

City of White Rock  
Arts Economic Strategy  
& Implementation Plan  
2013–2017



## ECONOMIC STRATEGY

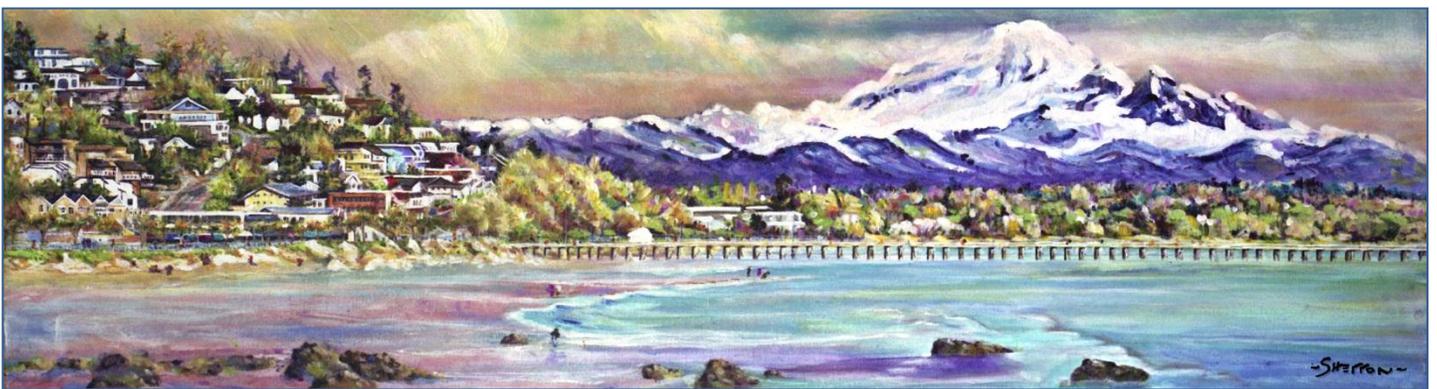
Mayor's Arts Economic Task Force  
November 2012

**WHITE ROCK**  
*My City by the Sea!*

[www.whiterockcity.ca](http://www.whiterockcity.ca)

*“Strong creative communities are known to attract business and industry, bringing employment and additional wealth to the community. Industries of the emerging information-age economy value quality-of-life issues for their employees, and are attracted to communities, regardless of their geography, that actively support arts and culture.”*

Creative Connections: Arts and Culture in BC Communities,  
Union of BC Municipalities, 1997



*Painting by Sherron Fairbairn*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

White Rock is known for its large number of accomplished artists and crafts people, active cultural organizations and a diverse concentration of arts related businesses.

The arts and culture sector in White Rock creates both social and economic wealth, and provides significant benefits that enrich the quality of life in the city.

Some of the ways the arts contribute to economic development in White Rock include creation of employment, business taxes, business spending, cultural industries, cultural tourism, event hosting, community revitalization and beautification and indirect spending.

The City has an awareness of the value of the arts and culture sector and the vast contribution it makes to the community. This growing appreciation of the art and culture sector is reflected in City plans and strategies including:

- The 2012–2014 Corporate Priorities of the City of White Rock include a vision of a City where “arts and culture flourish and our heritage is celebrated.” Key Strategies include the “development of a Cultural Strategic Plan.”
- The City of White Rock’s Cultural/Social/Wellbeing Strategic Priority is “to continue to distinguish itself from others through development and support of unique social, cultural and recreational opportunities.”
- The Official Community Plan contains policies to support, enhance and promote art in White Rock and to celebrate and promote White Rock’s culture, to strengthen civic identity and pride and attract tourism for the benefit of the local economy.

White Rock City Council has recognized the potential of the local arts and culture sector to become a major economic generator in the community. To move on this opportunity, a decision was made by Mayor and Council to create an Arts Economic Task Force to collaborate with stakeholders in the community to produce a plan that would build on existing community programs, cultural assets and social infrastructure to generate economic activity through arts and cultural activities and events.

On April 16, 2012 White Rock City Council endorsed Terms of Reference for the Arts Economic Task Force whose purpose was “to provide Council with a strategic plan for the arts as an economic generator in the community.” The Task Force was appointed by the Mayor and was comprised of 9 representatives of the local arts community, 2 City staff and one non-voting member of City Council (and an alternate). Their work spanned a period of four months (July 17–November 15, 2012) and consisted of best practices research, consultation with stakeholders and several strategic planning sessions.

This document outlines the results of their work, the planning process that followed, as well as their recommended Implementation Plan for the Arts Economic Strategy. The outcomes from the process are summarized into a vision statement, 4 strategic goals and 17 recommended actions to be achieved over the next 5 years (2013–2017).

For a community to embrace the arts as a means of stimulating the local economy takes a commitment to adopt a common vision, strategic goals and specific measurable actions by local government and the key stakeholders in the community. The vision statement for the Arts Economic Strategy is:

**“White Rock is a world class arts and cultural destination that enhances the quality of life for the entire community and its visitors.”**

Council at their Regular Council Meeting on October 29, 2012 approved this vision statement.

**Four Strategic Goals guide the Arts Economic Strategy:**

1. Collaboration between business and the arts;
2. Enhanced community partnerships;
3. Broaden the economic potential and contribution of the arts; and
4. Support local artists.

Under each of the four strategic goals, a number of actions are recommended. These actions are outlined in Section 6.0 of the Strategic Plan.

Upon adoption of the Arts Economic Strategy by Council, staff and community arts and culture stakeholders will advance the strategic goals and actions through annual work plans. Staff will monitor and report out on the progress and achievements on an annual basis to Council and Semiahmoo Arts.

Arts related businesses already contribute greatly towards the local economy, however, the consensus of the Arts Economic Task Force is that with further leadership and financial support, the arts and culture sector could become a major economic generator for the community of White Rock.



*Oxford Street Studio–International Artist Day Opening*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Project Lead/Facilitator

Eric Stepura, Director Leisure Services, City of White Rock

### Project Support, Layout and Design

Lorraine Sym, Committee & Freedom of Information Clerk, City of White Rock

### Arts Economic Task Force Strategy Members

Wayne Baldwin, Mayor of the City of White Rock and Project Initiator

Councillor Helen Fathers, Council Liaison

Councillor Louise Hutchinson, Alternate Council Liaison

Geoff Giffin, Committee Chairperson and President, Peninsula Productions

Cathy Burrell, past Committee Chairperson and Social Media Instructor/Art Business Operator

Kelly Breaks, Owner Blue Frog Recording Studio

Roxanne Charles, Artist and Student

Barbara Cooper, Chairperson Semiahmoo Arts

Sherron Fairbairn, Artist and Photographer

Chris MacClure, Artist and Owner of Golden Cactus Studio

Monica Tusnady, Music Teacher, Surrey School District

Stacy Wilson, White Rock Businesswoman



*Live at Blue Frog Studios. Photograph by Lisa Bayer*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2012–2014 Corporate Priorities of the City of White Rock include a vision of a City where “arts and culture flourish and our heritage is celebrated.” Key Strategies include the development of a “Cultural Strategic Plan.”

One key component of most municipal cultural strategic plans is the advancement of the arts as an economic generator in the community. To move on this opportunity, a decision was made by Mayor and Council to create an Arts Economic Task Force to collaborate with stakeholders in the community to produce a plan that will build on existing community programs and cultural assets and social infrastructure to generate economic activity through arts and cultural events and activities.

On April 16, 2012 White Rock City Council endorsed Terms of Reference for the Arts Economic Task Force. The Terms of Reference for the Arts Economic Task Force are outlined in Section 2.1 of this report.

The Arts Economic Task Force is a task force appointed by the Mayor and whose purpose is “to provide Council with a strategic plan for the arts as an economic generator in the community.”

On June 27, 2012 White Rock City Council hosted a Community Forum entitled “Arts, Culture and the Economy in White Rock.” The public forum focused on ways to support the arts and cultural identity of White Rock, and how to make better use of these assets in stimulating the local economy. Twenty-eight people attended, including several members of Council. The public forum discussions and feedback questionnaires generated a wealth of ideas and revealed the passion that many local residents have for arts and culture in the community.



The first meeting of the Arts Economic Task Force was held July 17, 2012. The Task Force was formed and comprised of 9 representatives of the arts community, 2 City staff and one non-voting member of City Council. Their work spanned over 4 months of strategic planning sessions.

This document outlines the results of their work, the planning process that followed as well as their expectations for the Arts Economic Strategy. The outcomes from the process are summarized into 4 strategic goals and 17 recommended actions to be achieved over the next 5 years (2013–2017).

## 1.1 The Arts in White Rock

A vibrant arts community plays a valuable role in the City of White Rock’s Cultural/Social/Wellbeing Strategic Priority “to continue to distinguish itself from others through development and support of unique social, cultural and recreational opportunities.”

The Official Community Plan contains policies to support, enhance and promote art in White Rock and to celebrate and promote White Rock’s culture, to strengthen civic identity and pride and attract tourism for the benefit of the local economy.

In 2011, the Council appointed Cultural Committee accomplished several significant planning projects including:

- The development of an arts and culture mapping project with recommendations for consideration in a future arts and culture strategic plan;
- Launching the arts and culture hub (an interactive, community listing and map of 240+ artists, musicians, and arts related facilities, organizations and resources;
- Presentation to Council on “The Arts as Economic Stimulus”; and
- Supported the development of a newly adopted Community Public Art Council Policy.



In response to the efforts of this enthusiastic group of arts community leaders, Mayor Baldwin appointed a task force to provide Council with a strategic plan for the advancement of the arts as an economic generator in the community, and to produce a plan to generate economic activity through arts and cultural events and activities.

The following are some of the ways arts and culture can generate economic activity in a community.

## 1.2 Arts and the Economy

The arts and cultural sector is a significant industry with the potential to provide economic vitality to the City’s economy. Cultural industries are clean, labour intensive, and highly technical fields providing year round employment. The direct economic impact of arts and cultural activity is considerable. Some examples include:

- Arts and culture organizations and activities are incubators of creativity. Through their work they create new intellectual, cultural and economic activities and innovations;

- Artists and other creative individuals bring a wealth of talent to the communities in which they live and work;
- The business community benefits from skilled creative and innovative workers;
- Cultural activities broaden people’s imaginations and greatly contribute to enriching the quality of life in a community;
- Artists generate work for others who supply their materials and service needs, and present and distribute their work;
- Cultural activities and events create indirect and induced spending by participants and attract out-of-town visitors to the community which results in economic spin-offs for tourist serving businesses; and
- Artists living and working in a community contribute towards the local tax base and may contribute considerable resources and volunteer time to the community they live in.

### 1.3 A White Rock Arts Economic Strategy

The focus of this strategy is on the arts. Cultural and heritage aspects are combined within the wide interpretation given to the term “arts”.

For the purpose of clarification for this document, the term “arts” denotes a wide scope of mediums of creative expression. Art, therefore, “is the finished expression of the combined work, skill, creativity and knowledge of the artist.”

The arts include but are not limited to:

- Visual arts: the work of painters, illustrators, sculptors, architects, photographers, graphic designers, crafts people and others who express themselves visually;
- Performing arts: the work of artists who perform for audiences, including theatre, dance, music and film; and
- Literary arts: the work of writers, poets, dramatists and others who express themselves with words.

See Appendix 1 for other definitions of words used in this document.



*“Arts and Cultural activities are at the heart of communities—they make communities more attractive places to live, they help bring a community to life, they define a community’s unique characteristics, they attract tourists and they help communities compete economically around the world.”The Canada Council for the Arts*

*Mousetrap, Photography Matt Vondette*

## 2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Arts Economic Task Force underwent a strategic planning process that included the following steps:

- Best practices research on what economic goals and actions have already been identified in previous work by the City’s Cultural Committee;
- Best practices research on other municipal arts and cultural strategies (i.e. Surrey, Richmond, Kelowna, St. John’s Newfoundland, Chemainus, Port Moody, Township of Langley and Abbotsford);
- SWOT Analysis process to identify White Rock’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as an arts and cultural business development community;
- Vision development exercise;
- Strategic goals and actions development and prioritization exercise;
- Resource and timeline identification process;
- Development of a strategic planning report outline; and
- Preparation for presentation of the Arts Economic Strategy to Council.



### 2.1 Terms of Reference of the Arts Economic Task Force

On April 16, 2012, Council endorsed the following Terms of Reference for the Arts Economic Task Force:

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Arts Economic Task Force is a task force appointed by the Mayor.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Arts Economic Task Force is to provide City Council with a strategic plan for the advancement of the arts as an economic generator in the community. The Arts Economic Task Force will collaborate with stakeholders in the community with a view to taking advantage of any and all existing opportunities to produce a plan that will build on existing community programs and social infrastructure to generate economic activity through arts and cultural events and activities.

#### **Membership**

The Arts Economic Task Force will consist of seven (7) voting members appointed by the Mayor from the community at large, one (1) non-voting member of Council, and City staff as required.

#### **Chair**

The Committee will select a Chair and Vice-Chair from among its voting members at the first meeting.

**Term**

The tenure of the Committee will be for a one (1) year term or until the plan is complete, whichever is sooner.

**Meetings**

Meetings will be held at the call of the Chair. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**Procedures**

Unless otherwise provided for in these terms of reference, the procedures of the Committee will be governed by the General Terms of Reference for Select Committees as set out in Council Policy 116.

**Code of Ethics**

Appointees will be required to sign a statement indicating that they have read, understood, and will conform to the City's Code of Ethics. This will be required immediately upon appointment.

## 2.2 Community Engagement and Consultation

Considerable community consultation work has gone into arts and cultural planning for White Rock over the past few years.

The work done in 2011 by Council's Cultural Committee in developing the White Rock Cultural Mapping Project was useful in providing background information regarding the current context of arts and culture in White Rock. The Cultural Mapping Project also highlighted key directions and action steps that will help integrate arts and culture into the fabric of the community of White Rock.

As well, Council's Community Forum titled "Arts, Culture and the Economy in White Rock", held on June 27, 2012, included discussions and feedback questionnaires that generated a wealth of ideas for using existing community assets and partnering with local arts, culture and heritage groups and individuals to help stimulate the local economy.

Some of the actions related to business development through the arts that were identified in the Cultural Mapping Project and/or Council's Community Forum on Arts, Culture and the Economy have been incorporated in this Strategy.



*Mousetrap, Photography Matt Vondette*

### 3.0 WHITE ROCK–CURRENT CONTEXT

The arts and culture sector in White Rock create both social and economic wealth and provides significant benefits that enrich the quality of life in our city. The arts enhance economic development, particularly in sectors such as tourism, high technology, and knowledge-based industries, which are all large growth industries in the new economy.

Some of the ways the arts contribute to economic development in White Rock include employment, business taxes, business spending, cultural industries, cultural tourism, event hosting, community revitalization and beautification and indirect spending.



*Chris MacClure painting at Golden Cactus Studio*

White Rock is known for its large number of accomplished artists and crafts people. The White Rock Arts and Cultural Hub which can be found at <http://whiterockculture.ca/> is maintained by Semiahmoo Arts and Tourism White Rock, and contains a directory of over 200 listings including categories for dance, film and video, literary/spoken word, music, theatre, concerts, visual arts and artists and artisans.

Arts related businesses already contribute greatly towards the local community, however, the consensus of the Arts Economic Task Force is that with further leadership and financial

support, the arts and culture sector could become a major economic generator for the community of White Rock.

For a community to embrace the arts as a means of stimulating the local economy takes a commitment to adopt a common vision, strategic goals and specific measurable actions by local government and key stakeholders in the community.

The first step in the strategic planning process for the Arts Economic Task Force was to identify White Rock's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats if it is to become a thriving arts business community.

### 3.1 Strengths and Opportunities

The following are the strengths and opportunities associated with advancing the arts as an economic generator in White Rock.

## Strengths

- Beauty of the waterfront i.e. beach, pier, sunsets, ocean view;
- Known vacation destination;
- Positive image as a City of many notable artists;
- Healthy environment;
- High percentage of post–secondary educated residents;
- Considerable artistic talent i.e. painters, musicians, actors, sculptors, writers, poets, photographers, dancers, culinary artists, etc.;
- Semiahmoo First Nation artists, dancers and sculptors;
- White Rock Elementary School is a designated arts school with skilled art and music teachers on staff;
- White Rock Arts and Cultural Hub with a directory of over 200 listings;
- Support from the City of White Rock i.e. facilities, programs, staff, event hosting resources, publicity tools etc.;
- Supportive Mayor and Council;
- Close proximity to two large metropolitan areas (Lower Mainland and Seattle);
- Rapid growth of South Surrey is increasing the customer base for local arts;
- Arts and cultural agencies and community groups (Semiahmoo Arts, etc.);
- BIA, Tourism White Rock and Chamber of Commerce to help support cultural business ventures;
- Existing Arts and Culture Infrastructure including:
  - ♦ City owned facilities i.e. White Rock Community Centre halls, studios and gallery, Mel Edwards Centre, parks, beach, Centennial Arena and Leisure Centre, Library, Museum;
  - ♦ Coast Capital Playhouse;
  - ♦ Music recording studios;
  - ♦ Commercial art galleries and dealers;
  - ♦ Semiahmoo First Nation band shell and green space;
  - ♦ Arts and Cultural facilities in South Surrey are nearby (including some new facilities planned for South Surrey Recreation Centre, and a new Arts Centre on 152nd Street);
  - ♦ Event advertising kiosks;
  - ♦ Vacant Church beside City Hall;
  - ♦ Bosa Civic Plaza at the Miramar.



*Photograph by Sherron Fairbairn*

## Opportunities

- New residents to South Surrey/White Rock area provide a source of new arts and culture customers and talent;
- Growing interest amongst Baby Boomers in arts and culture activities, performances, products and events;
- New residential and commercial development in South Surrey/White Rock provides considerable opportunities for hanging art and sculpture (interior decoration);
- Mayor and Council have initiated the Arts Economic Task Force, the Public Art Advisory Committee and the development of a Cultural Strategic Plan for White Rock;
- New Town Centre development will result in more people living downtown; and
- Programming of events at the Bosa Civic Plaza at Miramar.

## 3.2 Weaknesses and Threats

The following are the weaknesses and threats associated with advancing the arts as an economic generator in White Rock.

### Weaknesses

- Distance from many areas of the lower Mainland is perceived as a barrier (tunnels, bridges, etc.);
- Distance from Seattle is perceived as a barrier due to border line-ups etc.;
- Parking fees deter people from attending events at the waterfront;
- Perception that there is nowhere to park cars at the waterfront deters visitors from attending events there;
- Lack of a dedicated facility for the arts and culture;
- Lack of post-secondary school of fine arts;
- No City staff position currently assigned to arts and cultural groups or championing the arts in White Rock;
- Lack of hotel accommodation for large crowd events.



*Students painting at Golden Cactus Studio*



### Threats

- Many British Columbia and Washington communities are aggressively positioning themselves as arts and culture visitor destinations;
- Some local arts and cultural groups and artists are losing patience with the copious planning work and lack of action “all talk, no action”;
- Some artists and art galleries are leaving White Rock due to rising studio/gallery building rental rates and decreasing visitor traffic along the waterfront; and
- The public perception that talent must be imported from larger urban centers.

## 4.0 VISION FOR WHITE ROCK ARTS ECONOMIC STRATEGY

*What is a vision?* A vision should be inspiring, energizing, and clearly describe where and what we want to be in the future, and must be meaningful to everyone in the organization.

### 4.1 Vision Statement

The Arts Economic Task Force recommended the following vision statement for the Arts Economic Strategy. This vision statement was approved by Council at their regular Council meeting held October 29, 2012.

Our Future Vision:

**“White Rock is a world class arts and cultural destination that enhances the quality of life for the entire community and its visitors.”**



*Photograph by Sherron Fairbairn*

## 5.0 STRATEGIC GOALS

The following are the overarching goals that will help fulfill the Arts Economic Strategy vision.

### 1. Collaboration Between Business and the Arts

**Goal Statement:** Foster the collaboration of the business community and the arts sector in White Rock.

### 2. Enhanced Community Partnerships

**Goal Statement:** White Rock fosters cooperation and collaboration among government agencies, non-profit groups, private businesses and local artists in the delivery of arts and culture programs and events in the community.

### 3. Broaden the Economic Potential and Contribution of the Arts

**Goal Statement:** White Rock is known as an “arts friendly” city where artists and arts related businesses feel welcome, thrive and contribute greatly to the local economy.

### 4. Support Local Artists

**Goal Statement:** White Rock is known as a community that values and supports the work of its local artists and cultural groups.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIONS

### Goal #1: Collaboration between Business and the Arts

**Goal Statement:** Foster the collaboration of the business community and the arts sector in White Rock.

**Recommended actions:**

ACTIONS	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS	TIMELINE
1. Facilitate opportunities and incentives for the business community to invest in and support the arts e.g. provide public facilities and amenities, sponsorship and/or financial support for programs and events, create an endowment fund, etc.	City of White Rock	Business Improvement Association (BIA), Chamber of Commerce, Tourism White Rock, community arts, culture and heritage groups, White Rock artists, art related businesses and potential donors	Spring 2013 to Fall 2017
2. Increase awareness that growth comes to cities that are creative habitats in which all forms of creativity—arts, culture, technology and business flourish together.	Semiahmoo Arts	City of White Rock, BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism White Rock, arts related businesses	Spring 2013
3. Host an annual event to celebrate and recognize businesses that contribute to arts and culture in the community.	City of White Rock	BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Semiahmoo Arts, arts, culture and heritage groups and members of the local media	Spring 2014

## Goal #2: Enhanced Community Partnerships

**Goal Statement:** White Rock fosters cooperation and collaboration among government agencies, non-profit groups, private businesses and local artists in the delivery of arts and culture programs and events in the community.

### Recommended actions:

ACTIONS	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS	TIMELINE
1. The City of White Rock will provide a full time Arts and Culture Development Manager to work with the local arts and cultural agencies and the business community to facilitate the growth of arts and culture programs and event delivery in the community.	City of White Rock	Arts, culture and heritage groups, Tourism White Rock	Spring 2013
2. The City of White Rock will incorporate arts and culture into City planning initiatives including the Capital and Operating Budgets, Official Community Plan and economic development strategies.	City of White Rock	Arts, culture and heritage groups, Tourism White Rock	Early 2013 to Fall 2017
3. Work with the City of Surrey on economic arts and culture strategies and event hosting opportunities that are best delivered on a regional basis.	City of White Rock	Semiahmoo Arts, Metro Vancouver Arts, local arts groups, art serving businesses, Semiahmoo First Nation	Spring 2013 to Fall 2017
4. Establish a more effective liaison and development plan for enhancing arts and cultural delivery with Semiahmoo First Nation artists and White Rock arts and cultural groups.	City of White Rock	Semiahmoo First Nation artists, Semiahmoo Arts, Tourism BC, Provincial and Federal Governments	Summer 2013
5. Prepare and adopt a Cultural Development Plan that will mobilize arts and culture partnerships and strategic goals among tourism and other business sectors, educational institutions, community arts and culture groups and the City of White Rock.	City of White Rock and exterior consultant	Arts, culture and heritage groups, Tourism White Rock, Semiahmoo First Nation artists, local artists, Surrey School District, arts serving businesses	Fall 2013

### Goal # 3: Broaden the Economic Potential and Contribution of the Arts

**Goal Statement:** White Rock is known as an “arts friendly” city where artists and arts related businesses feel welcome, thrive and contribute greatly to the local economy.

#### Recommended Actions:

ACTIONS	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS	TIMELINE
1. Increase the number of busking program participants in White Rock.	City of White Rock	Local artists from White Rock, Semiahmoo Arts	Spring 2013
2. Mobilize community arts and cultural stakeholders to work together to attract and host one annual major arts and cultural festival in White Rock.	City of White Rock	BIA, Tourism White Rock, local arts, culture and heritage groups, local artists, Semiahmoo First Nation artists	Fall 2013
3. Encourage the development of a signature national and/or international arts and culture event that would serve economic development and increase tourist visitation during non-peak times of the year.	City of White Rock	BIA, Tourism BC, Tourism White Rock, Provincial and Federal governments, local arts, culture and heritage groups, local artists	Fall 2013
4. Develop strategies and incentives to attract artists and arts and cultural industries into the city (including commercial filming, television, video, music recording, graphic arts, design work, literature publishing, culinary arts, multimedia and broadcasting services, etc.) by promoting the benefits of being located in a creative artistic community.	City of White Rock	BIA, Chamber of Commerce, BC Film Commission, Provincial and Federal government, post secondary educational institutions	Spring 2014
5. Create an endowment fund to help support future arts and culture planning activities, facilities, programs, events and special projects.	External Consultant	Semiahmoo Arts, Chamber of Commerce, BIA	Spring 2014

**Goal # 4: Support Local Artists**

**Goal Statement:** White Rock is known as a community that values and supports the work of its local artists and cultural groups.

**Recommended actions:**

ACTIONS	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS	TIMELINE
1. City of White Rock to make space available to local artists to create art or display their work and to host events, e.g. City owned church, etc.	City of White Rock	Local artists, business owners and building owners	Spring 2013
2. Develop a community beautification program that encourages and supports work such as murals done by local artists.	City of White Rock	Public Art Advisory Committee, BIA and local artists	Spring 2014
3. Develop a public art program that supports a preference for work done by local artists.	City of White Rock	Public Art Advisory Committee and local artists	Summer 2014
4. Foster local arts and culture events through the development of a Cultural Event Hosting Incentive Grant Program.	City of White Rock	Grant approval committee comprised of the City’s Leisure Services staff representative, Semiahmoo Arts, and other members of the local arts community	Spring 2015

## **APPENDIX 1: DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Art:** is the finished expression of the combined work, skill, creativity and knowledge of the artist.

**Artist:** creator in any form or discipline.

**Crafts:** the production of original pieces, unique or in several copies, aimed at decorative or expressive function and is related to the transformation of materials such as wood, metal, textiles, leather, silicates etc.

**Culture:** includes the arts as well as heritage, including explorations of our history as a community or as individuals. It relates to the interaction of society with arts in both formal and informal settings.

**Heritage:** architecture, documents, artifacts and preserved memories related to a city's collective history.

## **APPENDIX 2: END NOTES AND REFERENCES**

Synopsis for the City of White Rock Arts and Culture Mapping Project—Dierdre Goudriaan  
Consultant/Author

Summary Report on the Community Forum on Arts, Culture and the Economy—Eric Stepura  
Author and Judy McLeod Author/Workshop Facilitator

Cultural Committee’s Year End Report for 2011—Co-Authors Barbara Cooper/Sylvia Yee

Creative Connections: Arts and Culture in BC Communities—Union of BC Municipalities, 1997

Arts Mean Business—Report from the Cultural Committee, 2011