

Chelsea Cultural Policy



Living in a Culture - Friendly Environnement



Chelsea Cultural Policy

Living in a Culture-friendly Environment

Consisting of three distinct display areas, the cover page contains a text banner head, an abstract illustration, and five icons that together represent the richness of the Chelsea cultural environment.

Two text banners frame the cover page and present the wording and spirit of the policy. The upper banner states the subject of the brochure: *Chelsea Cultural Policy* and the lower banner declares the spirit of the policy: *Living in a Culture-Friendly Environment*.

The two remaining display areas consist of visual components that complement the message by suggesting that the policy focuses on cultural events (the five representational icons) and alluding to desired harmony with the cultural environment (abstract).

The brightly coloured abstract symbolizes Chelsea decor with its vivid seasonal colours and boundless vistas. Repetition of the motif also expresses the desire for continuity underlying the Chelsea cultural policy.

In contrast to this abstract image, the clean lines and subjects of the five framed images evoke specific cultural sectors, such as literature, dance, theatre, music, and Chelsea historical patrimony.

The traditional covered bridge logo, often seen in Municipal documents, is supported here with other images from the cultural scene. The scope of the *Chelsea Cultural Policy* is extremely vast; its corresponding composite image is therefore well suited to this far-reaching policy.

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Mayor's Message

"Culture strengthens and promotes knowledge."

Edgar Morin



If there is one place where culture and environment have always enjoyed a productive relationship, it is certainly Chelsea. First, there is the ancestral culture of our first nations, with our game-rich forests and gleaming waters.

There is agriculture, with its earthy mosaic of fields, pathways, and homes. Then, too, is religious culture, with its picturesque churches and burial grounds. Of course, the constant is human culture, with its citizens from a diverse range of languages of origins, all sharing in Chelsea a love of the environment and a will to preserve it. Finally, there's artistic culture, expressing the many facets of our vision and the people that inhabit our community.

In recognition of the importance of the culture that is integral to the very fabric of our municipality, it is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I present to you

this document, marking a significant step forward in our development. I am speaking of Municipal Council's approval of Chelsea's very first cultural policy. Far from an end in itself, this policy is an initial collective reflection on the views of Chelsea residents regarding the cultural development of this community.

This document is a living testimony to the cultural vitality of our municipality and to the profound commitment of area residents and culture professionals to improve the quality of life for our citizens.

It is my fondest wish that the cultural community and the community in general appropriate this policy and allow it to take wings for the well being of all; for the harmony, respect, and enrichment of the community. I also trust that the cultural partners within the Municipality, the MRC des Collines and the region will make a sustained commitment to ensuring the longevity of this strategy.

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A key player, Municipal Council intends to use every means within its power to implement the suggestions and recommendations that citizens put forth during public hearings on this matter.

Before I invite you to peruse the pages of this document, which we proudly submit to you, I would like to thank all of the citizens, artists, and cultural organizations who participated at the various stages of the consultation process initiated by Recreation and Cultural Services. Thanks to their generous contribution,

Chelsea will be ready to pursue harmonious cultural development, combining all of the talents of our community—cultural, artistic, natural, or patrimonial.



Jean Perras,
Mayor of Chelsea

Introduction



The Municipality of Chelsea's cultural policy is the result of a lengthy thought process calling upon all parties concerned by cultural life in our region. From the outset, the Municipality has demonstrated its willingness to ensure the

transparency of this process to make certain that this policy would reflect our collective vision of cultural development.

The cultural policy is designed to pinpoint support for culture within overall community development, recognize Chelsea's cultural identity, and protect and enrich the elements that make it unique.

Culture increases the worth of the region's natural attractions, consolidates the bases of an economy receptive to cultural business and industry, and

promotes tourism in the region. The inclusion of culture among municipal priorities is part and parcel of social and economic development. This commitment contributes in its own way toward increasing citizens' feelings of belonging and pride in their community. It demonstrates to the world Chelsea's vision of its future in the spirit of its expressed mission.

Lastly, there can be no sustainable development without the involvement of all residents. The principles and guidelines defined in this policy will enable all Chelsea citizens to become involved, to learn more about culture, to become aware of the freedom of expression of our local artists, and of everyone's involvement in building a lifestyle framework of which each citizen will feel a part. Essentially, the policy is designed to give residents cultural development tools for their community.

Background



In 1875, the territory that became the Municipality of Chelsea was carved out of the Township of Hull. Its name until 1990 reflected this origin: the “Municipality of the West Part of the Township of Hull,” and it extended from Ironside

to Farm Point. On April 28, 1990, drawing on the names of the two major villages at its centre, the territory adopted its current name, Municipality of Chelsea.

Although its hills and streams were known to indigenous peoples and fur traders before the nineteenth century, it was only in 1800 that the first settlers arrived in Hull Township. Over the next 75 years, the land was broken into farms, the native white pine harvested as a cash crop, and business began to thrive in the area.

When the Municipality’s first council met on March 1, 1875, it was at the house of Charles Kingsbury. This building, located on Route 105 in Chelsea, was later purchased by the O’Neil family. The first mayor, Timothy Moffatt, arrived from Ireland in 1822.

The 1875 municipal valuation roll listed 819 rate-payers. Most were farmers, but the list also included a butcher, a baker, a cabinet-maker, a doctor, a shoemaker, several hotelkeepers and shopkeepers, more tavern-keepers (8) than public servants (6), and one fiddler! There were several schools and churches which, of course, did not pay taxes. Methodists and Presbyterians had churches in the Village of Chelsea, and the Catholic church was located in Old Chelsea. An Anglican pastoral charge was also established in Chelsea in this year, and their church erected in 1877. Nowadays the Methodists and Presbyterians have joined forces to become a United Church, the Anglican

and Catholic churches have continued in Chelsea and Old Chelsea, and another Catholic church is located in Farm Point. Two primary schools, one francophone and one anglophone, now welcome the children of Chelsea.

The first town hall was built in 1876. This structure, measuring only 10 metres by 7 metres (36 feet by 24 feet), was located in the heart of Old Chelsea, and served the community until 1956. At that time, a new building was erected to house a fire hall and municipal offices. In 1988, a home dating to the 1930s was purchased to provide space for administrative services and the mayor's office, while other departments remained in the old municipal building. Since 1997, all municipal departments have shared a common location at 100 Old Chelsea Road.

Over the years, Chelsea has become a prime destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Swimming, nature walks, cycling, hiking, and skiing are just a few of the recreational activities that attract people to our community.

Chelsea is also known for its fine dining, with several outstanding restaurants that offer French and vegetarian cuisine and other fine foods. There are also a smokehouse selling locally prepared fish and game, a bakery and catering service, cafés and grocery stores offering a range of organic products and other interesting food items. Each autumn, Chelsea's spectacular fall foliage attracts numerous visitors, and local artists welcome them to their studios.

Chelsea was already an artistic and cultural centre when, from 1959 until 1967, Crawley Film founder Budge Crawley created the first cinematographic industry in the Ottawa Valley. Crawley specialized in documentary film, and received an Oscar in 1975 for his efforts. The Crawley building, which had been unused for many years, reopened in 1996 to house the Chelsea Public Works department.

Throughout the years, Chelsea has kept its natural charm and has taken steps to protect the environment in which we live in.

Current Situation



Our Assets

Chelsea's driving cultural forces are the country atmosphere of the village and the presence of an extremely high concentration of innovative artists who are so generous

in donating their time, and so willing to collaborate with the educational institutions in the community, with the municipality, and with volunteer organizations in the sector.

At this time, Chelsea is proud to be able to depend upon the following outstanding assets:

- A municipal library houses a collection of some 11,000 books and features weekly storytelling for children, a wide range of artistic and cultural exhibits, workshops and conferences highlighting guest artists, two book clubs, a branch library at Farm Point, and a monthly book loan service in Hollow Glen, which also offers a children's story hour and brings in special guests;
- Cultural activity programmes, such as dance, ballet, painting, music, photography, crafts and craft fairs, and Chelsea Community Day;
- Religious and cultural organizations, such as the Castenchel Choir, the Gatineau Valley Historical Society, Artists in their Environment, as well as Catholic, Anglican, and United churches;
- Administrative support and meeting rooms available to organizations;
- A multicultural community and two art galleries;
- Numerous artists who participate in annual events, including the Studio Tour, an event during which some dozen artists invite the public to visit their home or studios; Art in the Park, which features some twenty artists; and Ms. Nicole Rhéaume's

country showing, which brings together approximately fifteen artists;

- Numerous historical sites, including the Pioneer Cemetery;
- A well educated citizenry that appreciates art in all its forms;
- Harmony and exchange between the resident francophone and anglophone populations;
- The presence of an immense number of talented, well known artists;
- The presence of Gatineau Park and its vast natural habitat;
- The establishment of a craft market, which has begun as a pilot project during the spring of 2005.

Our Needs

The cultural sector has considerable influence on citizens' quality of life, for example by creating employment, contributing to the development of the knowledge-based economy, and establishing new industries. However, the cultural sector will face a number of challenges during the next few years.

Chelsea currently suffers from a severe lack of infrastructure designed to create and display cultural products. Among other things, we need:

- A 300-400-seat theatre for theatre arts and workshops, musical events, and professional shows;
- An outdoor stage dedicated to theatre arts;
- A creative studio and showroom equipped with technical facilities;
- A larger municipal library.

Resources to support artists and their activities and provide access to distribution are rather limited. The people would like:

- Closer collaboration between the Municipality and local and regional cultural organizations;
- Consideration of the importance of Chelsea history and heritage and the possibility of enacting a bylaw to preserve Chelsea heritage;
- Creation of a support programme for artistic creation and for promotion of the artists and their activities.

Many people would like to increase accessibility and public participation in local cultural pursuits. For example, they would like to:

- Increase the range of artistic and cultural activities offered in municipal programming.

Vision



Mindful of the steadily evolving quality of life of its citizens, the Municipality of Chelsea supports cultural development. To this end, the Municipality is committed to supporting the vitality of its cultural community, promoting activities,

increasing citizens' awareness, and coordinating the efforts of the various players.

The Municipality has decided to adopt a cultural policy to better coordinate and maximize cultural and heritage development efforts. Today's reality is more highly specific than in the past, as there are more artists, art galleries, and cultural events, and greater segmentation of the cultural structure (dramatic arts, visual arts, handicraft trades, etc.). However, accessibility to culture requires favourable conditions. For residents, this means concrete opportunities to appreciate culture in general and the arts in particular

through freely chosen activities, to value local heritage, to enjoy outstanding library services and to take part in various community events. For cultural organizations and artists, this means offering well structured activities, regardless of their size.

In terms of cultural programming, promotion of popular culture, and architectural heritage, however, we feel a need for support to ensure the development of activities in an effort to bring people together, entertain them, and increase their awareness of the cultural life of the community and the riches surrounding them, all the while striving to meet their expectations. The Municipality has a responsibility to the cultural life of this community to establish partnerships that meet the expectations of the sector. These agreements must enable the interested parties to together identify the means and limitations of the cooperation they intend to maintain towards the public, as their resources permit.

A cultural policy will enable the community to develop feelings of pride and belonging by increasing awareness of the scope and dynamism of culture. Promoting culture will also help to project a distinctive image and help to increase tourism and social and economic development.

This cultural policy is needed so that we can:

- Express and affirm our local cultural identity;
- Better promote the expectations and needs of our community;
- Develop a long term vision of our cultural development;
- Make culture a municipal concern;
- Position Chelsea on the regional cultural scene; to assist in its discussions and negotiations with cultural agencies and other players;
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of each player involved in the implementation of cultural activities.

Guidelines

Culture in all of its various forms gives Chelsea its unique character, which features a wealth of artistic talent, cultural diversity, interesting historical, architectural and landscape heritage – in short, the quality of our lifestyle. Not only does this policy encompass all

of the cultural activities pursued in Chelsea, it is also intended to promote their development in a spirit of cooperation with the proactive forces of the cultural community. To this end, the Municipality favours the following guidelines, targeting an assortment of general objectives.

The Municipality has identified five general principles to guide its intervention in cultural affairs:

1. Since culture is an undeniable community asset that benefits all ages, it must be universally accessible and vigorously promoted.
2. Culture, heritage and history are components of community identity and enrichment, since they promote citizens' feelings of belonging and pride in their community.
3. Chelsea's dynamic cultural life will benefit from initiatives for cooperation, exchange, collaboration, and partnership with public and private players and neighbouring communities.
4. Resident Chelsea artists are cultural ambassadors for the Municipality and should be encouraged and supported in their creative efforts.
5. Cultural recreation is recognized and encouraged as a learning tool and instrument for community development.

Objectives and Orientations



A cultural policy will enable the community to develop a feeling of pride and belonging by increasing awareness of the scope and dynamism of culture. Promoting culture will also help to project a distinctive image and help

to increase tourism and social and economic development.

This policy organizes cultural intervention in Chelsea into six major sectors: the Cultural and Heritage Development Committee, cultural facilities, heritage and history, the libraries, promoting arts and culture, and multimedia.

Cultural & Heritage Development Committee

The Municipality hopes to encourage the combining of forces active in the community and to thus create a philosophy of resource sharing. The current economic climate calls upon all cultural players to strive to rationalize available cultural resources.

Cultural & Heritage Development committee will be convened to oversee application of the cultural policy provisions and to make recommendations to Municipal Council. Depending upon available resources, this committee would plan and orient cultural intervention to consider major outlines for municipal intervention in cultural affairs:

- by cooperating and sharing information with/among the various cultural agencies;

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- by recommending to Municipal Council plans of action to be adopted under the cultural policy;
- by submitting regular reports to be used to measure progress and assess actions taken;
- by coordinating cultural promotion efforts;
- by identifying solutions to issues involving the financing of cultural activities, as needed;
- by representing cultural players in the community.

To ensure adequate representation, the committee should be composed of representatives from the various activity sectors, including culture, education, the private and public sectors, business, and the Municipality.

Furthermore, through its cultural programming, the Municipality will promote the inclusion of culture among municipal priorities while consolidating current cultural services. It must develop programming that affords each resident access to initiation, awareness, training, and cultural expression.

The general objectives of the Cultural & Heritage Development Committee:

- Encourage partnership. Support cultural organizations in their efforts to obtain funding and professional and/or technical support from the private or public sectors.
- Encourage contact and exchanges with other cities and countries.
- Consolidate Municipal support for accredited cultural organizations by providing technical, materiel, or professional assistance needed to pursue their activities.
- Encourage the emergence of a new generation of talented, dynamic artists and artisans.
- Strive to provide professional guidance for municipal educational programmes.
- Initiate activities that favour increased interaction between artists and residents and help to increase learning.

Cultural Facilities

Chelsea currently suffers from a severe lack of cultural infrastructure. The situation considerably limits accessibility to the various facets of culture.

Today, the main distribution poles for cultural activities are the main library, Galerie Old Chelsea, Joinery Co., the Chelsea Community Center, and the artists' studios. To stage a play or other cultural event for an audience of more than 300 people, organizers must make arrangements outside the municipal region. Area artists have also frequently expressed a need for access to studio space.

The acquisition of cultural facilities to increase accessibility to cultural products enabling the harmonious development of each cultural player is a key focus of municipal concern. Cultural facilities play a fundamental role in the retention and development of the artists and artisans in the region. They encourage the creation of new cultural events that enrich the cultural life of the community.

Since future investment in the new infrastructure calls for a sizable budget, it must be part of a planning process that reflects the expectations of the community. It is therefore important to make a wide range of artistic and cultural works and products accessible to the greatest number of people possible.

See section 4.4 for a more detailed discussion of library services.

The general objective for cultural facilities:

- Recognize that cultural development in Chelsea depends, among other things, on the permanent presence of artists and artistic groups in the Municipality and that it is crucial to provide for them a stimulating infrastructure that will inspire them to practise their art in this community.

Heritage and History

The municipal region boasts a rich history of which unfortunately too few people are aware. To date, only the Gatineau Valley Historical Society acts as a prime mover in this area. The Society continues to maintain up-to-date microfilm records of historical documents, letters and photographs. The organization's main source of funding is its annual auction. The Municipality provides a no-cost working space and storage in the library basement.

Awareness, promotional, and marketing activities are elements that merit particular attention. Citizens must be informed of the significance of heritage. We must raise public interest in discussions and in the conservation and protection of our heritage.

The Municipality will look into the possibility of participating in certain relevant government programs, such as *Conservation du patrimoine bâti* or *Revitalisation des vieux quartiers*, sponsored by the SHQ (Quebec Housing Board - Société de l'habitation du Québec).

Natural heritage assumes the development and protection of green space and the identification of sites where the presence of trees adds to the quality of the sector, along with the adoption of protective measures. Moreover, the use of screen planting could considerably diminish the negative impact of industrial and commercial zones on surrounding natural areas.

It is also important to consider human heritage—those men and women responsible for major changes who have left their mark on Chelsea history, each in his or

her own way. They are a significant part of our heritage and merit our respect.

The general objectives for heritage and history:

- Agree that the Municipality has a collection of sectors and sites with unique identity, and that should be developed and maintained.
- Encourage respectful, coordinated exploitation of our heritage.
- Encourage the identification, preservation, utilization and promotion of Municipal heritage.
- Take advantage of Centre Village construction projects to restore the architectural landscape and highlight the features of Chelsea's heritage.
- Confirm the role of the archives as a source of identity and significant part of our collective memory.
- Recognize the importance of cultural tourism as a development instrument for cultural identity.
- Raise public awareness of the men and women who have shaped the history of Chelsea.

Library

The mission of the municipal library is to encourage free access to information for all citizens. The library objective is to provide a wide range of services that respond to the diverse interests of citizens by meeting their expectations in terms of information, education, culture, and recreation.

The Municipality also supports the 1994 UNESCO declaration: “The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups” and recognizes the library’s key role as an instrument for cultural leadership and development.

The municipal library is a member of CRSBPO (Centre régional de services aux bibliothèques publiques de l’Outaouais). Since 1996, the main branch has occupied space adjacent to Town Hall. Over the years, the library has grown at an exponential rate. At present, limited business hours, selection of resources and space seriously hamper fulfillment of the library’s prime mandate: to make relevant literary information available to the entire population. It is also very important to add to the reference collection in an effort to assist teens in their educational research.

There are two library branches within the Municipality. The main branch in the Old Chelsea sector is open 26 hours per week. The second branch, in Farm Point, has been opened under the auspices of the municipal library and operated by an outstanding group of formidable volunteers.

A comparison of annual statistics for 2000 and 2003 shows remarkable increases over the time span.

	2000	2003	Increase
\$ book purchases	\$2,500	\$5,000	100 %
# users	10,881	12,557	15 %
Borrowing	23,635	28,214	19 %
Story time	784	1,493	90 %
Internet	269	639	38 %
Other services	1,000	2,086	109 %
# members	1,743	1,916	10 %

Note that 29 percent of current Chelsea residents hold library cards.

The Municipality recognizes the importance of developing the municipal library as a centre for the distribution of all culture and promoting its role in the development of cultural activity. Increasing the accessibility of all citizens to municipal library services by increasing library funding to add to private collections of volumes and develop literature-related activities are priorities. We will only be able to undertake these new efforts once the library has been expanded.

General objectives for the library:

- Favour the presentation of artistic works of all sorts.
- Encourage Chelsea students to visit the libraries and art galleries more often by offering activities specially designed to be of interest to this age group.
- Promote and position the municipal library as a centre of knowledge and key location for new information technologies.
- Acknowledge that the municipal library mission is to disseminate culture, education, animation, information, and recreation.

- Recognize that books and reading are essential cornerstones in the development of culture and knowledge and, to that end, recognize the importance of a network of accessible, well equipped libraries.
- Favour the autonomy of the library by ensuring that it meets the specific needs of the various user groups in accordance with current Quebec standards.

Promoting Arts and Culture

For many years the Municipality of Chelsea has played host to cultural events, through the auspices of the professional artists and cultural events firmly implanted in the region, in terms of creation and production as well as distribution. As a driving force behind strong participation, numerous events, including, Artists in Their Environment, Art in the Park, Ms. Nicole Rhéaume's art weekends, and many others, must be maintained and encouraged. The influence of these activities serves as a major force in the development and discovery of other cultural facets of the Municipality.

By developing the promotional perspective, the Municipality is basically striving to establish mechanisms to promote the various cultural events and facilitate the circulation of information regarding the cultural events and products and the artists themselves. Increasing the visibility of cultural events also involves steering people toward venues conducive to discussion, communication, and learning of the various disciplines.

The Municipality recognizes the contribution of amateur artists and expresses its intent to support amateur production in the basic principles and in other guidelines of its policy. By identifying and specifying this orientation, the Municipality seeks to create a philosophy and structure that attracts Chelsea's artists and acknowledges the quality of their work. The Municipality seeks to create conditions favourable to the integration of the various forms of culture and increase the visibility of local artists and to increase all citizens' awareness of all forms of creativity and expression.

General objectives for promotion of arts and culture:

- Support development of cultural activities to better expose the public to the many facets of the artistic scene.
- Favour access to cultural products and musical, cultural, and artistic events in Chelsea and throughout the region.
- Establish mechanisms to facilitate the establishment of new technologies, including production of a web site designed to promote community artistic and cultural activities.
- Promote the Municipal image, including an artistic and cultural dimension in its communications instruments.
- Recognize private sector commitment through initiatives that favour visibility and public recognition.
- Promote artistic works.
- Support artists' efforts by staging public and cultural events.

- Acknowledge the importance of giving Chelsea artists a significant place in the various public events.
- Establish mechanisms designed to present artistic works in Municipal public space.
- Increase the number of participants in cultural activities by implementing projects to raise awareness and develop new audiences, this in direct cooperation with artists and citizens.

Multimedia

Current advances in the fields of broadband networks and multimedia applications have prompted the emergence of a new field of art—digital.

The term *multimedia* applies to all software and techniques allowing the integration of textual computer data with sound and image—both fixed and animated. In addition to combining these three elements, multimedia techniques call for a redefinition of ways to consult computer products, both popular and professional, especially by introducing the notion of interactivity and navigational tools, such as hypertext and hypermedia.

The cinematographic and television production industry in our region is experiencing a difficult period of economic development. In terms of mass media, we know that radio, television, newsprint, and internet are the cultural tools most used by older citizens, while youth tend to prefer video and multimedia.

General objective for multimedia:

- Recognize the emergence of new technologies, such as digital, that expand the frontiers of art and stimulate the economy and cultural tourism.

Varia

We have also retained the following general objectives:

- Work closely with public and private schools to ensure that practice of the arts is given proper priority.
- Encourage and support the presentation of cultural programming in the various municipal sectors to strengthen quality of life in the sector and increase accessibility.

A Final Word



We recognize the importance of culture in maintaining and developing our community environment. This cultural vitality is part and parcel of our heritage, our collective experience. We must protect it, preserve it, and give it new wings. This policy cannot work without cooperation. Our cultural vitality depends on each of us. It is the fruit of our combined, concerted efforts, our common will, and should be treasured.

The Municipality of Chelsea would like to thank all of the people and organizations who helped to prepare this Cultural Policy, in particular the members of the Recreation and Cultural Committee and the Gatineau Valley Historical Society. We would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution of artists, cultural organizations, municipal staff members and residents who participated in the public consultations.

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Members who participated in workshops

Luce Gilbert
Councillor, Ward 2
Chairperson, Recreation and Cultural Committee
September 2004

Peter Laurent Griffin
Councillor, Ward 3
Former Chairperson, Recreation and Cultural
Committee
December 2001 to August 2004

Gatineau Valley Historical Society

Jay Atherton
Carol Martin

Local artists

Gary Dahl
Francine Dalphond
Gayle Hermick
Heather Lamorie
Reid McLachlan
David McMahon
Katherine Sandford
Susan Spoke

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