

## **Summary:**

# **Indirect Cultural Investments in Saskatoon in 2016**

In October of 2017 Kelly Hill of Hill Strategies Research prepared a report on 2016 Indirect Cultural Investments in Saskatoon.

The project was initiated by the City of Saskatoon and summarized research from the following eight Canadian municipalities: District of Sechelt, Edmonton (led by the Edmonton Arts Council), Saskatoon, London, Brampton, Mississauga, Greater Sudbury, and the Halifax Regional Municipality

In general the report followed Statistics Canada's definition of culture: "Creative artistic activity and the goods and services produced by it, and the preservation of heritage." The report focused on 11 types of indirect cultural investment; the City of Saskatoon participated in 6 of these areas:

### **In-kind services for festivals, special events, film, etc. (e.g., permits, fire, police, EMS, waste management, transit, etc.)**

- All eight municipalities participate in this.
- It is difficult to make direct comparisons in this area. Edmonton appears to provide support to the greatest number of events while Saskatoon appears to be fourth (providing support to 48 events).

### **Below-market or nominal rent in municipally-owned spaces for arts, culture, and heritage organizations.**

- All eight municipalities participate in this.
- TCU Place in Saskatoon provided discounted rates for 17 events; information on how many organizations were involved in these events is not known.
- With the exception of Saskatoon, London, and Sechelt, the municipalities provide below-market rent and other services in more than one civic facility.

### **Property tax rebates/abatements/exemptions for arts, culture, and heritage organizations**

- All eight municipalities participate in this.
- Saskatoon's per capita property tax abatements (\$1.16) are the lowest of the five municipalities that provide a full costing.

### **Community capacity building (e.g., board development, organizational development, workshops, seminars, meetings)**

- All eight municipalities participate in this.
- A variety of supports are provided from ad-hoc activity to formal workshops and presentations. Many of the supports provided focus on strengthening non-profit organizations and general community development. Some municipalities such as Brampton and Sudbury provide economic development support to cultural ventures and cultural entrepreneurs.

### **Heritage conservation incentives (indirect/non-monetary)**

- Five municipalities participate in this.
- Saskatoon: support for mural project that may include alternative solutions to address building code requirements, provision of streetscaping elements which enhance the heritage structure, or a rezoning by agreement for adaptive reuse of property.
- Other participating municipalities provide supports such as free conservation tools, interpretive signs, awards of merit for well-maintained cultural heritage resources, loan programs, revitalization agreements, and assistance in seeking funding from senior government and community organizations.

### **Density bonusing (i.e. allowing higher building density in return for community cultural benefits)**

- Six municipalities participate in this.
- Saskatoon provides density bonusing in the Downtown Commercial Zoning District but has not done so recently. The City was active in five of these areas in 2016, having had no recent examples of density bonusing in return for community cultural benefits.

On average, the municipalities provided support in eight of the 11 areas. Saskatoon, with six indirect supports, was below this average. The five areas where the City did not provide indirect supports are:

- Free or below-market rates for arts, culture, and heritage organization advertising on city structures (e.g., bus shelters, buildings, etc.) (6 other municipalities do this)
- Formal arts, cultural or heritage districts (approval, development, or planning) (5 other municipalities do this)
- Fund management / investments (e.g., endowments, trusts) on behalf of arts, culture, and heritage organizations (4 other municipalities do this)
- Modified planning regulations to support cultural sector (with no direct financial implications) (4 other municipalities do this)
- Line of credit / loan guarantees for arts, culture, and heritage organizations (2 other municipalities do this)

### **Conclusion**

Overall Saskatoon falls below the average amount of Indirect Cultural Investments provided by the municipalities in this study. While some of the areas of support, such as the creation of formal arts, cultural, or heritage districts, may not be feasible or desirable for the City of Saskatoon consideration should be given to:

- Maintaining in-kind services for festivals, special events, films, etc.
- Increasing the amount of support provided below market or nominal rent in municipally owned spaces.
- Maintaining or improving tax abatement support for the culture sector.
- Increasing capacity building activities for the culture sector.