policy.

1. To improve access to and awareness of culture in Morden and to increase participation in cultural activities and to encourage excellence in their endeavors.
2. To preserve and increase the opportunities within Morden's culture and its cultural resources.
3. To maximize the economic benefits of culture in order to improve Morden's position in the local economy.

## Conclusion

The adoption of a Cultural Policy for Morden is not an end in itself, but a starting point, a move toward the future, and a sign of openness in a constantly changing world.

This policy is a tool that will enable the Town Council and other partners in the arts and heritage sectors to share a common vision for the development of culture in our Town.

The Town of Morden will continue to encourage individual and collective creativity, whether rooted in traditional culture, supported by new technologies, or bearing the bold stamp of contemporary culture.

Mordenites have tremendous creative potential; as individuals, they express themselves in different ways, as they seek to take part in the cultural life of Morden.

*Creativity, expressed in all forms and at all ages, is a good indicator of well-being, a powerful stimulus for social and economic prosperity, and an essential component of the culture of peace.*

Thus, Morden will continue to acknowledge our heritage, support cultural diversity and continue to promote the unique features that enrich our Town's culture.