

Staff Report



To Committee of the Whole
Department Community and Customer Services Department
Meeting Date Council and Committee of the Whole Meetings - 13 Jan 2026
Subject Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan - Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report
Report Number SR- 3010
Prepared by Lyndsay Tee

Recommendation

1. That the report from the Heritage, Culture and Tourism Division, dated Tuesday, January 13, 2026, re: Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan – Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report, be received; and
2. That staff be directed to incorporate comments provided at this Committee of the Whole meeting into the development of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the development of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan and to share the Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report.

This report presents the findings from Phase 1 within the Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary, establishing a vital foundation for the comprehensive plan to be finalized at the conclusion of Phase 2. As we transition into this next phase, we are seeking Council's ideas and feedback to support our co-designed model, validate community priorities, co-create solutions through prototyping, and ensure all emerging strategies align seamlessly with municipal frameworks.

Report Highlights

- The development of an Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan was identified in the 2024-2027 Council Strategic Plan. The consulting firm, Evoke Culture 2.0, was hired in March 2025 and have been working with staff on the development of the Plan throughout the year.
- Loyalist Township's Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan represents a major step toward building a connected, caring, and sustainable community, one where cultural life is recognized as essential civic infrastructure.
- The Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report presented within this report establishes the foundation for the full Plan, providing a clear picture of Loyalist's current system, its strengths and challenges, and its future opportunities.
- The Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report does not present recommendations. It is for informational purposes only. It confirms Loyalist's foundation, reveals what residents value most, and identifies where focused coordination and investment will yield the greatest return for community well-being and municipal efficiency.
- It is anticipated that the final Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan will be presented to Council for consideration in early 2026.

Report Details

Background and Analysis

The development of an Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan was identified in the 2024-2027 Council Strategic Plan and was approved within the 2025 capital budget. The consulting firm, Evoke Culture 2.0, was hired in March 2025 and have been working with staff on the development of the Plan throughout the year.

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan will provide an integrated framework that strengthens coordination, guides municipal investment, and aligns cultural priorities with Loyalist's Strategic Plan (2024–2027) and long-term vision.

The development of the Plan has been broken down into two phases:

Phase 1: *Empathize and Define*

This stage focused on gathering stories, mapping needs, and identifying barriers and opportunities within Loyalist's cultural ecosystem. The process prioritized participation over prescription, ensuring that future strategies would emerge from community insight rather than external assumptions. Phase 1 of the project had three primary objectives:

1. **Document the current state** of Loyalist's arts, culture, and heritage ecosystem, including staffing, assets, financial performance, and partnerships.
2. **Synthesize community and interest holder input** to reveal shared values, system gaps, and aspirations for the future.
3. **Establish the baseline** for a ten-year plan (Phase 2) that will be co-created with the community, Council, and staff.

Phase 2: Testing and Co-Creation

The next phase will move from insight to design. Using human-centered design methods, staff will work with the Community Working Group, Interdepartmental Working Group, and the community towards the following goals:

- Validating community priorities and early opportunity areas.
- Co-creating solutions through prototyping, mapping, and scenario testing.
- Aligning new strategies with municipal frameworks (Strategic Plan, Recreation Master Plan, Official Plan, etc.).
- Developing an evaluation lens (MEL Framework) to track social, cultural, and economic impact.

This report presents the findings from Phase 1 within the Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary, establishing a vital foundation for the comprehensive Plan to be finalized at the conclusion of Phase 2. As we transition into this next phase, we are seeking Council's ideas and feedback to support our co-designed model, validate community priorities, co-create solutions through prototyping, and ensure all emerging strategies align seamlessly with municipal frameworks.

Key highlights from the Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report include:

- **Community Engagement:** During the summer of 2025, more than 400 residents, artists, students, business owners, and community partners contributed their ideas through workshops, surveys, interviews, and creative activations held across the Township. The result is a rich mosaic of perspectives that reflects both the Township's geographic diversity and its shared sense of community pride. Altogether this multi-modal approach generated over 440 points of engagement, combining qualitative depth (labs, focus groups, interviews) with quantitative breadth (surveys and sounding boards), the result is both an evidence-based and community-driven foundation for the Plan.
- **Themes Emerging from Engagement:** Residents expressed overwhelming pride in their community and a shared desire to see cultural life become more visible, accessible, and connected. These priorities are consistent across all engagement methods, from focus groups and surveys to youth idea labs and Indigenous dialogues. Six cross-cutting themes emerged:
 1. *Belonging, Identity and Connection* – Culture is the thread that binds Loyalist's hamlets and generations together, expressed through local events, shared traditions, and pride of place. Residents want to protect each community's distinct identity while strengthening a Township-wide narrative and stronger connections across communities.
 2. *Inclusion, Accessibility and Cultural Safety* – Participation is shaped by practical barriers (distance, ferry schedules, limited transit, cost, and older buildings) and by whether people feel represented and culturally safe. Inclusion must go beyond compliance to ensure seniors, youth, newcomers, and Indigenous communities can see themselves reflected in programming, signage, and interpretation.

3. *Volunteerism, Coordination, and Shared Governance* – Volunteers sustain much of Loyalist’s cultural life, but participants flagged fatigue, succession challenges, and uneven municipal support. Stronger coordination (shared calendars, joint promotion, and clearer support structures) is needed to keep community-led efforts resilient.
 4. *Youth, Learning, and Creative Leadership* – Youth want visible pathways to create, perform, and contribute now, but many do not know where opportunities exist. Participants called for stronger links to schools, libraries, and recreation, alongside mentorship, internships, and paid roles that position youth as active cultural leaders.
 5. *Indigenous Place and Relationship Building* – Indigenous partners emphasized that reconciliation must be continuous and relational, grounded in lived visibility and respect for living treaties and agreements. Participants expressed strong interest in collaborative, land-based initiatives and dual-language interpretation that embed Indigenous perspectives across Loyalist’s cultural and heritage systems.
 6. *Visibility, Communication, and Year-Round Activation* – Residents consistently asked for a central cultural calendar, shared promotion, and unified branding so people can find and participate in what’s happening across the Township. They also identified a seasonal drop-off in cultural life and pointed to modest infrastructure upgrades and winter programming as practical ways to enable four-season activation.
- **System Level Insights:** Through analysis of both community data and municipal systems, five enduring insights define how Loyalist’s cultural ecosystem operates. These insights provide the conceptual framework for the next phase of planning, positioning Loyalist as a model of community-driven, relationship-based governance.
 1. *Culture is Civic Infrastructure* – investment in facilities, programs, and volunteers is investment in belonging.
 2. *Belonging is Built* – accessibility, communication, and recognition shape participation.
 3. *Heritage is a Living Practice* – preservation is participatory, not static.
 4. *Systems are Relational* – outcomes depend on trust, coordination, and partnership, not hierarchy.
 5. *Care is Capacity* – people are Loyalist’s greatest resource; supporting care sustains the system.

Financial Implications

The recommendations in this report have no financial implications beyond what has been approved in the 2025 Capital Budget.

Risks or Stakeholder Implications

This report is for information purposes only and presents no risks or stakeholder implications.

Communication and Consultation Plan

Completion of the report will be shared on Engage Loyalist with the full report available to residents by request.

Staff and Evoke Culture 2.0 will continue the Human-Centred Design approach with continued in depth community engagement in Phase 2 of the Plan's development.

Alternatives

No alternatives are proposed as this report is for informational purposes only.

Attachments

[Final Existing Conditions Report- Loyalist Township Council January 13 2026](#)

[Final Existing Conditions Report- Loyalist Township Council Presentation January 13 2026](#)

Approved by

Approved by

Lyndsay Tee, Heritage, Culture and Tourism
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Status:

Approved - 07 Jan 2026

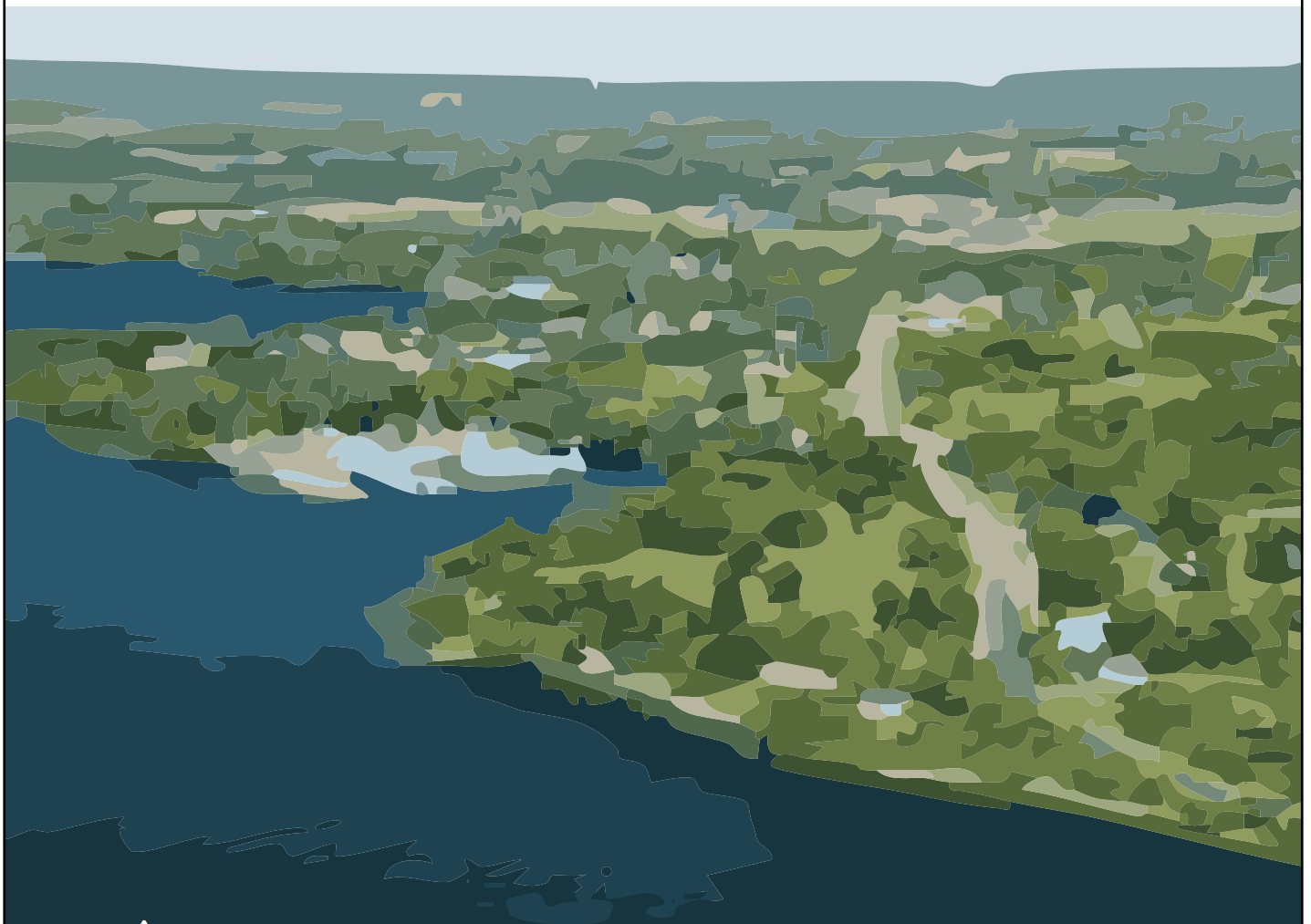
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Loyalist Township Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan

Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report



December 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Loyalist Township's Arts, Culture & Heritage (ACH) Master Plan represents a major step toward building a connected, caring, and sustainable community — one where cultural life is recognized as essential civic infrastructure.

The Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary (Phase 1) establishes the foundation for the full Plan, providing a clear picture of Loyalist's current system, its strengths and challenges, and its future opportunities.

It is the first time that the Township's arts, cultural, and heritage activities have been analyzed together, through both a data-driven lens and human-centered design (HCD) approach that elevates the voices of residents, staff, and partners.

This document does not present recommendations — it presents readiness. It confirms Loyalist's foundation, reveals what residents value most, and identifies where focused coordination and investment will yield the greatest return for community well-being and municipal efficiency.

“We don't need to start over. We just need to be seen, supported, and connected.”

> Focus Group Participant

Purpose and Positioning

Council tasked the development of the Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) Master Plan to provide an integrated framework that strengthens coordination, guides municipal investment, and aligns cultural priorities with Loyalist's Strategic Plan (2024–2027) and long-term vision.

Phase 1 has three primary objectives:

- **Document the current state** of Loyalist's arts, culture, and heritage ecosystem — including staffing, assets, financial performance, and partnerships.
- **Synthesize community and interest holder input** to reveal shared values, system gaps, and aspirations for the future.
- **Establish the baseline** for a ten-year plan (Phase 2) that will be co-created with the community, Council, and staff.

The process was intentionally participatory. Through more than 440 points of engagement, Loyalist residents, Indigenous partners, volunteers, artists, and youth helped shape a shared understanding of what culture means, how it works, and how it can thrive.

Loyalist is a lower-tier municipality within the County of Lennox & Addington's two-tier system — leveraging its small scale and close community ties as strategic advantages in cultural development.

Approach and Methodology

The planning process combined quantitative and qualitative analysis:

1. **Municipal Data Review** – Budgets, staffing, and expenditures from 2021–2025 were verified with staff to ensure accuracy and transparency.
2. **Engagement** – 57 participants attended five themed Labs (Arts, Events, Heritage, Business, and Youth); 35 residents joined hamlet focus groups; and 198 survey responses provided broad representation.
3. **Indigenous Engagement** – Guided by Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan, engagement included written and conversational contributions from Indigenous artists, educators, and knowledge keepers from Tyendinaga, Alderville, and Algonquin communities.

The result is a comprehensive, evidence-based understanding of Loyalist's cultural system as it exists today — and a clear direction for where it can grow.

Key Findings: Loyalist's Cultural System Today

1. **A Distributed but Connected System**

Loyalist's five main hamlets — Amherstview, Bath, Odessa, Wilton, and Amherst Island — each hold distinct strengths and identities. Together, they form a decentralized but cohesive network bound by shared pride, volunteerism, and care.

2. **Culture as Civic Infrastructure**

Culture functions as civic infrastructure that delivers belonging, connection, and quality of life in the same way that roads deliver mobility. Heritage buildings, events, and community halls act as public anchors of participation and identity.

3. **A System Fueled by People**

The Township's cultural success is built on a foundation of volunteerism and trust. Volunteers support the care of facilities, run events, and carry local stories. However, fatigue and succession gaps are growing risks to sustainability.

4. **Fiscal Reality and Opportunity**

With a five-year average per capita investment of \$28, Loyalist's cultural spending aligns with lower tier municipal norms. This "lean but loved" system demonstrates extraordinary return on investment, but also highlights the need for predictable funding and improved coordination to unlock its full potential.

5. **Indigenous Partnership and Place**

Loyalist's cultural landscape exists within a deeper Indigenous story—situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples under the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Covenant and specifically situated under the Crawford Purchase of 1783, a treaty agreement held in perpetuity by the Mississauga's at Alderville First Nation. Engagement confirmed that reconciliation must be ongoing, reciprocal, and visible, embedding Indigenous presence and authorship in policy, signage, and storytelling.

6. **Regional Connectivity**

Loyalist sits within a strong regional framework that includes Lennox & Addington County, RTO 9, and Tourism Kingston. Aligning with these networks will amplify Loyalist's profile and attract new partnerships, funding, and visitation.

Themes Emerging from Engagement

Residents expressed overwhelming pride in their community and a shared desire to see cultural life become more visible, accessible, and connected.

Six cross-cutting themes emerged:

- **THEME 1: BELONGING, IDENTITY, AND CONNECTION** – Culture is the thread that binds Loyalist's hamlets and generations together, expressed through local events, shared traditions, and pride of place. Residents want to protect each community's distinct identity while strengthening a Township-wide narrative and stronger connections across communities.
- **THEME 2: INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY, AND CULTURAL SAFETY** – Participation is shaped by practical barriers (distance, ferry schedules, limited transit, cost, and older buildings) and by whether people feel represented and culturally safe. Inclusion must go beyond compliance to ensure seniors, youth, newcomers, and Indigenous communities can see themselves reflected in programming, signage, and interpretation.
- **THEME 3: VOLUNTEERISM, COORDINATION, AND SHARED GOVERNANCE** – Volunteers sustain much of Loyalist's cultural life, but participants flagged fatigue, succession challenges, and uneven municipal support. Stronger coordination (shared calendars, joint promotion, and clearer support structures) is needed to keep community-led efforts resilient.
- **THEME 4: YOUTH, LEARNING, AND CREATIVE LEADERSHIP** – Youth want visible pathways to create, perform, and contribute now, but many do not know where opportunities exist. Participants called for stronger links to schools, libraries, and recreation, alongside mentorship, internships, and paid roles that position youth as active cultural leaders.
- **THEME 5: INDIGENOUS PLACE AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING** – Indigenous partners emphasized that reconciliation must be continuous and relational, grounded in lived visibility and respect for living treaties and agreements. Participants expressed strong interest in collaborative, land-based initiatives and dual-language interpretation that embed Indigenous perspectives across Loyalist's cultural and heritage systems.

- **THEME 6: VISIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, AND YEAR-ROUND ACTIVATION** – Residents consistently asked for a central cultural calendar, shared promotion, and unified branding so people can find and participate in what’s happening across the Township. They also identified a seasonal drop-off in cultural life and pointed to modest infrastructure upgrades and winter programming as practical ways to enable four-season activation.

These priorities are consistent across all engagement methods — from focus groups and surveys to youth idea labs and Indigenous dialogues.

System-Level Insights for Council

Through analysis of both community data and municipal systems, five enduring insights define how Loyalist’s cultural ecosystem operates:

1. **Culture is Civic Infrastructure** – investment in facilities, programs, and volunteers is investment in belonging.
2. **Belonging is Built** – accessibility, communication, and recognition shape participation.
3. **Heritage is a Living Practice** – preservation is participatory, not static.
4. **Systems are Relational** – outcomes depend on trust, coordination, and partnership, not hierarchy.
5. **Care is Capacity** – people are Loyalist’s greatest resource; supporting care sustains the system.

These insights provide the conceptual framework for the next phase of planning, positioning Loyalist as a model of community-driven, relationship-based governance.

Financial Overview and Investment Pattern

Analysis of the Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division between 2021–2025 confirms:

- Annual expenditures ranged between \$386,000 and \$715,000, with a one-time 2022 spike due to the major restoration project completed at Layer Cake Hall.
- Revenue recovery averages 5–10% annually, consistent with peer municipalities of similar scale.

- Approximately 60–65% of expenditures support staff and seasonal student positions — demonstrating a human-centered investment model.
- The Community Benefit Fund (CBF) is now a critical reinvestment tool, contributing over \$317,000 (16% of fund) to arts and culture initiatives since 2022.
- Community Benefit Charge (CBC) Loyalist Township meets the policy conditions to establish a CBC by-law under Ontario’s Planning Act. A background study amendment and by-law adoption in Phase 2 could formalize this mechanism, aligning growth-related contributions with cultural infrastructure renewal.

These findings confirm that Loyalist has built a solid operational base. Future growth will depend on diversifying funding (grants, partnerships, sponsorships) and strengthening data tracking to demonstrate social return on investment.

The Indigenous and Place-Based Lens

The ACH Plan acknowledges that Loyalist’s cultural story exists within the traditional and treaty territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples. Indigenous participants emphasized that reconciliation must be relational and intentional, not symbolic or token — integrated through co-created programs, dual-language interpretation, and shared care for land and water.

These insights align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action related to culture, education, and commemoration.

Opportunities Ahead

Community and staff identified several areas where Loyalist can demonstrate leadership:

- **Integrated Place Strategy** – A multi-community model highlighting Amherstview as a youth and creative hub and Bath as a waterfront heritage cluster, supported by rotating pop-ups in rural hamlets.
- **Innovative Funding Tools** – Aligning the CBF and exploring cultural reserve or parkland-levy mechanisms.

- **Intergenerational Design** – Balancing youth engagement and creative-aging programs.
- **Balanced Tourism Identity** – Positioning Loyalist as community-first with selective tourism extensions.

These opportunities reflect the Township’s unique strengths and its ability to deliver cultural innovation at a rural scale.

Next Steps – Phase 2: Testing and Co-Creation

The next phase will move from insight to design. Using human-centered design methods, Loyalist will work with the Community Working Group, Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG), and community to:

- Validate community priorities and early opportunity areas.
- Co-create solutions through prototyping, mapping, and scenario testing.
- Align new strategies with municipal frameworks (Strategic Plan, Recreation Master Plan, Official Plan).
- Develop an evaluation lens (MEL Framework) to track social, cultural, and economic impact.

Conclusion

This report confirms that Loyalist Township is ready for its next step. The cultural system is strong, trusted, and deeply valued. What it needs now is recognition, alignment, and continued partnership to sustain its momentum.

Investing in culture is investing in community resilience. By treating arts, heritage, and community storytelling as civic infrastructure, Loyalist positions itself as a regional leader in inclusive, place-based development.

“Culture is the way we take care of each other.”

> Focus Group Participant

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by EVOKE Culture 2.0 in collaboration with Loyalist Township's Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division and under the guidance of Township staff and Council.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of over 400 participants who shared their time, knowledge, and lived experience to shape this work. Participants included:

- Residents and business owners from across Loyalist Township
- Local artists, heritage advocates, cultural volunteers, and educators
- Youth and students from Loyalist Township schools and communities
- Indigenous artists, educators, and knowledge keepers from the Mohawk, Algonquin, and Ojibwe/Alderville Nations
- Regional partners and sector peers from neighbouring municipalities

We would like to thank Catherine Feraday Miller and Madison Parks who assisted us with engagement activities as well as the members of the Community Working Group and the staff-led Interdepartmental Working Group who guided and reviewed the results of this report.

We acknowledge the generational stewardship of Indigenous Nations on this land, including the Wendat, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee Peoples, and the continuing leadership of the Mississauga of Alderville First Nation and the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte as treaty rights holders. Their perspectives have directly informed this report.

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Loyalist Township is a community defined by connection — between land and water, history and renewal, and people who continuously make and remake community together. Stretching between Kingston and Napanee, Loyalist comprises five main hamlets: Amherstview, Bath, Odessa, Wilton, and Amherst Island. Each has its own rhythm, story, and community leadership; together they form a network of places that express the Township’s civic identity.

Arts, culture, and heritage are woven through Loyalist’s geography. Heritage buildings, museums, parks, and community halls are sustained by the Township. Township staff, volunteers, artists, and organizers animate the spaces year-round. These activities foster belonging and continuity; they are the social and emotional infrastructure that gives physical spaces their purpose.

Loyalist’s 2024–2027 Strategic Plan defines the Township’s vision as “thriving, innovative and sustainable communities where all people are valued”. This report supports that vision by showing how arts, culture, and heritage function as civic infrastructure — systems that deliver those same goals through participation, storytelling, and stewardship. It complements two key frameworks — the Official Plan (2019–2036) and the newly approved Recreation Master Plan (2025) — ensuring that cultural planning aligns with the Township’s approach to parks, open space, and community well-being.

1.2 Purpose of This Document

Project Background and Purpose

Loyalist Township is a community with a deep historical foundation and a growing population drawn to its natural beauty, heritage architecture, and strong sense of place. The Township’s cultural assets — ranging from museums and heritage sites to volunteer-run festivals and arts programming — are integral to community vitality, tourism, and local identity.

Recognizing the importance of culture to civic life, Loyalist Council directed the preparation of an Arts, Culture & Heritage (ACH) Master Plan to provide a coordinated ten-year framework for decision-making, investment, and partnership development.

The Plan seeks to:

- Establish a shared vision for arts, culture, and heritage across all communities
- Align future cultural initiatives with municipal planning priorities
- Clarify the Township's role relative to community partners
- Recommend practical strategies for program delivery, facility use, and resourcing

The Plan will serve as both a policy guide and implementation tool, ensuring that cultural development keeps pace with Loyalist's population growth, infrastructure investment, and community aspirations.

This Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report establishes a shared understanding of Loyalist's cultural ecosystem as it exists today. It consolidates research, community input, and system mapping to create a baseline before any design or strategy work proceeds.

Its objectives are to:

- Document the current system of cultural assets, activities, and relationships
- Synthesize what has been learned through engagement
- Identify strengths, challenges, and design opportunities
- Position arts, culture, and heritage as integral to municipal priorities for sustainability, inclusion, and civic well-being

This document closes Phase 1 of the Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan and provides the foundation for Phase 2: Co-Creation of Strategies.

1.3 Defining Arts, Culture & Heritage in Loyalist

For this Plan, “arts, culture & heritage” encompasses the full range of creative and community expression within Loyalist, including:

- Visual, performing, literary, and digital arts
- Tangible and intangible heritage conservation, museums, and storytelling
- Community festivals, events, and public art
- Cultural organizations, spaces, and informal creative hubs
- Indigenous knowledge, language, and place-based traditions

This definition honours both historic buildings to community memory — and reflects Loyalist’s commitment to inclusion, creativity, and continuity.

1.4 Acknowledging Indigenous Place

Loyalist Township lies on the traditional and treaty territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples, under the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Covenant and the Crawford Purchase of 1783 — living agreements to share the land in peace and mutual care. Indigenous artists, educators, and Elders contributed insights that continue to shape this work. Their perspectives affirm that cultural planning in Loyalist must include relationship, reciprocity, and respect as ongoing municipal practices.

“The landscape is the library — every path
and shoreline holds a story.”

> Indigenous artist, Quinte region

1.5 Context and Position within the Municipal System

Loyalist Township is classified as a lower tier municipality within Ontario's municipal landscape — a designation that reflects its population scale (under 50,000), rural-village composition, and hybrid governance model balancing essential service delivery with discretionary community development.

For the purposes of benchmarking in the field of cultural research and data sets, Loyalist operates between the resource levels of small rural townships (Tier 3) and mid-sized urban centres (Tier 1). This positioning shapes the Township's service expectations, funding capacity, and community partnerships across all departments — including Arts, Heritage, Culture, and Tourism (HCT).

Within this context, the Township's cultural system is defined by:

- Lean administrative capacity (a small core team supported by seasonal and volunteer labour)
- High physical asset responsibility (heritage buildings, museums, and community spaces)
- Reliance on external partnerships (non-profits, volunteers, and grant programs)
- Strong place-based identity rooted in European/Treaty Partner heritage, natural landscapes, and community gatherings

Together, these attributes frame Loyalist as a municipality that must balance preservation and participation — maintaining valued cultural assets while enabling community-led creativity with modest fiscal resources.

Implications for Arts, Culture, and Heritage

Arts, culture, and heritage are essential quality-of-life functions rather than mandated services. They contribute directly to social cohesion, tourism visibility, and local pride, but rely on strategic coordination and targeted investment rather than broad departmental expansion.

Key implications

1. SCALE AND INTEGRATION

Cultural services are interwoven across the Township — Recreation, Facilities, Planning, and Economic Development — rather than a standalone service. This integrated model requires cross-departmental collaboration and creative use of existing infrastructure to deliver programs efficiently.

“Culture isn’t a department here —
it’s what keeps us together.”

> Business and Tourism Idea Lab Participant

2. FUNDING DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION

With a limited municipal tax base, Loyalist must leverage a blend of funding streams — including the Community Grant Program (CGP), external grants, sponsorships, and partnerships — to sustain and grow cultural offerings. As one community participant noted:

“We do a lot with very little. It’s about
collaboration, not competition.”

The CGP, in particular, provides a flexible mechanism to support lower tier cultural priorities, enabling innovation without increasing the tax levy.

3. LABOUR AND VOLUNTEER CAPACITY

Lower tier systems depend on a combination of professional staff, student placements, and community volunteers to maintain operations. This hybrid workforce supports both European-focused heritage conservation and event delivery but also creates vulnerability during turnover or seasonal gaps.

Participants in engagement sessions emphasized the need for “steady leadership and support for the people doing the work behind the scenes.”

4. HERITAGE RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY

As a community with a concentration of provincially and municipally designated heritage sites, Loyalist’s role extends beyond maintenance. There is growing recognition that heritage stewardship and cultural activation can coexist — with the inclusion of Indigenous truths — turning preservation into a platform for storytelling, education, and tourism.

1.6 Process and Approach

The planning process uses a Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach that begins with empathy and shared learning rather than predetermined outcomes. It is grounded in questions rather than answers:

- How do residents experience arts, culture, and heritage today?
- What needs, motivations, and barriers shape those experiences?
- What patterns of relationship already connect people, place, and practice?

The consulting team combined policy analysis, comparative research, and extensive community engagement to answer these questions. Findings were drawn from:

- Review of municipal policies, budgets, and County frameworks
- Comparative research across peer municipalities (Prince Edward County, South Frontenac, and Brockville)
- Focus groups, interviews, and idea labs involving more than 440 participants

1.7 Structure of the Report

This report is organized into ten sections: the first three outline context, the next three map cultural assets, programs, and living heritage; sections seven through nine summarize community engagement and systemic insights and situates Indigenous place and synthesizes findings; section ten outlines next steps.

Each section follows a consistent logic allowing Council and community to read both linearly and thematically.



1.8 How to Read This Document

This report presents the foundation for Loyalist Township’s Arts, Culture & Heritage (ACH) Master Plan. It integrates quantitative evidence, community insight, and professional analysis to describe the Township’s current cultural system and the opportunities ahead.

The document is organized to move from context and evidence toward interpretation and action — enabling Council, staff, and partners to understand where Loyalist stands today and how the Plan will evolve through co-creation in Phase 2.

Each section builds on the one before it. A summary of each section, following this introductory section, is provided below:

Section 2 – Loyalist’s Cultural Landscape

Profiles the Township’s geography, demographics, and settlement history, showing how environment, population growth, and community identity shape participation in cultural life. It establishes the physical and social context within which Loyalists arts, culture, and heritage systems operates.

Section 3 – Existing Municipal Policies, Guidelines, Strategies & Plans

Summarizes the corporate and regional frameworks — such as the Strategic Plan, Recreation Master Plan, and Official Plan — that guide cultural decision-making. This section clarifies policy alignment and identifies where Loyalist’s ACH objectives already intersect with broader municipal priorities.

Section 4 – Loyalist’s Current Cultural System

Documents the Township’s tangible and intangible cultural assets: museums, community halls, parks, heritage properties, and volunteer-managed spaces. It analyzes governance, participation, and programming patterns, highlighting how local European-based traditions, storytelling, and volunteerism sustain Loyalist’s living heritage.

Section 5 – Financial Overview: Heritage, Culture & Tourism (2021–2025)

Provides a verified financial analysis of Loyalist’s Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division. It examines expenditure trends, per-capita investment, and funding sources — including the Community Grant Program (CGP) and potential Community Benefit Charge (CBC) — to illustrate how cultural investment supports both operational stability and community vitality.

Section 6 –Community and Interest Holder Engagement

Describes the Township’s extensive Phase 1 engagement process. It details the Human-Centered Design (HCD) framework, methods, participation levels, Indigenous conversations, governance structure, and data analysis process. The section concludes with a synthesis of “What We Heard,” summarizing seven key community themes that will guide future planning.

Section 7 –Cultural System Mapping and Regional Connectivity

Interprets Loyalist’s cultural landscape as a connected system rather than a collection of isolated sites. It maps the flow of people, information, and resources that link hamlets, volunteers, and institutions, and situates Loyalist within its broader County and regional networks. This systems lens reveals how communication, coordination, and recognition function as cultural infrastructure.

Section 8 – Indigenous Place and Cultural Landscape

Acknowledges Loyalist's location within the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples and recognizes the state of relationships with neighbouring Nations. It explores Indigenous perspectives on connection, continuity, and care — identifying opportunities for shared stewardship, language visibility, and land-based collaboration. This section frames reconciliation as an active, ongoing relationship central to cultural planning.

Section 9 – Insight Synthesis

Distills the system-level insights emerging from all research and engagement. Five guiding insights — Culture is Civic Infrastructure; Belonging is Built; Heritage is a Living Practice; Systems are Relational; and Care is Capacity — articulates how Loyalist's cultural ecosystem functions and where collective attention will yield the greatest impact. These insights form the conceptual bridge between discovery and design.

Section 10 – Next Steps – Testing and Co-Creation

Outlines the roadmap for Phase 2 of the Master Plan. It explains how the Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG), Community Working Group, and Council will collaborate to test ideas, co-design strategies, and align outcomes with municipal priorities. Phase 2 will produce a strategy framework, governance model, prioritization map, and evaluation lens to guide implementation.

Appendices

Provide supporting evidence and transparency: comparative municipal data, financial tables, engagement summaries, selected community quotes, and supplementary visuals. These materials serve as reference tools for Council and staff as implementation proceeds.

SECTION 2. COMMUNITY PROFILE

2.1 Purpose

Understanding Loyalist Township's community profile begins with recognizing that geography and demography are not mere backdrops to activity — they are the very conditions that shape cultural life. This section describes how land, people, and settlement patterns influence participation, access, and identity across Loyalist Township and the wider regional system.

Together, these factors explain why Loyalist's cultural ecosystem is both grounded and adaptive: rooted in place-based heritage, sustained through volunteerism, and responsive to changing population dynamics.

2.2 Territorial & Indigenous Context

Loyalist Township is situated within the traditional and treaty territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples, under the *Dish with One Spoon Wampum Covenant and Crawford Purchase of 1783* — living agreements to share the land and its resources in peace and mutual care. This foundation establishes that cultural stewardship in Loyalist is inseparable from the environment and from enduring Indigenous relationships with water, shoreline, and sky.

The Crawford Purchase enabled Loyalist and Mohawk settlement along the north shore of Lake Ontario shifting the occupying Mississauga Peoples in 1783 to Grape Island in the Bay of Quinte initially and then to the north-west with settlement in Bedford and Alderville/Roseneath respectively. Indigenous knowledge, language, and presence continue to shape the Township's contemporary identity through partnerships with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (Tyendinaga), Alderville First Nation, and Indigenous artists and educators active throughout Lennox & Addington County.

This recognition situates Loyalist's cultural system within a continuum of care for land and community that long predates municipal boundaries.

Further depth and relationship-building pathways are explored in Section 10: Indigenous Place and Cultural Landscape.

2.3 Demographics & Economy

Loyalist Township has approximately 18,600 residents in 2025, reflecting steady growth since amalgamation in 1998. Growth is projected to increase by as much as 25 percent by 2036, primarily in Amherstview — the Township’s most urbanized community.

TABLE 2.3.1 POPULATION AND AGE STRUCTURE

Age Cohort	Share of Population (2021)	Key Insights
Under 20 years	20%	Strong foundation for youth and family programming
20–64 years	54%	Majority workforce; primary audience for cultural and recreational amenities
65 years and older	26%	Above provincial average; need for age-friendly and accessible design

The median age of 46.5 years exceeds the Ontario average (41), yet hamlets such as Amherstview, Bath, and Odessa attract young families — ensuring demographic diversity and intergenerational potential.

Cultural Diversity

Loyalist shows gradual diversification in newcomer and visible-minority populations. As this evolves, inclusive cultural participation will depend on active outreach through schools, community organizations, and regional newcomer networks.

Economic Profile

The Township’s economy blends small business, agriculture, heritage tourism, and emerging creative industries. Many residents commute to Kingston, Napanee, or the Bay of Quinte region, while others operate home-based enterprises or remote practices. These patterns create strong socioeconomic stability and a growing creative workforce.

Implications for Cultural Planning

- Maintain intergenerational access in facility and program design
- Broaden representation and storytelling to include newcomers and under-represented voices
- Strengthen volunteer renewal and recognition to preserve Loyalist's civic energy
- Align creative-economy and tourism initiatives to enhance local well-being and diversification

2.4 Place, Growth & Geography

Loyalist occupies a strategic position along the eastern Lake Ontario corridor, bridging Kingston and Napanee. Its 342 km² encompass a rare convergence of rural, village, and waterfront landscapes — making it one of Eastern Ontario's most geographically diverse municipalities.

The Township's geography shapes how culture is expressed. Rather than a single urban centre, Loyalist functions as a polycentric network of interconnected communities — each reflecting distinct relationships between land, history, and daily life.

TOWNSHIPS MAIN HAMLETS

Community	Defining Character	Cultural Function
Amherstview	Urban-adjacent hub; largest and fastest-growing area	Civic and recreation anchor; opportunity for multipurpose cultural facilities and youth engagement
Bath	Historic United Empire Loyalist village; walkable heritage core	Heritage interpretation, festivals, and volunteer-led gatherings
Odessa	Central crossroads community	Industrial heritage, fairs, and intergenerational maker culture
Wilton	Compact rural hamlet with 19th-century fabric	Volunteer stewardship
Amherst Island	Ferry-accessed island with strong creative community	Destination for heritage and arts tourism and agritourism; ecological and cultural richness

Residents consistently emphasized pride in this distributed geography yet acknowledged coordination challenges:

“Each village has its own heartbeat, but sometimes we don’t hear each other.”

> Event Ideas Lab Participant

Growth Dynamics

Population expansion in Amherstview is accelerating, increasing demand for cultural and recreational infrastructure. Rural hamlets require parallel reinvestment to ensure geographic equity and maintain the vitality of heritage and volunteer-led spaces. Together, these settlements form a constellation of cultural nodes — a decentralized system that mirrors Loyalist’s social fabric.

Planning Implications for Culture

- **Distributed Access** – Ensure equitable cultural investment across the Township.
- **Connectivity** – Strengthen physical and symbolic linkages via waterfront trails, ferry routes, and shared storytelling.
- **Stewardship through Design** – Integrate cultural-landscape recognition and heritage conservation into development review.
- **Place-Based Storytelling** – Embed interpretation and public art within civic projects to reflect both Indigenous and European historical and living cultures.

2.5 Hamlet Profiles

Each hamlet expresses a unique cultural rhythm rooted in its landscape, people, and traditions.

2.5.1 Amherstview

The Township’s largest and fastest-growing community serves as Loyalist’s service and recreation hub. Residents described a blend of suburban convenience and small-town cohesion centered around the Community Centre and Library.

“People in Bath don’t always know what’s happening here.”

> Amherstview participant

Young families value informal cultural experiences — music in the park, library story time, and markets — while artists note a lack of studio and exhibition space. Amherstview aspires to evolve from a recreation-first hub into a recognized cultural connector for the Township.

2.5.2 Bath

Bath balances deep heritage with forward-looking creativity through places like The Hive. Anchored by Fairfield Gutzeit House, Bath Museum, and the waterfront, it hosts major events like the Canada Day Event that draw thousands. Long-time volunteers voiced fatigue — “We’ve been doing this for decades; we need to know the next generation cares” — while youth seek more year-round programming. Bath’s walkable heritage core positions it as a regional cultural tourism node within the County.



2.5.3 Odessa

Odessa's identity is grounded in craftsmanship and continuity. The Babcock Mill functions as both industrial heritage site and community anchor. Residents express pragmatic pride — "We take care of what we have" — but note challenges recruiting volunteers. Its maker culture exemplifies Loyalist's ethos of stewardship through doing.

2.5.4 Wilton

Wilton residents lead the activation of the community and embodies a social infrastructure built on trust. Wilton Hall is volunteer managed.

This model is both a strength and a risk, highlighting the need for generational succession planning.

2.5.5 Amherst Island

Separated by Lake Ontario, Amherst Island sustains a culture of independence and creativity. The Neilson Store Museum & Cultural Centre and community-led festivals serve as focal points. Artists emphasized logistical challenges yet pride in collaboration and autonomy. The Island's seasonal rhythm adds an essential dimension to Loyalist's cultural mosaic.

2.5.6 Cross-Hamlet Observations

Collectively, these hamlets form a distributed but cohesive cultural ecosystem — Amherstview through population and facilities; Bath through heritage; Odessa through craftsmanship; Wilton through volunteerism; Amherst Island through creativity and resilience. Residents expressed curiosity about each other's events and a desire for stronger connection: a latent network awaiting better communication and coordination.

2.6 Cultural System & Connectivity

Culture as Civic Infrastructure

Residents frequently used infrastructural metaphors to describe culture:

- “Volunteers are the backbone”
- “Stories are our wiring”
- “The halls are our bridges”

This illustrates an intuitive understanding that culture functions as essential civic infrastructure, delivering belonging and pride in the same way roads deliver mobility.

Regional Role & County Linkages

Loyalist’s cultural system sits within a broader regional framework that includes Lennox & Addington County. Within the County’s heritage context, several Loyalist Township assets are profiled and promoted — including the Fairfield Gutzeit House, Babcock Mill, the Amherst Island Neilson Store Museum, Fairfield House, and the Bath Museum. Loyalist’s sites therefore contribute to — and benefit from — a wider heritage landscape across L&A, rather than functioning as the only identified anchors.

Current linkages include hosting Doors Open and cross-promotion through Naturally L&A. This regional positioning strengthens Loyalist’s visibility while reinforcing its contribution to a broader corridor of cultural vitality across Eastern Ontario.

2.7 Indigenous Connection to Land

The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Covenant and Crawford Purchase agreements are both treaties and moral contracts: commitments to share the land and its resources peacefully and sustainably. The Township’s shoreline, islands, and waterways have always been part of Indigenous travel routes, harvest areas, and cultural practice.

Loyalist’s very name — evoking Loyalist settlement after the American Revolution — marks one chapter of this layered history. The Township’s planning context must acknowledge the intersection of European/Treaty Partner and Indigenous histories and the responsibilities that follow from that shared geography.

Historical Presence and Stewardship

TIME IMMEMORIAL TO CONTACT ERA

Oral traditions recount the presence of Wendat (Huron), Anishinaabe (Mississauga, Algonquin, Chippewa), and Haudenosaunee (Mohawk, Oneida, Seneca) Peoples along the north shore of Lake Ontario. The confluence of waterways that define the Loyalist area was a longstanding gathering place for trade, diplomacy, and sustenance accumulation.

THE DISH WITH ONE SPOON WAMPUM COVENANT

This enduring peace agreement between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee established shared responsibility for hunting territory, respect for boundaries, and balanced acquisition from the land, waters and skies. It continues to remind us of all human accountability to the landscape and shape how we understand the responsibilities of all peoples to care for this territory.

THE CRAWFORD PURCHASE (1783)

Following the American Revolutionary War, the Mississauga Anishinaabe agreed to cede land from Gananoque to the Bay of Quinte, enabling United Empire Loyalist and Mohawk settlement. The Purchase provided gifts but no perpetual annuities, and its boundaries remain contested today.

DISPLACEMENT AND RESILIENCE

Over time, Indigenous Nations experienced profound disruption — land dispossession, disease, religious imposition, and forced relocation. Mississauga communities were displaced to Grape Island and later to Alderville and Bedford, while Haudenosaunee families settled at Tyendinaga (Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte) or moved west to establish Six Nations of the Grand River at the western end of Lake Ontario. Despite these pressures, Indigenous Nations continue to steward and protect their ancestral territories.

2.8 Archaeological Record

Archaeological evidence reinforces that Loyalist's landscapes are living cultural heritage sites.

The Ontario Ministry of Archaeology has registered multiple Indigenous archaeological sites in Loyalist (formerly Ernestown) between 1979 and 2024, confirming continuous Indigenous use of the Township's shoreline and inland corridors as part of longstanding travel, trade, and harvesting routes.

INDIGENOUS ARCHEOLOGY SITES

Year	Site Name	Borden No.	Key Findings
1979	Roy Hartman Site #1	BbGe-1	Adena and Meadowood points, lithics (Early Woodland period: est. 500 BC to 100 AD)
1984	Lloyd / Isaac Hough House	BbGe-4	Projectile points, pottery, pipes, celts
1986	Swamp Point	BbGe-6	Lithic flakes, faunal remains
2024	Taylor Kidd Sites (2-5)	BbGe-36-39	Brewerton points, stone fragments (Late Archaic to Middle Woodland periods: est. 3000 BC to 500 AD)

These findings confirm continuous Indigenous use of the Township's shoreline and inland corridors — particularly along Lake Ontario — as part of long-standing travel, trade, and harvesting routes.

Understanding this long continuum of Indigenous presence provides the foundation for how Loyalist Township interprets its geography, heritage, and community identity today.

Indigenous Presence Today

Indigenous people live, create, and teach throughout the region. Indigenous artists, educators, and Elders contribute to schools, museums, and public art throughout Loyalist Township. Many are citizens of Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, have ties to Algonquin Nations north of the Township, are associated with Alderville First Nation, or amongst the urban Indigenous residents of Kingston and Napanee.

Engagement with Indigenous artists and knowledge keepers revealed a continuing commitment to cultural continuity and relationship-building. Participants described the lake, shoreline, and ferry routes as living archives — places where story, language, and responsibility remain present.

“We are still here, and the land still knows us,”

> shared one Indigenous artist during a listening session.

The Township’s own planning studies — such as the Amherstview West Secondary Plan (2024–25) — recognize areas of archaeological and cultural heritage value and require ongoing consultation, assessment, and respect for Indigenous knowledge.



SECTION 3. EXISTING MUNICIPAL POLICIES, GUIDELINES, STRATEGIES & PLANS

3.1 Introduction

Loyalist Township has a strong foundation of municipal policies that guide land use, growth, infrastructure, recreation, climate action, and heritage protection. Yet, arts, culture, and heritage (ACH) priorities are not consistently woven through these frameworks. Instead, they surface in narrow references — heritage designations, community improvement programs, or archaeological protocols — without broader integration across service delivery, facility planning, or community identity.

At present, activity is fragmented: heritage, recreation, land use, and infrastructure are managed in parallel rather than as interconnected parts of a cultural system. This results in missed opportunities to leverage cultural assets for growth management, tourism, civic engagement, and community well-being.

The Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan offers an opportunity to create a unifying framework that brings these threads together. By aligning cultural priorities with existing municipal strategies, Loyalist can move from isolated efforts to an integrated cultural system.

Every major Township policy provides a potential entry point for cultural integration:

- **Strategic Plan** → embed measurable ACH outcomes.
- **Official Plan** → add a Cultural Services section and map cultural facilities.
- **Secondary Plans** → designate space for growth-area cultural hubs.
- **Community Improvement Plans** → expand to include adaptive reuse and cultural incentives.
- **Parks & Recreation Master Plan** → integrate culture into park and trail activations.
- **Asset Management Plan** → account for cultural facilities in lifecycle planning.
- **Climate Action Plan** → set cultural-sector sustainability targets.
- **Heritage Committee & Tools** → broaden scope from regulation to activation.
- **Transportation Planning** → connect mobility to cultural and tourism destinations.

As Table 3.1.1 and Table 3.1.2 illustrate, Loyalist’s existing frameworks acknowledge heritage and community improvement but stop short of fully embedding ACH into civic planning. Arts sector development is limited; heritage is defined mainly through built form; and Indigenous presence is recognized primarily in archaeological assessments rather than through active partnerships.

The ACH Master Plan can change this by positioning arts, culture, and heritage as core municipal services, aligned with growth, identity, and community priorities.

TABLE 3.1.1 MUNICIPAL PLAN INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Plan / By-law	Insights	ACH Levers & Opportunities
Strategic Plan (2024–2027)	Mentions heritage preservation; limited dedicated arts/culture objectives or metrics.	Expand Strategic Plan metrics to include ACH (e.g., event participation, heritage activation, volunteer engagement, Indigenous partnerships, youth programming).
Official Plan (2019–2036)	Policies on heritage and CIPs present; no recognition of arts facilities, creative industries, or Indigenous cultural heritage.	Add a <i>Cultural Services & Facilities</i> section. Embed a <i>Waterfront Policy</i> linking land use to shoreline cultural hubs, interpretation, Indigenous heritage recognition, and creative-economy development.
Amherstview West Secondary Plan (Draft 2024; ESR 2025)	References archaeology only; engagement is technical, not relational. There are policies encouraging public art (Section 5.7.2.4.8) and Gateway and Wayfinding (Section 5.7.2.4.9) and an Urban Design Guideline document to help create a sense of place.	Cultural Hub — There are two institutional blocks, one is for a school, and the other could be for a cultural hub. Develop a public art and placemaking policy and plan. Amend the plan to ensure co-design amenities blending recreation, arts, and heritage interpretation with early Indigenous/community input in the gateway and wayfinding as well as the urban design guidelines.

Plan / By-law	Insights	ACH Levers & Opportunities
Community Improvement Plans (Industrial CIP 2022)	Incentives limited to employment/industrial lands; The CIP criteria policies in the Official Plan (Section 8.2 j,l,m,n & o) does have criteria for CIPs for heritage, tourism, rec & cultural facilities.	Expand CIP eligibility to adaptive reuse of heritage assets, support creative enterprises, and provide grants for cultural/ tourism-related start-ups. Implement a CIP based on the criteria in Section 8.2.
Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2024–2033; Endorsed 2025)	Focuses on recreation; culture absent from service model.	Leverage park levy for cultural development. Treat waterfront heritage (settlement, marine, shipwrecks) as part of cultural identity. Use waterfront as a cultural spine for programming, festivals, interpretation, and public art.
Asset Management Plan (2024)	Focused on servicing (roads, water, wastewater); cultural facilities not included. Heritage assets are a gap.	Integrate cultural facilities into asset management (lifecycles, accessibility retrofits, energy upgrades). Position culture as civic infrastructure. Include cultural facilities in the 10 year capital plan and the Long Range Financial Plan.
Infrastructure Master Plan	Scope is on roads/ water/sanitary/storm as well as a few misc. items of infrastructure with a lens on growth, remedial, regulatory, new technology, and climate change. It excludes municipal facilities.	As part of ongoing and future Infrastructure Master Plan updates, Loyalist Township should incorporate a <i>Cultural Infrastructure Review Lens</i> to identify where roads, servicing, and public realm investments intersect with cultural nodes, heritage landscapes, and community gathering areas.
Climate Action Plan (2021; annual Report Cards)	GHG targets exclude cultural facilities/events; no link between culture and resilience.	Position ACH as part of resilience (green events, heritage retrofits, active-transport tourism). Integrate Indigenous ecological knowledge into climate action. Energy upgrades would be identified through the energy demand and conservation management plan.

Plan / By-law	Insights	ACH Levers & Opportunities
Heritage Governance (By-law 2024-49; Bath HCD By-law 1277/1982, update 2013)	Committee scope limited to designation/permits; heritage treated narrowly.	Broaden scope to include interpretation, storytelling, and cultural activation. Expand heritage planning to include Indigenous and community narratives.
Transportation Planning (County TMP update 2025; Loyalist transit study)	Focused on commuting and growth nodes; cultural destinations not considered.	Connect transit/active-transport routes to cultural and tourism destinations (heritage trails, festival shuttles, Indigenous cultural tourism).
Amherst Island Shoreline Assessment (2024–2025)	Assessment framed around erosion, infrastructure, and roads; no cultural lens.	Use findings to integrate cultural storytelling, shoreline interpretation, and Indigenous ecological knowledge into shoreline adaptation plans.
Indigenous Presence & History (cross-cutting)	Primarily acknowledged in archaeological studies; limited municipal framework for cultural collaboration.	Embed Indigenous presence across Official Plan, programming, and engagement. Build shared stewardship of land, stories, and cultural assets within ACH planning.

TABLE 3.1.2 ZONING & BY-LAW INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Area	Current State / Insights	Opportunities
Zoning By-law (2003–2032)	Cultural facilities not defined as a land use; festivals/events treated as “temporary uses”; adaptive reuse often triggers rezoning.	Amend the zoning bylaw by adding “Cultural Facility” and “Festival/Event Use” definitions. Permit them in Open Space, Community Facility, and Commercial Core zones. Enable adaptive reuse of heritage sites without rezoning. Allow temporary stages, tents, and installations <i>as-of-right</i> .
Special Event Permitting & Noise	Organizers must apply for multiple permits; noise exemptions inconsistent.	Update Noise By-law with standardized cultural-event exemptions in designated parks (Bath, Odessa, Amherstview). Provide pre-approved exemptions for Township/community events. Develop or amend the event by-law under the Municipal Act. The zoning by-law has a definition to support the municipal by-law.
Vendor / Business Licensing	Food trucks, artisans, and vendors face high fees and zoning restrictions.	Add Community Event Vendor Permit class with reduced fees. Permit short-term vending in parks/heritage sites during approved events. Allow one permit to cover multi-day cultural festivals.
Sign By-law	Limits on temporary signage make cultural promotion more difficult.	Introduce a <i>Temporary Cultural Event Sign Permit</i> (up to 14 days). Permit interpretive and cultural signage on Township property.
Parking Standards	Parking requirements can apply to festivals.	Exempt cultural events and encourage shared-parking agreements (churches, schools, municipal lots). Support shuttle and active-transport options.
Alcohol & Public Space Use	Each event must apply separately for AGCO permits.	Consider <i>Cultural Event Zones</i> (Bath waterfront, Amherstview hub, Amherst Island, Odessa Fairgrounds). Secure standing Township permits with AGCO for community use under partnership.

The Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan represents an opportunity to align these frameworks under a shared civic lens — embedding arts, culture, and heritage as both service and strategy. By viewing existing plans through a cultural lens, Loyalist can ensure that every municipal investment — whether in infrastructure, parks, or policy — also advances belonging, identity, and creative expression.

SECTION 4. LOYALIST'S CURRENT CULTURAL SYSTEM

4.1 Overview

Loyalist's cultural system is modest in municipal scale but significant in value. It is defined by a concentrated yet diverse network of heritage sites, seasonal programming, and the dedication of staff, volunteers, and community partners.

While the Township is relatively small, it holds one of the largest concentrations of heritage collections among municipalities of its size in Eastern Ontario. This system provides a strong cultural backbone but faces challenges of seasonality, limited capacity, incomplete representation and the ability to financially support this many properties.

4.2. Context: Where Loyalist Sits in the Cultural Planning Continuum

Canadian municipal cultural planning has evolved over 30+ years from beautification and tourism to cultural sustainability, social cohesion, and intercultural belonging. Important: municipalities don't "graduate" linearly through these phases. Urban and rural municipalities often operate in multiple phases at once.

1	2	3	4	5	6
BEAUTIFICATION EFFORT	ECONOMIC DRIVER	COMMUNITY AMENITIES	CREATIVE CITY	SUSTAINABLE CITY	INTERCULTURAL CITY
Canadian municipalities became immersed in cultural planning in the 1900s	Cities made the case for the economic value of culture	Tackling urban issues and investment in community features	Integrated in urban planning Richard Florida creative class	Culture as a quality-of-life value Social cohesion Social capital	Contributing to community outcomes and cultural identity
Arts and heritage collections Buildings Monuments	Downtown revitalization Tourism	Public art, festivals and events Tangible culture, arts, and heritage infrastructure	Creative industries Cultural mapping Cultural districts	Cultural democracy Cultural vitality	Cultural democracy (Re)defining cultural meanings Intangible culture

Loyalist's Location on the Continuum

Loyalist is a rural municipality of ~18,000 residents with an HCT Division that is only four years old. It is actively moving from a “we deliver programs” model toward “we steward systems.”

Right now, Loyalist sits between:

- **Community Amenities (Phase 3)** – Strong events, visible heritage, high volunteer engagement, culture as a community benefit.
- **Sustainable City (Phase 5)** – The Master Plan begins to position culture as civic infrastructure — essential to identity, belonging, and cohesion across hamlets.

4.3 Emerging Cultural-Sector Trends

Analysis of 2025 cultural-sector reports highlights several shifts that Loyalist should anticipate as it develops its Arts, Culture & Heritage (ACH) Master Plan:

- **Hybrid Programming Models** – Audiences seek shorter, flexible cultural experiences that blend physical and digital delivery.
- **Youth Engagement and Succession** – Recruiting youth is critical as organizations face volunteer and staff succession challenges.
- **Inclusive Storytelling** – Funders and residents expect greater diversity in representation, especially Indigenous, Black, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQIA+ histories.
- **Wellness and Belonging** – Arts and culture are increasingly recognized as public well-being infrastructure, not discretionary extras.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making** – Cultural funders require performance metrics and dashboards to demonstrate impact and return on investment.
- **Climate Adaptation in Heritage** – Municipalities are adopting conservation and resilience strategies to safeguard heritage properties and collections.

For Loyalist, these trends point to the need to modernize delivery models, invest in workforce renewal, broaden storytelling, and reposition culture as essential civic infrastructure.

4.4 Organizational Structure and Workforce

Cultural leadership within Loyalist Township is provided through the Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division, which offers centralized coordination across the cultural portfolio.

The Division is staffed by three full-time employees, supported by six summer students and a network of committed community volunteers who deliver visitor services, collections care, and event coordination.

This team manages site operations, programming, marketing, volunteer support, and partnerships. Their commitment and versatility are among the Township's greatest strengths. However, the lean staffing model limits Loyalist's ability to:

- Operate sites year-round.
- Expand programming.
- Respond flexibly to growing community demand.

Reliance on seasonal staff and volunteers introduces fragility into service delivery, particularly as community expectations for cultural programming, inclusion, and engagement continue to grow.

“We have the heart and the history —
it's the capacity we're missing.”

> Staff Interview participant

4.4.1 Volunteer Support

Volunteers play a critical role in extending the reach, capacity, and community impact of the Heritage, Culture and Tourism Division. Their contributions represent both an economic and social asset to the Township, supporting the delivery of programs, events, and community partnerships that would otherwise require significant staff and financial resources.

In 2023, the Division recorded 71 engaged volunteers contributing approximately 625 hours of service. In 2024, this increased to 127 volunteers contributing approximately 776 hours. Volunteer hours for 2025: 121 engaged volunteers contributing approximately 843 volunteer hours.

These figures represent only volunteers directly supporting the Heritage, Culture and Tourism Division's work and do not include hours contributed through the Recreation Division, community festivals, or independent volunteer organizations operating within Loyalist Township.

Volunteer contributions not only enhance program delivery but also deepen civic engagement, strengthen social cohesion, and build capacity across Loyalist's cultural ecosystem.

Many of these volunteers serve as cultural ambassadors — supporting heritage events, assisting at public programs, and contributing to ongoing documentation and storytelling efforts that reinforce local identity.



4.5 Program and Service Delivery

Programming operated by Loyalist Township is currently concentrated in the summer season, with shoulder-season activity. Offerings include guided tours, heritage interpretation, temporary exhibitions, seasonal festivals, and community events and arts activities.

Programs are consistently delivered in partnership with community organizations, artists, and volunteers, reflecting strong community pride and a collaborative spirit. This partnership model has been a strength of Loyalist's cultural system, ensuring programs remain accessible and connected to local identity.

However, several constraints shape the current delivery model:

- **Seasonality** – Most programming aligns with the four-month tourism window, leaving gaps in year-round engagement for residents.
- **Venue limitations** – Community-led programs often rely on ad hoc venues such as community halls, libraries, or churches, which limits continuity, visibility, and scale.
- **Equity of access** – Youth, newcomers, and working families reported limited access to sustained, affordable cultural opportunities outside the summer season.
- **No central cultural hub** – Loyalist does not yet operate a dedicated arts or cultural facility that could anchor programming year-round.

These realities highlight both the strengths of Loyalist's collaborative programming model and the gaps that must be addressed to meet community aspirations. They also set the stage for exploring new partnerships, facilities, and delivery models in the ACH Master Plan.

4.6 Cultural Infrastructure in Practice

Purpose

Loyalist's cultural system is anchored in its places: the buildings, parks, landscapes, and gathering spaces that hold memory and foster connection. This section documents that physical and organizational infrastructure, describing how municipal and community facilities work together as a distributed network of civic assets.

Loyalist's asset network illustrates how physical infrastructure and community capacity intertwine. Each of the main hamlets identified in this plan maintains at least one key gathering space, and the sum of these spaces forms a resilient cultural grid. Each site contributes to a broader ecology of participation.

These assets — maintained through care, creativity, and cooperation — are the tangible framework for the plan.

Heritage Conservation Districts & Designated Properties

Loyalist Township has one Heritage Conservation District in the west end of the Village of Bath, comprising nine properties selected for their historical/architectural integrity. The Township maintains a list of “designated heritage structures / properties” under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Heritage Plaque Program

While not an “asset” in itself, the Township runs a Heritage Plaque Program to formally recognize heritage homes/properties with plaques, promoting community awareness of the heritage assets.

Heritage sites connect residents to both tangible and intangible histories. Fairfield Gutzeit House, Babcock Mill, Wilton Hall, Bath Museum, and Fairfield House exemplify adaptive reuse, blending preservation with active community use. Smaller monuments and heritage churches act as everyday anchors of memory. On Amherst Island, the Neilson Store Museum shows how volunteer-run institutions sustain archives, exhibitions, and events simultaneously.

Shared and Multi-Use Spaces

Libraries, recreation centres, and parks have become de facto cultural spaces. The Recreation Master Plan (2025) calls for flexible, inclusive, multi-purpose facilities — an ambition that could transform halls into theatres, rinks into concert venues, pavilions into pop-up galleries. These conversions show that Loyalist's cultural infrastructure is defined by *adaptability of use rather than exclusivity of purpose*. They embody Loyalist's approach to “doing more with every space,” hosting recreation, heritage, and community programming under one roof.

TABLE 4.6.1 MUNICIPAL SPACES

Facility	Hamlet / Location	Primary Cultural Functions
WJ Henderson Community Centre	Amherstview	Major civic hub combining arena, pool, multipurpose rooms, and library services. Hosts art exhibits, workshops, community meetings, and municipal events.
Amherstview Community Hall/ Leisure & Activity Centre	Amherstview	Rentable community hall. Used for various community events and gatherings. Leisure & Activity Centre used by Recreation Division to host programming and events.
Wilton Hall	Wilton	This restored historical building is currently home to the Wilton Community Association who operate and manage Wilton Hall as a community and cultural centre.
Fairfield House	Amherstview	The Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association promotes the preservation of Fairfield House and provides guided tours and heritage programming at the House through an agreement with Loyalist Township.
Layer Cake Hall	Bath	The historic Layer Cake Hall is a hidden gem of the beautiful Village of Bath. This building, which dates back to 1859, is the proud home to the Bath Branch of the Lennox & Addington Libraries
Fairfield Gutzeit House	Bath	Heritage landmarks and interpretive museum. Potential venue for summer concerts, shoreline markets, plein-air painting, and heritage tours.
Bath Museum	Bath	Community museum and educational space. Opportunity for community use and enhanced year round operations.
Babcock Mill and Parklands	Odessa	Restored industrial heritage site with greenspace. Potential space for maker demonstrations, fairs, and outdoor gatherings.
Neilson Store Museum & Cultural Centre	Amherst Island	Community-run museum, archive, and gallery; hosts exhibitions, school programs, and performances.
Parks, Waterfronts & Trails	Township-wide	Outdoor venues for concerts, farmers' markets, film nights, and festivals connecting residents with the landscape.

These facilities are more than venues; they are manifestations of Loyalist’s cooperative spirit. Each operates through shared stewardship among Township staff, volunteers, and community organizations. The Amherstview Community Hall, for instance, could serve as a rehearsal hall, and exhibition gallery; such adaptability would present a pragmatic, inclusive approach that defines Loyalist’s civic life.

“We don’t have single-purpose buildings — everything here works twice as hard.”

> Focus Group Participant

TABLE 4.6.2 MUNICIPAL HERITAGE SITES OVERVIEW

CASE STUDIES AND ADAPTIVE REUSE MATRIX

Site	Mandate & Focus	Estimated Collection Size	Operating Season	Volunteer Involvement	Notes
Bath Museum	1861 Town hall; Loyalist settlement, workforce, and military history	10,000–15,000 objects + archival items	May to August; occasional Culture Talks & shoulder-season programming	6–10 volunteers	Only site with near year-round engagement (except January to February).
Fairfield Gutzeit House	1796 Georgian waterfront Historic Fairfield/ Gutzeit home; fine art & furnishings	~10,000 works	May to August; some shoulder-season openings	None	Fully furnished house museum; significant fine-art holdings.
Fairfield House	1793 Loyalist-era home; architectural interpretation; Fairfield family	5,000–10,000 objects	Jul to August	4 volunteers (volunteer-led)	Operated by Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association with \$5,000 annual Township support.

Site	Mandate & Focus	Estimated Collection Size	Operating Season	Volunteer Involvement	Notes
Babcock Mill	1856 Industrial heritage of Odessa/ Ernestown; milling history	~ 5,000 artifacts (machinery + archival)	May to August	None	Only industrial-heritage site; closed in off-season.
Wilton Hall	Historic Community Hall	n/a	Year-round	Wilton Community Association	Year-round activities
Layer Cake Hall	1859 Carpenter's Gothic civic hall;	n/a	Public access ~ 20 hrs/week	None	Lennox and Addington County Library staff operate this site.
Neilsen Store Museum and Cultural Centre	1883 General Store	~ 5,000 artifacts	May to October – varied hours	Neilson Store Museum and Cultural Centre Board	Operates as a local history museum which includes an Art Gallery

Ownership & operations: All of these heritage assets are municipally owned. Bath Museum, Fairfield Gutzeit House, and Babcock Mill are managed by HCT. Fairfield House, the Neilson Store Museum and Cultural Centre and the Wilton Community Hall operate via a Licensing Agreement while daily operations of the Layer Cake Hall are managed by the Lennox and Addington County Library Services branch.

Collections: ~30,000–40,000 artifacts across sites; most in storage; limited digitization; climate control and conservation storage are inconsistent.

Narrative: Interpretation is largely Eurocentric; Indigenous and Black Loyalist stories are under-represented.

These assets offer a powerful foundation for community identity and tourism but require investment in preservation, accessibility, and inclusive storytelling to realize their full potential.

Community-Owned and Volunteer-Run Facilities

Alongside municipal assets are numerous community-owned buildings — churches, schools, service-club halls, and informal studios — that together form a parallel cultural infrastructure. They host concerts, workshops, seasonal markets, and public meetings. Collectively, more than two dozen such venues operate across the Township.

Their governance demonstrates “shared responsibility in practice.” Maintenance and programming rely on volunteer fundraising, small grants, and reciprocal labour. This local stewardship fosters pride and autonomy but also exposes vulnerabilities as volunteer capacity ages. Nonetheless, it remains the backbone of Loyalist’s cultural resilience.

Maintenance, Visibility and Governance

MAINTENANCE

While the overall condition of Loyalist’s cultural and heritage assets is sound, ongoing accessibility upgrades and energy-efficiency improvements remain priority needs. Several facilities require incremental investment to meet accessibility standards, improve sustainability performance, and extend building life cycles. Maintenance is delivered through a collaborative approach involving multiple Township divisions. Facilities and Engineering provide mechanical and structural upkeep and repairs, while operations staff and volunteer groups support in various day to day capacities across the sites.

Developing a coordinated maintenance plan that aligns with the Township’s Asset Management Plan (AMP) and integrates heritage assets within the 10-year Capital Investment Plan —supported by a Cultural Infrastructure Lens embedded in the Infrastructure Master Plan (IMP) — will ensure that cultural facilities are managed to consistent standards and that heritage integrity, accessibility, and environmental objectives are sustained over time.

VISIBILITY

Digital and public visibility emerged as a shared concern across community engagement sessions. The Township’s municipal website aggregates information on cultural venues, event listings, rental processes, and heritage sites, though residents expressed that they still have difficulty discovering specific offerings. Improved visibility — through

an integrated online portal, and a cultural map — would strengthen participation and reinforce Loyalist's cultural identity. Physical visibility can also be improved through coordinated wayfinding, interpretive signage, and consistent branding across cultural and heritage destinations, connecting smaller hamlets and waterfront areas to Township-wide promotion efforts.

GOVERNANCE

Governance remains a key factor in ensuring the sustainability and coordinated delivery of cultural services. While the Heritage, Culture and Tourism Division leads strategic planning and implementation, many outcomes depend on interdepartmental collaboration —with Recreation, Facilities, Planning, and Economic Development playing supporting roles. Formalizing this coordination through an Interdepartmental Culture Framework (ICF) or staff working group would strengthen shared accountability for maintenance, programming, and communications. Governance improvements should also clarify roles between staff, Council, and community organizations, ensuring consistent oversight, decision-making, and reporting as the Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan is implemented.



System Insights and Opportunities (Heritage Focus)

(Framed as insights for Phase 2 co-creation; not recommendations.)

TABLE 4.5.3 HERITAGE SYSTEM INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Theme	Current Issues (Insights)	Opportunities (Future Directions to Explore)
Coordination & Governance	Township-managed + independent sites (e.g., Neilson Store Museum) link through Council approved agreements.	Explore a Heritage Network model (shared framework connecting Township sites, independent/ volunteer sites, and Indigenous cultural partners).
Seasonality	Most sites open ~4 months; residents face limited year-round access.	Expand shoulder-/winter activations using sites as community hubs for learning, arts, and gatherings.
Infrastructure	Gaps in accessibility, washrooms, utilities limit scale and inclusion.	Identify targeted upgrades to enable longer seasons and inclusive participation.
Staffing & Volunteers	Lean staffing; aging volunteer base; demand is outpacing capacity.	Strengthen volunteer lifecycle supports (recruit, train, recognize, succession) alongside staff readiness.
Narrative	Interpretation is primarily Eurocentric.	Embed inclusive interpretation frameworks co-curated with Indigenous, Black Loyalist, newcomer, youth voices.
Collections	Limited digitization; storage constraints; conservation risk.	Advance a Collections Policy & Digitization approach for long-term care and wider access.

4.6 Intangible Heritage and Living Traditions

Purpose

Beyond its museums, artifacts, and designated buildings, Loyalist Township's cultural identity is sustained through the practices, stories, and shared experiences that people carry forward. These living forms of heritage — storytelling, music, foodways, crafts, and seasonal traditions — connect generations and give tangible expression to community belonging.

While these traditions remain vibrant, they rely on volunteer memory and fragile continuity. Recognizing and resourcing them as part of Loyalist's *civic infrastructure* is essential for intergenerational sustainability. Doing so also advances inclusion by making space for all cultural narratives within the Township's evolving story.

“These are the things you can’t put in a museum — they live in us.”

> Heritage and Museums Idea Lab

This section profiles these intangible assets, identifies areas of vulnerability, and outlines opportunities to preserve and strengthen them within the Township's cultural system.

Overview of Intangible Heritage in Loyalist

In addition to its significant portfolio of built heritage sites and collections, Loyalist Township is also home to a rich body of intangible and living heritage. These include oral histories, seasonal celebrations, foodways, music, craft, and community rituals.

Engagement participants described these practices as “what makes Loyalist feel like home,” yet noted that they are largely undocumented, volunteer-driven, and vulnerable to loss. While intangible heritage remains highly valued across the hamlets, several patterns emerged:

- Under-representation of Indigenous, Black Loyalist, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQIA+ narratives.
- Reliance on volunteer memory rather than formal recording or archiving.
- Limited municipal visibility, despite their strong role in sustaining hamlet identity.

Oral Histories and Storytelling

Residents consistently emphasized oral traditions — from Black Loyalist settlement stories to Indigenous knowledge of the land and waterways — as key to understanding the Township’s layered identity. At present, these narratives are preserved informally through family memory, volunteer heritage organizations, and occasional presentations. A formal structure for capturing, archiving, and sharing these stories across Township sites is not yet in place.

“Our history lives best when it’s spoken out loud.”

> Resident, Amherst Island

“The kids are our best archivists — they’ll remember the stories if we give them tools.”

> Heritage volunteer, Odessa

“It’s not just what we see — it’s what we hear and remember.”

> Participant, Bath

Seasonal and Community Traditions

Each hamlet expresses heritage through long-standing community events and customs that serve as annual touchstones:

- Bath Artisans exhibitions and craft fairs.
- Odessa Agricultural Fair, one of Eastern Ontario's longest-running community events.
- Amherst Island Markets and fishing traditions.
- Wilton craft, sewing, and quilting circles, carrying forward pioneer-era practices.

These traditions are largely volunteer-led and depend on local pride and continuity. They are highly valued but vulnerable as older volunteers retire and few succession structures exist. Municipal integration — through recognition, coordination, and modest resource support — could safeguard their future.

“Our year moves from one event to another —
that’s how we tell time.”

> Bath participant

Foodways and Agricultural Heritage

Food is a unifying cultural marker for Loyalist Township, reflecting both Loyalist-era agricultural roots and contemporary multiculturalism. Residents spoke of farm-to-table practices, community markets, church suppers, and newcomer potlucks as integral parts of local identity. Food traditions foster connection across generations and cultures but are not formally documented or leveraged in Township storytelling.

Music, Dance, and Craft

Music and craft remain vibrant across Loyalist's hamlets through informal networks and seasonal events like the artisan fairs, and pop-up craft markets. Local artisans and musicians contribute significantly to place identity but lack visibility and sustained support. There is no artist or artisan registry, and no formal Township structure for coordination, marketing, or arts grants.

TABLE 4.6.1 INTANGIBLE HERITAGE INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES MATRIX

Theme	Current State (Insights)	Future Potential (Opportunities)
Oral Histories & Storytelling	Oral histories (Indigenous, Black Loyalist, settler) preserved informally by families and volunteers; limited documentation.	Establish a living-heritage/ oral-history program; embed narratives in site interpretation, exhibitions, and cultural events.
Seasonal & Community Traditions	Long-standing traditions (Bath Gardening Club, Odessa Fair, Amherst Island markets, Wilton crafts) are volunteer-driven; continuity fragile.	Strengthen intergenerational transfer; integrate these traditions into Township cultural frameworks.
Foodways & Agricultural Heritage	Food as a unifying marker — farms, markets, community meals — visible but undocumented.	Develop food-heritage initiatives; use foodways to link agriculture and multicultural identity.
Music, Dance & Craft	Practices thrive in grassroots events but lack registry or municipal support.	Create an arts/heritage registry; incorporate into Township programming and education.
Documentation & Archiving	Intangible heritage not systematically recorded or digitized; dependent on memory.	Launch a digitization and archival initiative; partner with schools or local radio.
Representation & Inclusion	Interpretation remains largely Eurocentric; diverse voices under-represented.	Ensure diverse representation; co-curate with Indigenous and community leaders.
Visibility & Access	Intangible heritage siloed within hamlets; low Township-wide visibility.	Develop visibility tools (storytelling festivals, community archives) to showcase traditions year-round.

4.7 Partnerships – The Backbone of Delivery

Partnership Landscape

Partnerships are central to Loyalist’s cultural ecosystem, extending the Township’s modest staffing capacity through collaboration with schools, businesses, community groups, and cultural organizations. The current landscape reflects strong goodwill but remains largely informal and event-based, with most relationships dependent on volunteer labour and sponsorships connected to specific events.

TABLE 4.7.1 CURRENT PARTNER LANDSCAPE (SELECTED EXAMPLES)

Partner / Category	Current Role	Opportunity to Enhance
Neilson Store Museum & Cultural Centre (Amherst Island)	Volunteer-run museum offering exhibitions, archives, and community programs.	Review the service agreement to align with ACHMP and expand Indigenous and newcomer storytelling; strengthen curatorial continuity.
CJAI-FM Amherst Island Radio (101.3 FM)	Community radio amplifying local voices and oral histories.	Formalize as media partner for heritage storytelling and Township-wide cultural promotion.
Amrize (formerly Lafarge Canada)	Major employer and long-standing community contributor.	Establish multi-year sponsorships aligned with Township cultural infrastructure and waterfront activation priorities.
Ontario Power Generation (OPG)	Major employer and Event sponsor.	Build year-round sponsorship linked to environmental education and arts-based energy literacy.
Amherstview Foodland	Local business sponsor for seasonal events.	Broaden sponsorship to support cultural markets and culinary festivals celebrating local foodways.
Loyalist Cove Marina	Local business sponsor of many cultural events.	Expand role in maritime heritage interpretation and arts-on-the-water programming.

Partner / Category	Current Role	Opportunity to Enhance
L&A Accessibility Advisory Committee	Promote barrier-free standards across public events.	Co-design accessible cultural experiences and integrate accessibility audits into Township event planning.
Educational Institutions (LDSB & ALCDSD)	Participate in occasional field trips or arts events. Agreement with Amherst Island Public School for after-school community use.	Formalized agreements linking curricula to Township cultural initiatives, student showcases, and volunteer credit programs.
Museum Network	Member of the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites to assist with heritage promotion and visitor itineraries.	Strengthen County-level alignment for cultural tourism and cross-municipal event promotion.

Partnership Insights

- **From Event-Based to Strategic Collaboration** – Partnerships are strong but primarily ad hoc; Township and partners want to transition toward continuity, clarity of roles, and co-delivery models.
- **Education as an Engagement Channel** – Schools can become long-term partners for youth leadership, volunteer pipelines, and student-led interpretation.
- **Reciprocity in Indigenous Relationships** – Indigenous collaboration must extend beyond archaeology to co-authored interpretation, shared language visibility, and public archaeology.
- **Accessibility as Embedded Practice** – Accessibility is evolving from event compliance to co-design — partners want to be included upstream in planning.
- **Regional and Economic Alignment** – Tourism and County-level cultural efforts should be leveraged to extend reach and share resources.

4.8 Festivals and Events Ecosystem

Overview

Festivals and events are Loyalist's most visible expressions of community identity — moments when arts, heritage, recreation, and local enterprise come together. They demonstrate how a small Township can punch above its weight in cultural programming through collaboration, volunteerism, and pride of place.

As Loyalist moves toward developing its full Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan, these celebrations remind us that cultural vitality is built on more than infrastructure — it's built on connection.

“Every event, from the Fishing Day to Light Up the Season, tells a piece of who we are.”

> Resident, Amherstview

“Events like Canada Day are what make me proud to live here — it's the one time you see the whole community come together.”

> Resident, Bath

Despite lean staffing, the Township consistently delivers high-quality, inclusive, and well-attended events, while also supporting community-led celebrations that contribute to Loyalist's year-round rhythm.

Township-Led Events

Loyalist's portfolio of municipal events reflects both tradition and creativity. These gatherings bring heritage, arts, and family life together in ways that animate parks, waterfronts, historic sites, and community spaces across the Township.

TABLE 4.8.1 CURRENT ROSTER OF TOWNSHIP-LED EVENTS

Event	Season / Location	Estimated Attendance	Description
Canada Day (Bath)	July	15,000+	The Township's largest annual celebration featuring a parade, heritage demonstrations, live performances, and family activities.
TuNesday Concert Series (Amherstview)	Summer	200–400 per event	Monthly outdoor concerts showcasing local musicians; a beloved community tradition.
Doors Open (Across Loyalist Township)	June	~1,250	Heritage-focused event offering behind-the-scenes access to Loyalist's historical and cultural sites.
Spring Egg Hunt (Amherstview)	April	~2,000	Family-friendly event with games, prizes, and community engagement.
Family Fishing Day (Amherst Island)	May	~200	Intergenerational event promoting outdoor recreation and connection to place.
Trunk-or-Treat (Odessa)	October	3,000+	Halloween celebration focused on accessibility and inclusion; safe and creative family fun.
Culture Days (Across Loyalist Township)	September – October	~1,500	Artist-led workshops and pop-ups across hamlets, celebrating local creativity. Single day event hosted by the Township celebrating culture and the arts.
Light Up the Season (Amherstview)	November	1,000–1,500	Holiday activities, live music, and tree-lighting ceremony marking the winter season.

These events are touchpoints of belonging — they connect residents to each other, to their hamlets, and to the Township's collective identity.

Community-Led and Partner Events

Alongside municipal programming, grassroots and partner-led events are an essential part of Loyalist's cultural ecosystem. The Township provides logistical support (permits, road closures, insurance coordination, and promotions) to Lions Clubs, Agricultural Societies, schools, churches, and small business organizers.

Events such as the Amherstview Lions Club Santa Claus Parade, Wilton Remembrance Day Ceremony, Amherst Island Markets, and the Odessa Agricultural Fair embody Loyalist's volunteer-driven ethos. These gatherings reinforce cultural continuity and strengthen the Township's rural-urban connection.

“Our events succeed because people know how to pull together — it's community spirit at its best.”

> Focus Group Participant

Volunteer Engagement and Capacity

In 2024, 127 volunteers contributed over 776 hours across Township-led events and heritage operations. Their collective commitment sustains the community's most cherished traditions.

“I volunteer with my granddaughter — we both learn something different each time.”

> Focus Group Participant

However, the system relies heavily on an aging and overstretched volunteer base, and participation often depends on personal connections rather than structured recruitment. Current volunteer management uses basic tracking tools (Excel-based), which limits visibility, recognition, and long-term planning.

“I’d volunteer more if I knew where help was needed. Right now, you have to know someone to get involved.”

> Events Lab participant

Volunteer engagement is a defining strength — but without coordinated recruitment, training, and succession planning, the system remains vulnerable. Strengthening volunteer pathways — especially for youth, newcomers, and intergenerational teams — is a priority insight for Loyalist’s next planning phase.

Infrastructure and Accessibility

Most major events rely on outdoor venues, making them vulnerable to weather and logistical challenges.

Sites such as Loyalist Park in Amherstview provide power but lack permanent washrooms, covered stages, and accessible infrastructure. Heritage sites such as Fairfield Gutzeit House and Babcock Mill face limitations around parking, accessibility, and seasonal use.

Indoor alternatives — Wilton Hall, St. John’s Hall, and school gymnasiums — are available but vary in affordability, availability, and accessibility.

These realities underscore the need to treat event infrastructure as part of the Township’s cultural asset network — not as temporary conveniences but as permanent community amenities that support inclusion, tourism, and local economic vibrancy.

TABLE 4.8.2 SYSTEM INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

(Framed as insights to inform Phase 2 co-creation, not recommendations.)

Insights (Current State)	Opportunities (Future Directions)
Loyalist delivers a strong, consistent annual calendar of Township-led events, well-attended across all hamlets.	Build on success to design a signature Township-wide cultural festival blending arts, heritage, and local business participation.
Volunteer contribution is high but aging and at risk of burnout; tracking and recognition are limited.	Develop a Volunteer Lifecycle Framework (recruitment, mentorship, recognition, succession).
Reliance on outdoor venues leaves events weather-dependent.	Invest in event-ready infrastructure — permanent washrooms, covered stages, accessible power and storage, and shaded gathering areas.
Community-led events thrive but depend on informal Township support.	Establish a Cultural Events Framework and streamlined permitting process to support grassroots delivery equitably.
Promotion and marketing are inconsistent across platforms.	Strengthen the channels for groups to provide content to the existing centralized cultural calendar under the HCT Division to unify Township and community-led event listings.
Youth and newcomers are underrepresented in event leadership.	Introduce youth and newcomer ambassador pathways — connecting cultural events to civic engagement and skill-building.
Accessibility varies by venue and event.	Embed accessibility co-design with the Lennox & Addington Accessibility Advisory Committee for all major events.

“We have lots of great events, but they’re weather dependent and sometimes hard to find out about unless you’re already connected.”

> Community Questionnaire Respondent

4.9 Arts and Creative Ecosystem

Loyalist Township's arts ecosystem is vibrant, grassroots, and community-driven. Creative talent is distributed across all hamlets, supported by independent studios, volunteer collectives, and informal networks. While heritage has long served as Loyalist's cultural anchor, engagement revealed strong enthusiasm for elevating the arts — including a clear call to establish a formal Arts Council to strengthen coordination, advocacy, and visibility.

“Arts aren't just a nice-to-have. They are what makes people feel like they belong here.”

> Arts Idea Lab participant



What exists today is a constellation of people and places that, with modest coordination, could form a sustainable, interlinked system. The Township's opportunity lies in connecting what already works — grassroots collectives like Bath Artisans, independent spaces like The Hive, and inclusive media like CJA1-FM — under a shared narrative of creativity as civic infrastructure.

Community-Based Arts Activity

Across Loyalist, the arts are practiced and shared in everyday community settings — from artist-led workshops and craft fairs to community theatre, live music, and seasonal events such as *Culture Days*, pop-up markets, and local maker festivals. These activities are largely volunteer-led, reflecting deep community pride and creative resilience.

However, without dedicated coordination, participation remains fragmented. Artists and creative practitioners often rely on personal connections rather than a shared calendar, network, or support structure.

“We have so many talented artists here, but unless you know someone personally, you wouldn't know where to find them.”

> Resident, Community Questionnaire

“An arts council could give us a voice and help us work together instead of always working in isolation.”

> Idea Lab participant

TABLE 4.9.1 INDEPENDENT ARTS ASSETS (SELECT EXAMPLES)

Several independent and volunteer-run assets serve as anchors of Loyalist’s creative identity:

Asset / Collective	Description
The Hive Studio	A community-focused creative space supporting visual artists through workshops, exhibitions, and collaboration.
The Tragically Hip Studio	A nationally recognized private recording studio connecting Loyalist to Canada’s contemporary music landscape.
CJAI-FM Amherst Island Radio	A volunteer-run community radio station amplifying local music, storytelling, and oral history — an essential cultural hub.
Bath Artisans	A long-standing collective of artists and craftspeople based in the Village of Bath. Founded in the 1990s, the group organizes seasonal shows and sales, mentors emerging artists, and participates in cultural events such as Canada Day.
Community Halls, Churches & Markets	Multi-use venues that double as exhibition, rehearsal, and performance spaces, reflecting Loyalist’s adaptable civic infrastructure.

Together, these assets form a distributed creative network — rich in quality and heritage yet currently unlinked by policy or shared governance. Each operates independently, leaving opportunities for collaboration, cross-promotion, and resource sharing unrealized.

“Arts in Loyalist are not a separate sector; they are how community life expresses itself — through making, gathering, and belonging.”

> Arts Idea Lab participant

Infrastructure and Facilities

Loyalist currently lacks dedicated municipal arts facilities or creative production spaces. Artists rely on independent studios, halls, libraries, and schools — or travel to nearby Kingston or Napanee — to access professional venues and year-round exhibition space.

This infrastructure gap emerged repeatedly through engagement as a limiting factor for visibility, youth engagement, and inter-community exchange. Residents and youth participants voiced a strong desire for a multi-use creative hub that combines creation, performance, and gathering spaces.

“There’s nowhere for young people to create art together year-round. We need spaces where they can perform, share, and learn.”

> Youth participant, Amherstview Focus Group

Support Structures and Partnerships

Unlike some neighbouring municipalities, Loyalist does not yet operate a formal Arts Council, artist registry, or municipal arts specific grants program. Schools, libraries, and community groups occasionally partner with artists, but these collaborations are episodic and untracked.

Residents expressed pride in the Township’s creative talent but also frustration with its invisibility — noting the absence of a central marketing platform or cultural staff lead. Strengthening partnerships with schools, Bath Artisans, and media partners such as CJI-FM was identified as key to sustaining momentum.

“I’d love to see the Township support the arts the way they support sports or recreation — with space, funding, and recognition.”

> Community Questionnaire respondent

Volunteerism and Informal Networks

Volunteer energy powers most local arts activity — from community theatre and craft markets to seasonal exhibitions. These networks demonstrate Loyalist’s cooperative culture but face mounting sustainability challenges. Many long-time volunteers are aging, and succession planning and youth mentorship remain inconsistent.

Creating clearer volunteer pathways, peer learning, and intergenerational collaboration opportunities would not only preserve existing activity but build capacity for renewal.

TABLE 4.9.2 SYSTEM INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

(Framed as insights to inform Phase 2 strategy co-creation, not recommendations.)

Insights (Current State)	Opportunities (Future Directions)
Arts activity thrives across hamlets — workshops, theatre, craft fairs, live music — but is informal and volunteer-driven.	Support formation of a Loyalist Arts Council or equivalent network to coordinate, advocate, and strengthen visibility.
Independent assets (Hive Studio, Tragically Hip Studio, CJAI-FM, Bath Artisans, community halls) are strong anchors but disconnected.	Map and integrate independent arts spaces into a Township-wide creative network linked to the ACH Master Plan.
No Township-dedicated creative hub; artists rely on neighbouring municipalities.	Explore adaptive reuse of existing sites (e.g., Layer Cake Hall) or shared-use facilities to host year-round arts programming.
No municipal arts specific grants, registry, or cultural staff role for arts.	Develop a local artist registry and coordinated support mechanisms (small-grants, sponsorship matching, or shared services).
Arts visibility depends on word-of-mouth; no centralized promotion tool.	Create or support a marketing platform to showcase artists, events, and opportunities.
Volunteer-driven programming is episodic, with limited succession planning.	Strengthen volunteer engagement pathways — mentorship, youth internships, and intergenerational arts labs.
Arts are celebrated through HCT events and Recreation Division programming but not yet embedded in Township infrastructure or budgeting.	Position the arts as civic infrastructure — core to belonging, inclusion, and economic vitality.

SECTION 5.
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW –
HERITAGE, CULTURE &
TOURISM (2021–2025)

5.1 Overview

Loyalist's financial landscape for arts, culture, and heritage reflects the realities of a lower-tier municipal system within a two-tier governance and taxation structure. Residents contribute to arts, culture, and heritage through both Township and County property taxes, with the Township responsible for the direct operation of local heritage sites, museums, events, and tourism services, and Lennox & Addington County funding County-wide heritage services, including the Lennox & Addington County Museum & Archives and broader heritage promotion and interpretation initiatives.

Between 2021 and 2025, Loyalist Township's direct municipal investment in Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) fluctuated in response to project cycles, seasonal staffing, and event delivery, averaging approximately \$20–\$33 per resident annually. This Township-level investment represents only one part of the total public contribution made by Loyalist residents to the cultural system; County-funded heritage services operate in parallel and provide additional capacity, programming, and regional coordination beyond the Township's operating scope.

While modest when viewed against provincial peers, Loyalist's Township investment has enabled a visible and distributed cultural presence across its five communities - supporting heritage sites and museums, signature community events, and tourism-related programming. Engagement participants consistently recognized the value of this investment, describing it as "lean but well-loved," and emphasizing the importance of maintaining existing programs while creating space for new ideas.

Operating within this fiscal context requires resource creativity rather than resource abundance. Loyalist's approach - blending Township operating funds with external grants, community partnerships, sponsorships, and the Community Grants Program (CGP) — illustrates how a lower-tier municipality can leverage its scale as an advantage: nimble, adaptive, and community-powered, while relying on County-level investment to support broader heritage infrastructure and regional storytelling.

The analysis that follows examines Loyalist's Township-level financial ecosystem in detail, outlining expenditure composition, revenue sources, and emerging funding trends, while recognizing that residents' total contribution to arts, culture, and heritage also includes County taxation that supports complementary services and assets at the regional level.

5.2 HCT Budget Overview (2021–2025)

Loyalist Township's financial data for the Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division demonstrates a modest but steadily increasing municipal investment in cultural infrastructure, programming, and heritage stewardship between 2021 and 2025.

While annual expenditures typically range between \$600,000 and \$700,000, the 2022 fiscal year stands out as an exceptional funding cycle driven by the major restoration project completed at Layer Cake Hall. Since that time, the Township has updated its accounting practices for budgeting capital restoration work at heritage properties. These changes were introduced to strengthen asset management practices and ensure more accurate tracking of heritage investments.

TABLE 5.2.1 HCT BUDGET OVERVIEW (2021–2025)

(reported as a partial year)

Year	Expenses (Actual)	Revenues (Actual)	Net Township Investment
2021	\$393,706	\$79,011	\$314,695
2022	\$1,021,975	\$552,267	\$469,708
2023	\$645,643	\$36,991	\$608,652
2024	\$729,786	\$48,155	\$681,631
2025 (YTD)	\$487,290	\$68,076	\$579,092 (2025 Partial Year)

- Net Township Investment is the sum of the net subtotals for each heritage site/ event/service line (Including supplies, contracted services, facility maintenance and utilities, human resources, insurance, etc. for 8 township buildings, and all operational functions.).
- Revenues equal the combined total of all forms of revenue (donations, sponsorships, grants/funding, rent, admissions, gift shop, etc.).
- Expenses are calculated as: $\text{Expenses} = \text{Net Township Investment} + \text{Revenues}$

Key Financial Insights

1. 2022 ANOMALY - ONE-TIME CAPITAL AND GRANT CYCLE (STILL TRUE, WITH UPDATED TOTALS)

The increase in both expenses and revenues in 2022 reflects a concentrated cycle of capital and externally funded activity (not ongoing operating growth). In 2022, total expenses reached \$1.02M and total revenues reached \$552K, materially reducing the net municipal draw to \$469.7K compared to what the same level of work would have required without external funding.

2. CORE INVESTMENT GROWTH (2021-2024) WITH 2025 REPORTED AS YEAR-TO-DATE

Net municipal investment increased from \$314.7K (2021) to \$681.6K (2024), reflecting the real cost of maintaining multiple heritage assets and delivering programming across a large geography. 2025 is reported as a partial year at \$579.1K and should not be interpreted as a full-year stabilization point until year-end postings and final revenues are complete. The 2025 actual budget is anticipated to be \$767,990.

3. COST COVERAGE AND REVENUE DEPENDENCY

In most years, HCT is primarily tax-supported. Revenues are modest in typical operating years (2021, 2023, 2024) and spike when senior government funding is secured (2022). This pattern is consistent with lower-tier municipalities managing municipally owned heritage assets and community events.

TABLE 5.2.2 TREND ANALYSIS (2021–2025)

(2025 Actual is YTD to Nov 28, 2025)

Indicator	Trend	Interpretation
Expenses	\$394K (2021) → \$1.02M (2022) → \$645K (2023) → \$730K (2024) → \$647K (2025 YTD)	2022 peak reflects grant/capital cycle; 2023–2024 reflect steady-state operating scale; 2025 is partial-year.
Revenues	\$79K (2021) → \$552K (2022) → \$36,991(2023) → \$48K (2024) → \$68K (2025 YTD)	2022 spike is external funding; other years show modest earned and community revenue.
Net Township Investment	\$315K (2021) → \$469K (2022) → \$681K (2023) → \$682K (2024) → \$579K (2025 YTD)	Net investment grew through 2024; 2025 is partial-year and not a final “normalization” figure.
External revenue coverage ratio	20.1% (2021) / 54.0% (2022) / 5.7% (2023) / 6.6% (2024) / 10.5% (2025 YTD)	Confirms 2022 as anomaly; typical operating years remain predominantly tax-supported.

Key Takeaways

- **Numbers Verified** – All financial data has been cross-referenced with Township HCT budget records and aligns with the verified 2021–2025 financial summaries provided by staff.
- **2022 Explained** – The spike in both expenditures and revenues reflects a unique circumstance, not an error or ongoing operational increase.
- **Sustained Growth** – Loyalist’s investment trajectory confirms a deliberate shift toward cultural infrastructure as civic infrastructure, aligning with recreation and community well-being goals.
- **Future Implication** – Predictable base funding will be critical to maintain the progress made since 2021 and sustain growing community expectations.

5.3 Per Capita Investment

Over the past five years, Loyalist Township has invested between \$20 and \$33 per resident annually in cultural programs, events, and heritage services. Spending peaked in 2024, reaching almost \$33 per resident.

This investment level positions Loyalist within the expected range for lower tier municipalities — small, multi-community townships that balance modest budgets with broad geographic and service mandates.

TABLE 5.3.1 LOYALIST TOWNSHIP – PER CAPITA CULTURAL INVESTMENT, 2021–2025

(reported as a partial year)

Year	Net Township Investment	Population Estimate	Per Capita Investment (\$)	Change from Previous Year (%)	Notes / Interpretation
2021	\$314,695	17,800	\$17.27	–	Baseline year; pandemic recovery period.
2022	\$469,708	18,000	\$26.09	+49.3%	Event and staffing ramp-up; return to full programming; early use of grants.
2023	18,000	18,200	\$32.10	+26.6 %	Expanded operating scale across sites and programming.
2024	\$26.09	18,400	\$36.29	+13.0 %	Peak completed-year investment level.
2025	+49.3%	18,600	\$23.48	–35.3 %	YTD only - not comparable to full-year results.

- Average per capita investment (2021-2024 completed years): \$28.66 per resident.
- 2025 is reported as year-to-date (YTD) and should be treated as provisional until year-end close.

TABLE 5.3.2 REVENUE BREAKDOWN BY SOURCE (2021-2025)*(2025 Actual is YTD to Nov 28, 2025)*

This table mirrors the actual revenue lines (donations, sponsorships, funding, rent, admissions, etc.) and totals to the verified annual revenues.

Revenue Source	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (YTD)
Donations	\$8,701	\$12,413	\$10,400	\$169	\$5,864
Sponsorships	\$0	\$13,750	\$5,302	\$17,191	\$24,500
Federal funding	\$35,813	\$334,534	\$6,000	\$6,501	\$19,307
Provincial funding	\$7,203	\$36,199	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other grants	\$7,775	\$9,172	\$5,957	\$7,482	\$13,000
From reserves / reserve funds	\$0	\$0	\$6,998	\$11,501	\$0
Unexpended capital forward	\$10,894	\$141,138	\$0	\$0	\$0
Rent revenue	\$0	\$5,061	\$2,334	\$2,788	\$4,380
Admissions (museum admission)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$289
Event tickets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$397
Gift shop / sales	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$237
Administrative + other recoveries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23	\$204
Program revenue (Spring Egg Hunt)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500	\$0
Summer student funding	\$8,625	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenues (Actual)	\$79,011	\$552,267	\$36,991	\$48,155	\$68,076

**TABLE 5.3.3 NET COST BY SITE/EVENT (NET TOWNSHIP INVESTMENT)
AND COST PER RESIDENT**

(2025 Actual is YTD to Nov 28, 2025)

Site / Event / Service Line	2024 Net Cost	2024 \$/Resident	2025 Net Cost (YTD)	2025 \$/Resident (YTD)	Avg \$/Resident (2021-2024)
Heritage, Culture & Tourism (program/admin)	\$534,807	\$29.07	\$460,519	\$24.76	\$20.05
Fairfield Gutzeit House	\$16,046	\$0.87	\$16,809	\$0.90	\$1.83
Fairfield House & Park	\$16,254	\$0.88	\$18,886	\$1.02	\$0.79
Wilton Hall	\$23,875	\$1.30	\$19,759	\$1.06	\$1.16
Layer Cake Hall	\$26,722	\$1.45	\$12,129	\$0.65	\$1.36
Bath Museum	\$24,076	\$1.31	\$22,186	\$1.19	\$1.54
Neilson Store & Stella Bay Park	\$13,962	\$0.76	\$9,881	\$0.53	\$0.82
Babcock Mill & Park	\$11,185	\$0.61	\$6,952	\$0.37	\$0.51
Light Up the Season	\$8,334	\$0.45	\$2,509	\$0.13	\$0.41
Discovery Centre	\$6,371	\$0.35	\$5,299	\$0.28	\$0.18
Bath Canada Day	-\$1	-\$0.00	\$4,163	\$0.22	\$0.00

Bath Canada Day is effectively net-zero in completed years (2021-2024), consistent with staff's statement. The 2025 YTD net cost (\$4,163) appears driven by expenses already posted (notably overtime) without all offsets necessarily posted by Nov 28. This should be rechecked at year-end close.

Summary

- Loyalist's five-year average of \$27 per capita aligns with other Ontario lower tier municipalities (pop. < 50,000), which typically invest \$20–\$40 per capita (Hill Strategies Research, 2023; Ontario Culture Strategy, 2016).
- The 2025 normalization signals a sustainable investment level for a lower tier multi-community township emphasizing stewardship and seasonal programming.

These figures underscore both the structural constraints and strategic opportunities of Loyalist's scale. Smaller municipalities often have limited tax bases, fewer cultural institutions, and higher per-unit costs for facility upkeep — yet they also benefit from closer community connection, agile decision-making, and strong volunteer networks. Loyalist's cultural system reflects this dynamic equilibrium: lean, people-driven, and highly valued by its residents.

As one participant summarized during community engagement:

“We may not have a big-city budget, but we have heart — and we use it well.”

> Community Working Group Interview Participant

Loyalist's per-capita spending therefore signals not underperformance but lower tier pragmatism — a system that sustains beloved heritage assets and community events while exploring new models for creativity and participation.

Community and In-Kind Investment

In addition to the Township's direct operating and capital allocations, the Heritage, Culture and Tourism Division benefits from significant community-based in-kind support. This includes volunteer time, donated materials or services, and collaborative partnerships that extend the Township's ability to deliver cultural programming and events.

Volunteer contributions represent a measurable and growing share of the Division's resource base. Over the past two years, the value of volunteer time has averaged approximately \$19,600 annually, based on standard provincial valuation rates of \$28/hour. This in-kind contribution supplements municipal investment and enhances the Township's overall return on cultural spending.

The in-kind value of volunteer time reflects both operational leverage and community ownership of the Township's cultural goals. When combined with Township and external funding, the total investment in Loyalist's cultural system demonstrates a hybrid model — where modest municipal funds are amplified by community contribution.

5.4 Expenditure Composition and Funding Characteristics

Analysis of 2021–2025 financial actuals confirms that Loyalist's Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) portfolio operates as a labour-intensive, site-based system, influenced by seasonality and dependent on interdepartmental collaboration. This investment pattern — emphasizing operational stability over program expansion — is consistent with the realities of lower tier municipalities across Ontario, where limited staff capacity and large geographic footprints require careful balancing of maintenance, service delivery, and innovation.

Staffing and Operations

Salaries for three full-time staff and six seasonal students account for roughly 60–65% of annual expenditures. This reflects the human-centred nature of Loyalist’s cultural ecosystem — where staff serve simultaneously as caretakers, curators, event planners, and community connectors. Community engagement participants repeatedly recognized this contribution, noting:

“It’s the people that make these places matter — without them, the doors wouldn’t even open.”

> Focus Group Participant

This staffing model ensures that core sites remain open and community traditions continue but leaves minimal financial flexibility for new initiatives or year-round programming growth.

Events and Programming

Between 15–20% of expenditures support event delivery, marketing, supplies, and contracted programming. These funds enable cornerstone community traditions such as Canada Day and Light Up the Season, which participants consistently identified as “the heartbeat of the Township.”

However, as is common in lower tier communities, this event-driven model results in an uneven activity rhythm — vibrant in the summer, quieter in the winter — limiting opportunities for off-season arts incubation, artist partnerships, or youth engagement.

Collections and Conservation

Annual allocations for collections care and conservation average \$5,000 per site, funding modest exhibit rotation, storage, and basic artifact maintenance. Staff expressed concern that “digitization and storage upgrades are long overdue,” echoing public feedback calling for greater access to local history through digital storytelling and interpretation.

This constraint mirrors national trends: smaller municipalities devote proportionally higher shares of their cultural budgets to fixed costs, leaving less for innovation (Hill Strategies Research, 2023).

Capital and Infrastructure

Cultural capital investments are administered primarily through Engineering and Facilities, supporting accessibility upgrades, cyclical building maintenance, and restoration of heritage assets. While this ensures asset stewardship, it also disperses visibility of cultural capital spending within the broader municipal budget — a common issue in smaller jurisdictions where cultural infrastructure is embedded within general facility management frameworks.

Financial Context and Sector Alignment

Comparative review confirms that Loyalist's per-capita cultural investment remains below provincial averages but aligns with patterns among municipalities under 50,000 residents (Hill Strategies Research, 2023; Ontario Culture Strategy, 2016). In this cohort, limited tax bases, volunteer-dependent delivery models, and seasonality all shape investment decisions, concentrating funds on heritage preservation and event programming rather than innovation or digital engagement.

Engagement participants expressed both pride and aspiration — valuing Loyalist's traditions while envisioning greater creative breadth:

“We have strong traditions — now we need support for new voices and year-round culture.”

> Heritage Museums Lab Participant

“You can feel the potential here if there was a little more investment in creativity.”

> Arts Idea Lab Participant

To meet this vision, incremental investment and reallocation will be essential — particularly to:

- Transition key sites toward year-round operations
- Support digitization, inclusive interpretation, and co-created programs
- Expand staffing and volunteer coordination capacity
- Establish lifecycle funding models for heritage buildings and cultural infrastructure

These actions would allow Loyalist to evolve from maintaining a valued lower tier cultural base to building a sustainable, year-round ecosystem of creativity, connection, and inclusion.

Funding Patterns and Community Impact (2022–2025)

The Community Grants Program (CGP) has steadily reshaped Loyalist’s local funding landscape. Early allocations (2022) were largely unspecific, with nearly 90% categorized as “Other.” By 2025, funding distribution had become more intentional — signaling a maturing grants framework that reflects community priorities.

5.5 Funding Sources and Opportunities

Loyalist’s Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) portfolio draws on a modest but diverse funding ecosystem combining municipal base investment, external grants, earned revenues, and community partnerships. Maximizing these sources will be central to advancing from operational stability to creative growth.

Eligibility for the Community Benefit Charge (CBC)

Under Ontario’s Planning Act (Section 37), municipalities are permitted to impose a Community Benefit Charge (CBC) on higher-density development (five or more storeys and at least ten units) to fund services or facilities that are not otherwise covered under Development Charges (DC) or Parkland Dedication.

Cultural and heritage facilities — including museums, galleries, community halls, and public art — qualify as eligible capital investments under the CBC framework when they serve a public benefit and community access function.

Loyalist Township is eligible to implement a CBC by-law, provided that:

- An updated background study is prepared to justify eligible costs and establish a rate cap (maximum 4% of land value)
- The Official Plan (2019–2036) and Asset Management Plan reference cultural infrastructure as part of the Township’s community service system
- The Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division identifies capital needs (e.g., museum upgrades, interpretation renewal, creative space retrofits) within the next 10-year horizon

Loyalist currently meets these conditions in principle, with the Official Plan and Recreation Master Plan both identifying “cultural facilities and community gathering spaces” as part of the Township’s public infrastructure system. However, housing development of five+ stories in the life of this plan is low. As cost and staff time would be substantial to implement with no payback for 10-15 years, staff should monitor development trends to determine future

Implementing a CBC by-law for cultural purposes would provide a dedicated and growth-aligned funding stream — reducing pressure on the tax levy while ensuring long-term sustainability for the Township’s museums, heritage sites, and creative infrastructure.

Municipal Base Funding

The Township’s annual budget forms the foundation for cultural delivery, covering salaries, and recurring programming. This core funding ensures reliability — keeping doors open, sites staffed, and seasonal traditions alive. Maintenance and utilities are covered through the Facilities budget. Predictable base funding also provides the leverage required to secure matching grants and partnerships.

5.6 Community Grants program (CGP) Applications

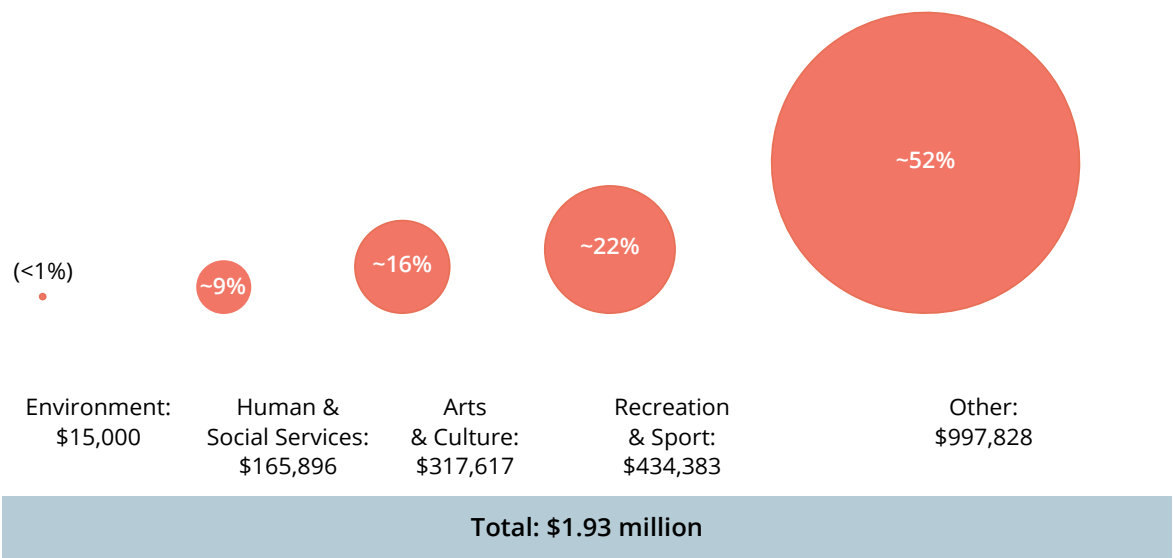
The Community Benefit and Community Vibrancy Fund, administered through Loyalist’s Community Grants Program, has quickly become the Township’s most visible and flexible local funding mechanism for cultural and community projects. Funded through revenues from renewable energy agreements, the CGP reinvests directly into community-led initiatives that enhance quality of life across Loyalist Township.

Between 2022 and 2025, the CGP allocated approximately \$2.01 million across five program streams — capital, program and event grants, free facility use, and discretionary micro-grants — with approximately 16.5% directed to arts and culture projects. These investments have supported festivals, public events, heritage restorations, interpretive signage, and artist-led community projects.

The evolution of the fund demonstrates a maturing framework: early allocations (2022) were broadly defined, while more recent funding cycles (2024–2025) have shown stronger alignment with Township priorities in arts, heritage, and recreation.

Engagement participants consistently described the CGP as a “game changer” — one that makes visible the Township’s commitment to community creativity and civic well-being.

CUMULATIVE ALLOCATIONS (2022–2025)



Strategic Opportunities

Looking ahead, the CGP can play a pivotal role in implementing Loyalist's forthcoming Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan. Opportunities include:

- Establishing a cultural allocation target of annual CGP disbursements to arts, culture, and heritage.
- Introducing a new "Creative Innovation" stream, supporting artist residencies, public art, and youth-led cultural projects.
- Using the CGP as a municipal matching tool to leverage external funding from federal, provincial, or philanthropic programs.
- Embedding reporting metrics (e.g., attendance, partnerships, volunteer hours) to track community impact and strengthen transparency.

By formalizing these strategic opportunities, the Community Grants Program could evolve into a cornerstone of Loyalist's cultural sustainability framework — bridging community innovation with municipal accountability.

5.7 Grants, Sponsorships, and Partnerships

Beyond municipal sources, Loyalist Township can enhance cultural investment by strategically engaging senior government grants, corporate sponsorships, and inter-municipal partnerships. The Township already demonstrates strong grant performance, having successfully leveraged federal and provincial funds since 2022 for capital restoration and accessibility upgrades at the Fairfield Gutzeit House.

Moving forward, formalizing a grant-readiness strategy within the Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division would position Loyalist to secure recurring funds for operations, programming, and infrastructure renewal.

Grant Opportunities

Potential programs include:

- Canadian Heritage – *Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage, Museums Assistance Program*, Canada Museums Operating Grant (CMOG) and *Cultural Spaces Fund*.
- Ontario Trillium Foundation – *Community Building* and *Capital Investment* streams.
- Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming– *Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund* and *Celebrate Ontario*.

Loyalist Township currently accesses cultural funding through both operational and capital grant streams. Small-scale operational and program-related applications are initiated and managed by the Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division, while large-scale capital grants — typically related to facility upgrades or major infrastructure — are led by the Corporate Services, Strategy and Innovation Department, with support from the relevant operating division.

To strengthen alignment and efficiency across departments, the Township could establish a coordinated grant pipeline — a shared annual workplan that identifies and prioritizes 2–3 strategic applications each year. This proactive approach would ensure that high-impact funding opportunities are tracked early, internal capacity is allocated effectively, and community partners (e.g., arts organizations, service clubs, and heritage groups) can be engaged in a timely and coordinated way. The pipeline could also serve as a tool to align cultural development goals with broader Township priorities such as sustainability, accessibility, and community growth.

Corporate and Community Sponsorships

While currently underutilized, sponsorship and philanthropic partnerships represent scalable tools for offsetting programming costs and enhancing community visibility. Local businesses and organizations have expressed interest in partnering through event sponsorships, interpretive signage, and youth program support.

The Township already maintains policies governing donations, naming rights, and sponsorships, which provide a clear ethical and procedural framework for partnership development. Building on these policies, the HCT Division could collaborate with Corporate Services to develop a Sponsorship and Recognition Program tailored to arts, culture, and heritage initiatives. This would formalize opportunities for business and community participation, establish recognition standards that align with municipal brand and ethics guidelines, and help diversify revenue streams to support long-term cultural sustainability.

Regional and Institutional Partnerships

Collaborations with Lennox & Addington County, Tourism Kingston, and Prince Edward County present further opportunities to align marketing, joint exhibits, and trail-based storytelling initiatives. Partnerships with educational institutions such as Loyalist College and Queen's University could also support research, interpretation, and student placement programs, strengthening the Township's creative ecosystem while building future workforce pathways.

Summary

Together, the CBC, CGP, and external funding partnerships have the opportunity to form a multi-tiered financial ecosystem capable of sustaining Loyalist's cultural growth over the next decade. By diversifying its revenue base and adopting a proactive funding strategy, Loyalist can shift from maintaining valued heritage and events to building a resilient, year-round, and inclusive cultural system — one that reflects the Township's values of connection, care, and sustainability.

5.8 Insights & Opportunities

Loyalist's financial profile demonstrates a lean but strategically resilient cultural system — one that achieves strong visibility and community participation with limited means. Several insights emerge from the 2021–2025 analysis:

Key Insights

- **Resilient Base, Limited Flexibility** – The Township sustains consistent service delivery despite tight budgets. However, nearly two-thirds of HCT costs are fixed (staffing, operations), leaving limited flexibility for innovation.
- **Volunteer and Partnership Leverage** – The financial model depends on volunteer energy and informal partnerships, underscoring the need for structured support and recognition mechanisms.
- **Grant-Readiness as a Strength** – Loyalist's clean financial reporting, success in many grants received, and alignment with federal/provincial priorities position it well for future external funding.
- **True Cost of Cultural Investment** – Cultural operating and capital budgets are currently managed across multiple Township departments, reflecting the shared nature of arts, heritage, and infrastructure delivery. Operational funding — including programs, events, and partnerships — is led by the Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Division, while capital investments in buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure are primarily managed through Facilities and Engineering, with support from Corporate Services and Finance. Because these responsibilities are distributed, the full picture of cultural investment is not always visible in a single view. Cultural capital upgrades — such as accessibility retrofits, heritage restorations, or public realm enhancements — are often funded through Facilities or Engineering budgets, which can obscure the cultural outcomes and return on those investments. Such transparency would strengthen strategic decision-making, help demonstrate the community and economic value of cultural assets, and ensure that future investments are aligned with both infrastructure and cultural development priorities.
- **CGP as Strategic Lever** – The Community Grants Program has already shifted local perception of what is possible — demonstrating demand for arts, culture, and social connection funding that exceeds available supply.

TABLE 5.8.1 EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity Area	Strategic Rationale
Establish a Dedicated Cultural Investment Reserve	Create a modest annual reserve to stabilize funding for multi-year projects and matching grants.
Leverage Regional Collaboration	Joint funding with Lennox & Addington County, RTO 9, and Kingston for shared tourism and marketing infrastructure.
Pursue Integrated Grant Streams	Combine culture, tourism, and environment funding (e.g., eco-cultural trails, shoreline storytelling, climate resilience projects).
Expand CGP Alignment	Introduce thematic intakes (arts, youth, environment) to target underfunded areas and attract new partners.
Develop Sponsorship and Donor Programs	Pilot annual giving or sponsorship models linked to signature events or heritage sites.
Develop a “True Cost Cultural Investment” Framework”	Integrate both operating and capital perspectives. This could include annual reporting that combines cultural program expenditures, facility maintenance, capital renewal, and grant contributions into a single summary. Finance could support this process by consolidating departmental data to provide Council and senior management with a clearer understanding of how resources collectively sustain the Township’s cultural infrastructure and outcomes.
Digital Infrastructure and Innovation Funding	Apply to digital access and heritage digitization funds to modernize interpretation and engage younger audiences.

Moving forward, financial sustainability will rely not on large infusions of new money, but on the strategic alignment of existing funds, grants, and partnerships. By viewing culture as civic infrastructure and funding as a networked ecosystem — municipal, regional, and community-based — the Township can continue transforming limited resources into broad, visible, and lasting cultural impact.

“We’ve learned how to do a lot with a little,”
 one participant reflected. “Now imagine what we
 could do if those little pieces worked together.”
 > Idea Lab Participant

SECTION 6. COMMUNITY AND INTEREST HOLDER ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Introduction

The development of the Loyalist Township Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan was guided by a comprehensive community engagement process. Designed collaboratively with Township staff, the Internal Working Group (IWG), and the Community Working Group (CWG), the engagement process followed a Human-Centered Design (HCD) approach emphasizing listening, iteration, and co-creation.

During the summer of 2025, more than 400 residents, artists, students, business owners, and community partners contributed their ideas through workshops, surveys, interviews, and creative activations held across Amherstview, Bath, Odessa, Wilton, and Amherst Island. The result is a rich mosaic of perspectives that reflects both the Township's geographic diversity and its shared sense of community pride.

Altogether, this multi-modal approach generated over 440 points of engagement, combining qualitative depth (labs, focus groups, interviews) with quantitative breadth (surveys and sounding boards). The result is both an evidence-based and community-driven foundation for the Plan.

This section outlines how Loyalist Township and the consulting team approached the task of discovery — detailing the structure, engagement methods, and collaborative governance that ensured Phase 1 of the Master Plan authentically reflects local voices, lived experience, and shared community priorities.



6.2 Engagement Approach and Methods

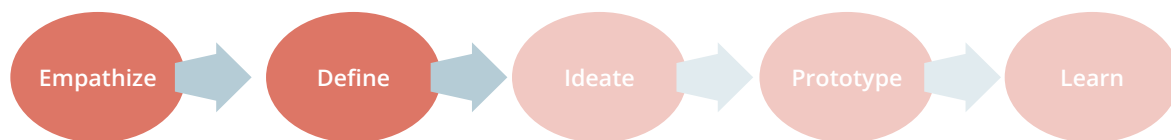
Loyalist Township’s engagement process was intentionally designed as a process of co-discovery, not consultation. Guided by Human-Centered Design (HCD) principles, it emphasized listening before prescribing, and co-creating understanding alongside residents, artists, students, and cultural partners. The approach sought to reach a diversity of voices — across age, geography, and experience — while grounding every conversation in the lived reality of Loyalist Township.

“You could feel people relax when they realized they were being listened to, not surveyed.”

> Youth Focus Group Participant, Amherstview

Design Framework

Phase 1 of the ACH Master Plan corresponded with the first two stages of the HCD framework:



This stage focused on *Empathize* and *Define* — gathering stories, mapping needs, and identifying barriers and opportunities within Loyalist’s cultural ecosystem. The process prioritized participation over prescription, ensuring that future strategies would emerge from community insight rather than external assumptions.

Engagement Methods

To achieve both depth and reach, a multi-modal engagement structure was employed. Methods were customized to context — some conversational and intimate, others broad and interactive — to ensure residents could participate in ways that felt comfortable and relevant.

Method	Description
Community Questionnaire	Township-wide survey exploring priorities, satisfaction, and aspirations for 2035.
Youth Survey	Targeted distribution through schools, youth hubs, and digital channels to capture youth perspectives.
Student Idea Lab	Co-design workshop with secondary students exploring cultural spaces, identity, and creativity.
Youth Idea Lab	Creative visioning session for youth aged 14–24 on cultural participation and belonging.
Arts, Heritage, Events, and Business Labs	Thematic workshops held in Bath with 51 local creatives, business owners, and heritage volunteers examining needs and opportunities in each sector.
Hamlet Focus Groups	Facilitated discussions in Amherstview, Odessa, Wilton, and Amherst Island uncovering place-based strengths and challenges.
Sounding Boards	Interactive comment boards placed at Township events, and markets, gathering open feedback.
Community Interviews	Interviews with Community Working Group members as well as arts and business leaders exploring systemic issues and opportunities for coordination.
Indigenous Conversations	One-on-one and written submissions from six Indigenous participants representing Mohawk, Algonquin, and Ojibwe/Alderville voices, guided by Indigenous advisor Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan.

Each engagement channel was designed to meet people where they were — through familiar venues, local events, and trusted community networks — ensuring meaningful inclusion across demographics and geography.

Engagement Timeline

Phase	Timeframe	Focus
Project Launch	May 2025	Background review; establishment of Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG).
Community Engagement	Summer 2025	Public pop-ups, youth labs, first Community Working Group meeting.
Deep Listening & Dialogue	Summer 2025	Hamlet sessions, arts and heritage dialogues, Indigenous engagement.
Synthesis & Analysis	October 2025	Coding, cross-departmental integration, and identification of insights.
Validation & Drafting	October–November 2025	Review with IWG and CWG prior to Council presentation.

Participation Overview

Over 400 individuals contributed to the engagement process between spring and fall 2025.

Engagement Type	# Participants
Community Questionnaire + Written Survey	198
Youth Survey	21
Student & Youth Idea Labs	27
Arts, Events, Heritage & Business Labs	51
Hamlet Focus Groups (4 sessions)	35
Sounding Boards	95
Community Interviews	8
Indigenous Conversations	6
Total Participants	441

This reach ensured that every major demographic — residents, youth, artists, heritage volunteers, community organizations, and Indigenous voices — was represented in shaping the Township’s cultural vision.

6.3 Indigenous Conversations and Parallel Story Work

A dedicated stream of engagement, guided by Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan (Onkwehon:we), focused on the perspectives of six Indigenous participants from the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, Algonquin knowledge holders, and Ojibwe/Alderville First Nation members. These dialogues included one-on-one conversations and a written Indigenous history report contextualizing Loyalist's lands within a deeper timeline of Indigenous stewardship.

Participants offered reflections that intertwined historical continuity with the lived realities of today:

- **Visibility and Representation** – “Township museums and events contain little or no Indigenous content,” noted one participant. “It often feels like our stories aren’t there.”
- **Cultural Safety** – Urban areas such as Amherstview were described as less welcoming than smaller communities, reinforcing the need for inclusive representation.
- **Treaty Recognition** – Participants emphasized that Mississauga Peoples remain treaty rights holders through the Crawford Purchase and should be recognized in signage and public interpretation.
- **Programming and Collaboration** – Strong interest was expressed in outdoor storytelling, public archaeology, and language visibility (Mohawk, Anishinaabemowin).
- **Unlearning and Decolonization** – Residents should be supported to “unlearn colonial narratives” and embrace shared stewardship.

“Museums especially need to explore and share Indigenous identities, culture, stories, etc. with residents and visitors alike... The Township should seek out opportunities to engage in unlearning and implementing ways to decolonize spaces and events.”

> Indigenous Conversations Participant

This dialogue reaffirms that Indigenous engagement must be understood as relationship-building, not outreach — a continuous process of listening and shared authorship that will continue through Phase 2.

6.4 Governance and Collaboration

Two advisory bodies ensured accountability and shared ownership throughout the process:

- **Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG)** – Representatives from Parks & Recreation, Facilities, Planning, Communications, Engineering, Emergency Services and Finance collaborated to align data and integrate departmental priorities.
- **Community Working Group (CWG)** – Residents from each hamlet acted as co-researchers, testing assumptions and ensuring diverse community perspectives shaped emerging insights.

“We’re not just reviewing a report; we’re shaping how culture lives across the Township.”

> CWG Member

This governance model embodies Loyalist’s collaborative ethos — municipal staff and residents working in parallel toward shared goals for cultural growth and connection.

6.5 Data Integrity and Analysis

Qualitative data from all sessions were anonymized, coded thematically, and organized under five human needs identified through the HCD process: belonging, participation, continuity, visibility, and care. Quantitative data from surveys and municipal sources were cross-verified for accuracy and used to triangulate trends. This mixed-method analysis ensures both rigor and representativeness, creating a transparent foundation for future evaluation.

This iterative and transparent process ensured that findings are both technically grounded and community-authored — anchored in Loyalist’s values of inclusion, stewardship, and shared pride of place.

6.6 What We Heard: Community Findings

The voices gathered through Loyalist's engagement process present a clear and compelling portrait of a Township deeply proud of its heritage and equally eager to see its cultural life evolve. Across all methods — idea labs, focus groups, surveys, interviews, and sounding boards — participants described culture as a connection: to one another, to history, and to the places that define daily life.

“You didn't come to tell us what culture is —
you came to ask what it feels like.”

> Participant, Odessa

Residents consistently expressed pride in Loyalist's hamlet identities and the Township's deep sense of belonging. They view culture not as a separate sector but as something woven into community life — through shared traditions, volunteerism, and the rhythm of annual gatherings. Yet, beneath this pride lies a desire for greater visibility, inclusivity, and coordination. Participants want culture to be understood as civic infrastructure: something that connects hamlets, supports well-being, and helps tell a shared story of who Loyalist is becoming.

Distinctive Hamlet Perspectives

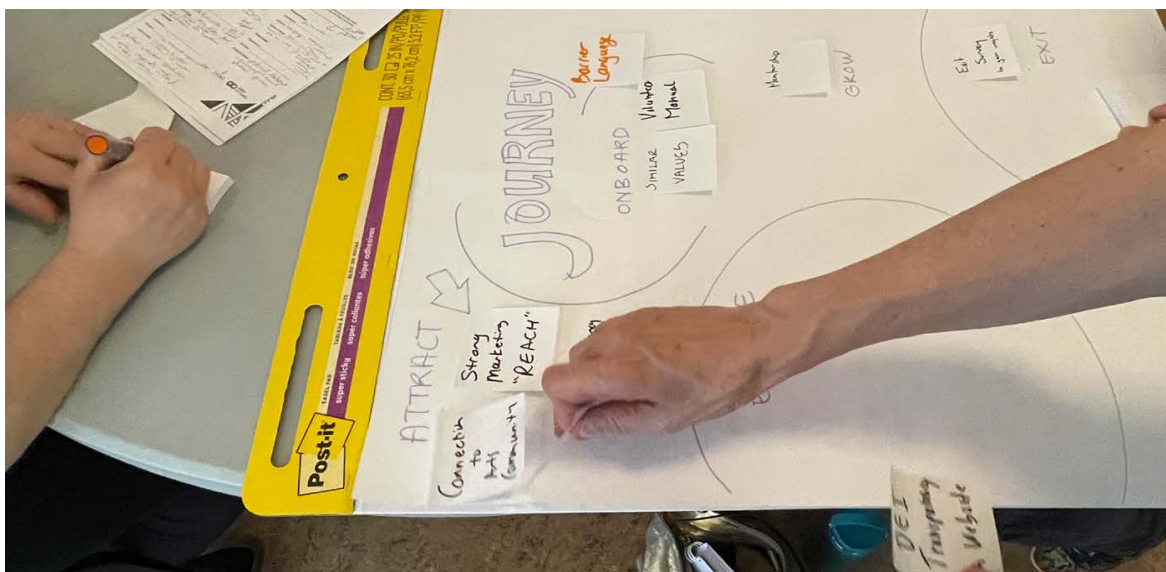
Each of Loyalist's five primary communities offered perspectives rooted in place. In Bath, participants spoke of a strong Loyalist heritage identity and the need to revitalize the museum precinct while linking it more intentionally to the waterfront and regional tourism trails. On Amherst Island, residents described a vibrant arts community and an independent creative spirit tempered by logistical barriers such as ferry schedules and the cost of transporting materials. Odessa participants voiced pride in Babcock Mill as a symbol of local craftsmanship and wanted clearer Township visibility at events and improved signage. In Wilton, engagement revealed deep agricultural heritage and a community anchored by Wilton Hall — a volunteer-run hub in need of upgrades and modest youth programming support. Finally, Amherstview, the Township's fastest-growing community, identified a lack of cultural venues and a desire for concerts, pop-up events, and a multipurpose cultural hub to match its growing population.

Across all hamlets, the same refrain was heard: residents want stronger coordination and communication between communities. The absence of a unified effort means that residents in one hamlet often have little awareness of what is happening in another. As one participant put it, “Each hamlet has its own heartbeat. We want to hear each other.”

Community Priorities and Survey Insights

The community questionnaire and youth survey — together representing more than 200 respondents — provided quantitative confirmation of what was heard in conversation. Roughly half of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with current opportunities, particularly with long-standing community events such as Canada Day and Light Up the Season. Satisfaction was lowest for access to arts spaces, Indigenous content, and year-round programming, underscoring the need for a more balanced and inclusive cultural offering.

When asked about priorities for the future, residents responded with clarity and consistency. Their top aspirations were for more year-round cultural programming, expanded festivals and events across all hamlets, increased youth opportunities, and stronger visibility for Indigenous and newcomer stories. More than four in five respondents rated arts, culture, and heritage as “very important” to quality of life. Many emphasized that cultural participation builds pride of place and community connection. “We may not have a big-city budget,” wrote one resident, “but we have heart — and we use it well.”



A Shared Understanding of Culture

When asked what “culture” means to them, residents described it as both heritage and everyday life. Culture, in Loyalist, means the ways people connect — to history, to creativity, and to one another. It is expressed through familiar rituals: music in the park, vendor markets, storytelling at the museum, and shared meals in community halls. It also means inclusion — making space for new voices and stories that reflect the Township’s evolving diversity.

“Culture is to share our stories,”
wrote one respondent. Another noted, “History matters —
tell it so it connects to today.”

Through more than 400 conversations, a shared definition emerged:

Culture in Loyalist Township means connection — connecting to history, to creativity, and to each other. It is both tradition and innovation, rooted in place yet open to new voices. Culture is the way we celebrate, share stories, and build belonging together across all our hamlets.

Key Insights

The engagement process revealed a cultural system rooted in pride of place, neighbourly care, and deep volunteer commitment. Residents across the Township spoke about culture not as a program or product, but as a lived experience — something that connects people to one another, to their stories, and to the land itself. What follows synthesizes hundreds of conversations, surveys, and workshops into six interconnected themes that reflect the community’s collective voice.

THEME 1 – BELONGING, IDENTITY, AND CONNECTION

Loyalist residents view culture as the thread that binds them together across hamlets and generations. Whether through fairs, markets, concerts, or shared meals, participation in local events is experienced as an expression of belonging. People spoke proudly of Bath's Loyalist roots, Wilton's agricultural history, Amherst Island's creativity, Odessa's heritage craftsmanship, and Amherstview's energy. Each community carries its own rhythm, yet residents yearn for stronger connections among them.

“Each hamlet has its own heartbeat.
We want to hear each other.”

> Bath participant

This sense of belonging is both emotional and geographic: residents want to celebrate local distinctiveness while seeing themselves reflected in a single Township-wide narrative. They described culture as the bridge between heritage and future growth — something that keeps memory alive while welcoming new voices.

THEME 2 – INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY, AND CULTURAL SAFETY

While Loyalist is widely perceived as friendly and welcoming, participants identified practical and cultural barriers that limit participation. Distance between hamlets, ferry schedules, and a lack of public transit constrain access to events. Seniors, newcomers, and youth referenced cost, awareness, and accessibility in older buildings as recurring issues.

“Inclusion here means making it
easy to take part — not just saying
everyone's welcome.”

> Participant, Amherstview

Indigenous advisors expanded the definition of accessibility to include cultural safety and representation, stressing that acknowledgment must be lived through ongoing visibility in programming, signage, and interpretation. Residents agreed that inclusive design must go beyond compliance — ensuring that everyone can *see themselves* in Loyalist’s cultural life. These insights echo priorities identified in the Recreation Master Plan (2025) and point to the need for integrated, equitable planning across departments.

THEME 3 – VOLUNTEERISM, COORDINATION, AND SHARED GOVERNANCE

Volunteers remain the backbone of Loyalist’s cultural ecosystem. From museum boards to community halls, much of what exists today survives through dedication and goodwill rather than formal resources. Participants voiced pride in this civic spirit but warned of fatigue and the absence of succession planning.

“A little help at the right time keeps
us going for another year.”

> Volunteer, Bath

Residents consistently called for stronger coordination — shared calendars, joint promotion, and more visible municipal support. This theme underscores that sustainability in Loyalist will depend less on expanding bureaucracy and more on enabling the community structures that already exist.

THEME 4 – YOUTH, LEARNING, AND CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

Young residents expressed both pride in their community and frustration with limited avenues for creative participation. Many described wanting to perform, exhibit, or learn new skills but not knowing where opportunities existed. They spoke of digital media, design, and music as preferred entry points, and requested paid summer positions and recognition in municipal decision-making.

Some community questionnaire respondents cited that early creative engagement builds confidence and belonging. Youth Idea Lab and Focus Group participants mentioned linking cultural programs with schools, libraries, and recreation facilities, and establishing mentorship and internship pathways through Township events and museums.

Youth see themselves not as future audiences but as current contributors. Supporting their visibility and leadership will be critical to Loyalist’s long-term cultural vitality.

THEME 5 – INDIGENOUS PLACE AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Indigenous engagement revealed both historical continuity and present-day invisibility. Participants representing Mohawk, Algonquin, and Ojibwe/Alderville voices emphasized that reconciliation must be relational and ongoing. They urged Loyalist to embed Indigenous perspectives in signage, exhibits, and public programming and to honour living treaties and agreements such as the Crawford Purchase and The Dish with One Spoon Wampum.

There is strong interest in collaborative, land-based initiatives — public archaeology, shoreline storytelling, dual-language interpretation, and outdoor cultural events — that link Indigenous knowledge to Loyalist’s environmental and heritage planning. These conversations reinforced that Indigenous partnerships are not a one-time consultation but a continuous relationship that will guide implementation in Phase 2.

THEME 6 – VISIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, AND YEAR-ROUND ACTIVATION

Perhaps the most consistent message across all engagement activities was the need for improved visibility and coordination. Residents frequently expressed that they *do not know what’s happening* across the Township or how to find out. Events often overlap, and promotion relies heavily on word-of-mouth or individual Facebook pages. Participants called for a central cultural calendar, shared marketing tools, and unified branding for heritage, culture, and tourism.

Beyond communication, participants highlighted a desire for year-round cultural life. Many heritage sites and events operate primarily in summer, leaving a perceived lull through the winter months. Residents suggested winter markets, rotating exhibits, pop-up arts spaces, and modest infrastructure upgrades — such as heating and washrooms — to enable four-season use.

“Everything shuts down in the fall. We need spaces we can use in winter too.”

> Focus Group Participant

The community’s vision is for Loyalist to be recognized as a place where culture is visible, connected, and continuous — a year-round reflection of the Township’s identity and creativity.

Financial and Structural Realities

Participants repeatedly acknowledged that Loyalist's cultural achievements are impressive given its lean financial base. Many expressed a desire to treat culture not as discretionary spending but as essential infrastructure that generates social and economic return. There was broad interest in diversifying funding sources — through grants, sponsorships, earned revenue, and dedicated allocations within the Community Grants Program — to ensure long-term stability of sites and programs. Residents also expressed interest in tracking participation, volunteer hours, and attendance to better demonstrate impact and advocate for future investment.

Emerging Themes

From these collective insights, several themes emerged that define Loyalist's cultural future:

- Renew and connect heritage assets while expanding interpretation to reflect all stories.
- Create a central communications platform and shared brand for cultural events.
- Support year-round activation through winter markets, rotating exhibits, and improved infrastructure.
- Empower youth and volunteers as leaders through structured programs and recognition.
- Embed Indigenous partnerships and representation across all aspects of planning.
- Build cross-sector collaboration with County and regional partners to amplify Loyalist's profile.

Across all six themes, one unifying message stands out: Loyalist's cultural system is relational, resilient, and ready. Residents take immense pride in what exists and see the Township's role as an enabler — helping to connect dots, reduce barriers, and sustain the human infrastructure that already gives Loyalist its character.

“We have remarkable assets and people.
Help us connect the dots.”

> Ideas Lab Participant

SECTION 7. CULTURAL SYSTEM MAPPING AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

7.1 Purpose

This section interprets Loyalist's cultural landscape as an interconnected system — a living web of relationships among people, places, and stories. Rather than viewing cultural programs and assets as discrete initiatives, this systems lens recognizes the flow of activity, care, and creativity that binds Loyalist's hamlets together and links them to the wider regional network. Understanding these interconnections helps Council and partners see culture not as an isolated pillar but as civic infrastructure — essential to the Township's vitality, identity, and long-term sustainability.

7.2 The Cultural System as Infrastructure

Residents and participants frequently used the language of infrastructure to describe culture:

- "Volunteers are the backbone"
- "Stories are our wiring"
- "The halls are our bridges"

These metaphors reveal an intuitive local understanding that culture, like roads or utilities, sustains the Township's cohesion. It provides pathways for belonging, pride, and continuity.

Recognizing this system as infrastructure reframes investment: strengthening communication, coordination, and accessibility is as critical to Loyalist's quality of life as maintaining roads or community halls. When viewed through this lens, small-scale supports — like a volunteer recognition network or a centralized cultural calendar — can deliver system-wide benefits.

7.3 Flows of Connection

Analysis of engagement data and mapping exercises revealed four dynamic flows that define Loyalist's cultural system:

1. PEOPLE AND ENERGY

The Township's creative and volunteer energy moves fluidly between communities. Volunteers from one hamlet routinely assist with festivals, museum events, or installations in another. This lateral exchange — built on trust and relationships — serves as the true connective tissue of Loyalist's cultural life.

2. INFORMATION, VISIBILITY, AND SHARED RESOURCES

The Township already maintains several strong communication tools — including a municipal website, community calendar, and public engagement platform — but there is room to expand their reach and integration to strengthen awareness of arts, culture, and heritage activities. Current promotion remains partly reliant on word-of-mouth, posters, and independent social media groups, leading to uneven visibility across communities. Enhancing the Township's digital presence through improved cross-linking, consistent branding, and stronger collaboration with local groups could make cultural events and opportunities more discoverable. A centralized cultural hub or enhanced section within existing platforms would further streamline access to event listings, venue rentals, volunteer opportunities and heritage information.

3. RESOURCES AND LOGISTICS

In many cases, community organizations and volunteer groups informally share physical assets such as tents, tables, signage, and event equipment to support local gatherings. This demonstrates a high level of collaboration and community initiative but also highlights the opportunity to expand coordination and efficiency. Establishing a modest, community-oriented inventory or booking system — supported by the Township as a facilitator rather than a direct provider — could reduce duplication, enhance event readiness, and ensure equitable access to basic resources without significant cost increases.

4. EMOTION AND STORY

Beneath the visible structures lies a deeper, intangible network of pride, memory, and affection. Residents attend events and volunteer because these activities express care for community and continuity. This emotional infrastructure — rooted in trust — sustains Loyalist's system even when funding or staff capacity are limited.

Mapping these flows highlights key leverage points: communication, coordination, and recognition. Strengthening these relational nodes can multiply cultural impact across the Township without significant new expenditure.

7.4 Regional Partnerships

Loyalist is positioned to be a key contributor to the regional narrative, with sites such as Fairfield Gutzeit House, Babcock Mill, and the Neilson Store Museum acting as anchor destinations in the County's heritage corridor.

Partnerships through Doors Open, heritage weeks, and joint marketing initiatives already strengthen cross-community visibility. New opportunities exist to expand collaboration with neighbouring municipalities — Kingston, Prince Edward County, and Greater Napanee — around shoreline interpretation, cycling and ferry tourism, and the creative economy.

Such collaborations enhance cultural tourism while reinforcing Loyalist's leadership in sustainable, community-driven cultural development. Participants consistently expressed that these partnerships would help elevate Loyalist's profile beyond its size, leveraging regional reach without losing local identity.

7.5 Strengths and Weaknesses

The mapping and engagement findings reveal a system marked by both resilience and vulnerability.

Strengths include deep volunteer commitment, distributed access to facilities across hamlets, cross-sector collaboration, and a culture of generosity and care. These attributes give Loyalist flexibility and authenticity — key assets in small-community cultural development.

Fragilities, however, are equally clear: volunteer stretch, fragmented communication, limited youth involvement, and unpredictable funding streams. Without intervention, these weaknesses could erode the very trust that sustains the system. Addressing them will require *“relational design”* — intentional structures that strengthen connection without bureaucratizing it.

Examples include shared calendars, volunteer mentorship networks, intergenerational training programs, and recognition initiatives that celebrate community contributions. Such measures transform goodwill into durable infrastructure.

7.6 Regional and Environmental Identity

Loyalist’s geography — its shoreline, ferry route, and agricultural landscapes — acts as both literal and symbolic connective tissue. Participants repeatedly referenced the lake as a teacher and a storyteller, linking Indigenous, Loyalist, and agricultural histories into a shared narrative of stewardship.

This environmental identity offers a natural foundation for regional collaborations: shoreline interpretation trails, eco-cultural tourism, and partnerships between environmental and cultural organizations that reflect the Township’s dual commitment to place and sustainability.

7.7 Interpretation

Viewed as a whole, Loyalist's cultural network functions like a living organism — adaptive, interdependent, and sustained by care. Its organizing principle is trust: trust between volunteers, between hamlets, and between the Township and its residents.

By recognizing and nurturing this interconnected system, Loyalist positions itself not as an external authority but as a participant in the same ecology of belonging that residents described. In practical terms, this means shifting from isolated program delivery to networked support — investing in relationships, visibility, and year-round connection.

This systemic perspective bridges community insight with implementation. It provides a conceptual foundation for future strategies focused on governance, partnership, and investment, ensuring that Loyalist's cultural ecosystem remains resilient, connected, and visible.

SECTION 8. INDIGENOUS PLACE AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

8.1 Purpose

Arts, culture, and heritage in Loyalist Township exist within a deeper, older story. The purpose of this section is to acknowledge the Indigenous lands, teachings, and relationships that predate the Township's establishment and continue to shape its landscape. This section recognizes Indigenous culture as a living, relational presence — one that informs how Loyalist understands stewardship, collaboration, and civic responsibility. The goal is to move beyond acknowledgment to relationship: from words to shared work and celebration.

Recognizing Indigenous place and partnership is not an addition to cultural planning but a core principle of it. As Loyalist moves into Phase 2, the Township will continue this relationship-based work through inclusive co-creation of strategies, ensuring that Indigenous voices help shape the future of local arts, culture, and heritage.

8.2 Indigenous Presence Today

Indigenous people live, create, and teach throughout the region. Indigenous artists, educators, and Elders contribute to schools, museums, and public art throughout Loyalist Township. Many are citizens of Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, have ties to Algonquin Nations north of the Township, are associated with Alderville First Nation, or amongst the urban Indigenous residents of Kingston and Napanee.

Engagement with Indigenous artists and knowledge keepers during this phase revealed an ongoing commitment to cultural continuity and to relationship with non-Indigenous neighbours. Participants described the lake, shoreline, and ferry route as living archives — places where story, language, and responsibility remain present.

“We are still here, and the land still knows us,”

> shared one Indigenous artist during the listening session.

“Our stories live in the water, in the wind,
and in how we care for them.”

> Indigenous Conversation Participant

8.3 Relationship as Practice

Human-Centred Design and Indigenous methodologies intersect in one key principle: learning begins with listening. The project team approached Indigenous engagement as an act of respect, guided by existing relationships within Lennox and Addington County and by the understanding that cultural collaboration cannot be rushed. Conversations were held with local Indigenous practitioners and educators who have worked on County and municipal projects. Their insights emphasized humility, reciprocity, and patience.

As one advisor put it:

“You don’t build trust by scheduling it —
you build it by showing up.”

This orientation redefines engagement as ongoing relationship rather than task completion. The Township’s commitment should therefore extend beyond this plan, evolving through continued dialogue and mutual support.

8.4 Intersections with Loyalist’s Cultural System

Indigenous cultural presence intersects with Loyalist’s arts, culture, and heritage ecosystem in multiple ways:

- Doors Open and Culture Talks as well as museum programming have featured Indigenous craftspeople and educators.
- Schools across the Township incorporate Indigenous curriculum and land-based learning partnerships.
- Indigenous artists have participated in exhibitions.

These examples represent early steps in a longer process of reconciliation through collaboration. They demonstrate that Loyalist already has the relationships and frameworks to build from.

8.5 Shared Themes: Connection, Continuity, and Care

Three interrelated ideas recur across both Indigenous engagement and broader community insights:

Connection — Recognition that people and land are inseparable. The Township’s environmental and cultural planning can align with Indigenous knowledge emphasizing stewardship and interdependence.

Continuity — Both Indigenous and settler residents express deep concern for sustaining tradition through generational change. The impulse to “keep things going” unites communities across differences.

Care — Acts of maintenance, teaching, and volunteerism reflect the same ethics found in Indigenous principles of reciprocity. Caring for people and place is understood as the core of civic identity.

These thematic parallels point toward a shared cultural foundation already in practice within Loyalist — one that can guide future partnership.

8.6 Environmental and Cultural Stewardship

For Indigenous communities, landscape and culture are one. Environmental care — protecting shorelines, restoring wetlands, honouring traditional plants — is simultaneously cultural practice. Loyalist residents echoed this perspective in their emphasis on natural heritage and sustainable growth.

Collaborations between Township environmental initiatives and Indigenous ecological knowledge could yield profound benefit. Such partnerships might include shoreline interpretation projects, ceremonial plantings, or inclusion of Indigenous design principles in parks and trails.

“The lake teaches us balance,” explained one Elder.
“Every plan should begin by listening to it.”

8.7 Regional Collaboration

Loyalist's participation in regional networks offers an opportunity to contribute to a model of reconciliation through cultural planning.

Building on relationships with Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Alderville First Nation, and regional Indigenous artists, Loyalist can co-develop exhibitions, artist residencies, and interpretive programming that link heritage and contemporary practice. Doing so would advance Township priorities and reflect its core values of connection and care, while also supporting broader County objectives.

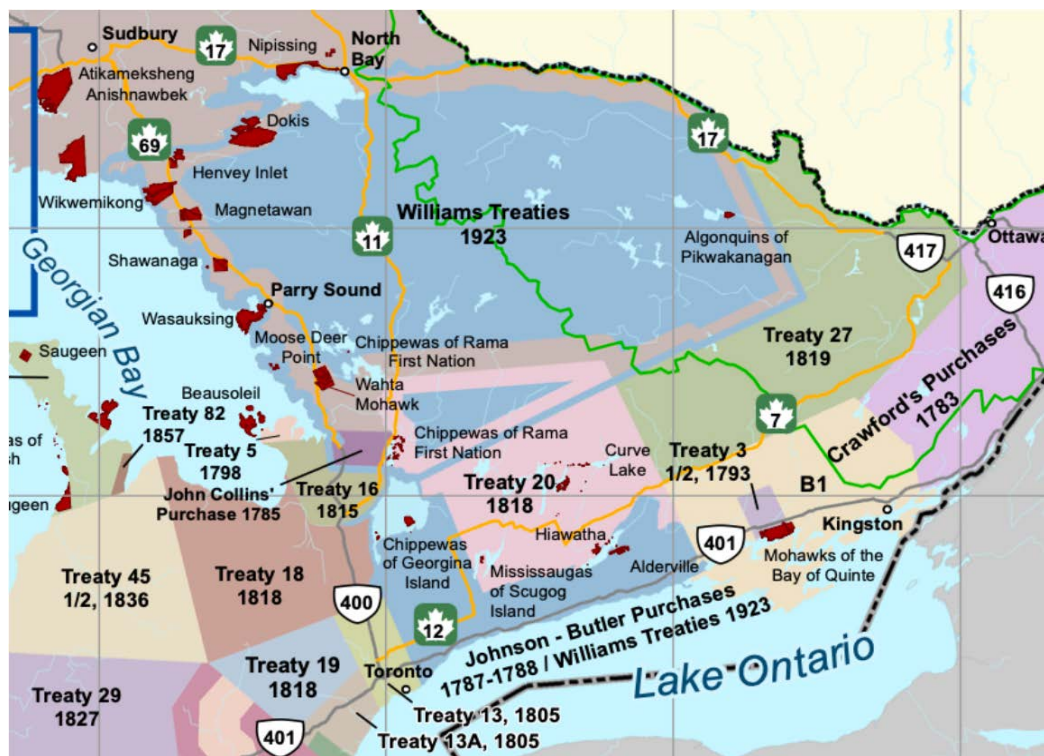


8.8 Future Pathways

From these discussions, several pathways for continued relationship emerged:

- **Ongoing Dialogue** – Maintain contact with Indigenous artists and cultural advisors beyond project cycles.
- **Visibility and Authorship** – Ensure Indigenous representation in interpretive signage, communications, and cultural programming.
- **Shared Space** – Designate accessible venues and events for cultural exchange, learning, and ceremony.
- **Reciprocity** – Approach collaboration as mutual benefit, not extraction.
- **Integration** – Embed Indigenous perspectives into the Township's environmental, recreation, and heritage planning.

These pathways align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action relevant to municipalities, especially those concerning education, culture, and commemorative policy.



SECTION 9. INSIGHT SYNTHESIS

9.1 Purpose

This section distills the most significant, system-level insights that emerged through the discovery and engagement process. They represent what Loyalist has learned about how culture already functions within civic life — and where collective attention will yield the greatest impact in Phase 2.

These are not recommendations; they are foundations for co-creation.

Through hundreds of conversations, workshops, and site visits, a clear message surfaced: Loyalist's arts, culture, and heritage system already acts as connective civic infrastructure. It binds hamlets, generations, and stories together through care, volunteerism, and shared identity. What residents asked for most was not reinvention, but recognition — of the work already being done and the people who sustain it.

“We don't need to start over.
We just need to be seen, supported,
and connected.”

> Focus Group Participant, Bath

9.2 What the System Is Telling Us

Loyalist's cultural ecosystem operates as a distributed civic network: municipal and community spaces working twice as hard, heritage assets anchoring identity, and people carrying culture through the seasons. Its strengths are pride, adaptability, and collaboration; its constraints are seasonality, lean capacity, uneven inclusion, and visibility.

From this analysis, five overarching insights define how Loyalist's cultural system works today and what it needs to sustain momentum.

9.3 Five System-Level Insights

1. Culture Is Civic Infrastructure

Arts, culture, and heritage are not ancillary amenities — they are essential systems that maintain community connection, mental well-being, and belonging. Every hall, museum, and festival functions as connective tissue, delivering social outcomes that parallel other municipal services.

Recognizing culture as infrastructure reframes the conversation: embedding it across civic planning and policies ensures a cohesive approach, and maintaining a hall or funding a volunteer-led festival is not discretionary spending; it is maintenance of social cohesion and local pride.

2. Belonging Is Built

Participation does not happen by chance — it is enabled through thoughtful design. Accessibility, communication, and recognition determine whether residents see themselves reflected in community life. Hamlets with clear information, low-barrier spaces, and visible appreciation for volunteers consistently show higher engagement.

Future cultural planning must therefore treat inclusion, signage, and outreach as design challenges, not marketing tasks.

“When people can see themselves
in the story, they show up.”

> Community Working Group Member

3. Heritage Is a Living Practice

In Loyalist, heritage is enacted rather than observed. It lives through storytelling, restoration, craft, and seasonal festivals that renew continuity across generations. Residents view preservation as an act of participation — something they do together. This “living heritage” approach invites adaptive reuse, multi-season programming, and cross-generational teaching as core strategies for sustainability.

“Our history isn’t in glass cases —
it’s in how we still use these places.”

> Heritage Lab Participant

4. Systems are Relational

The Township’s strongest cultural outcomes arise from relationships, not hierarchies. The collaboration between staff, the Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG), the Community Working Group (CWG), and volunteers can demonstrate that effective governance can rely on trust and coordination more than structure.

When departments and community members co-own outcomes, efficiency and creativity multiply. Relational governance — grounded in communication and care — is Loyalist’s operating system for cultural development.

“It’s not about control; it’s about connection.”

> IWG Participant

5. Care Is Capacity

The Township's most valuable resource is human — the time, energy, and emotional labour contributed by staff, volunteers, and neighbours. This care work keeps facilities open, programs running, and community identity intact. Investing in recognition, rest, and coordination is therefore an investment in sustainability. Culture in Loyalist thrives where care is visible, supported, and shared.

“It’s people, not budgets, that make things happen.”

> CWG Participant

9.4 Cross-Cutting Insights

Several cross-cutting patterns strengthen these five system truths:

- **Inclusion and Cultural Safety** – Residents want spaces where everyone — youth, newcomers, seniors, and Indigenous neighbours — feels welcome.
- **Visibility and Communication** – Information gaps limit participation; improved signage and shared calendars are seen as quick wins.
- **Year-Round Activation** – Culture peaks in summer; infrastructure and staffing upgrades could unlock four-season participation.
- **Volunteer Sustainability** – Volunteer energy is immense but fragile; recognition and intergenerational renewal are essential.
- **Regional Integration** – Partnerships with Lennox & Addington County, and RTO 9 remain critical to amplify Loyalist’s reach and leverage funding.

These patterns show that Loyalist’s cultural life is not constrained by lack of interest but by bandwidth — the human and logistical capacity to connect what already exists.

9.5 Implications for Phase 2

Together, these insights describe a Township whose cultural system already embodies the values of connection, care, and sustainability embedded in its Strategic Plan. The task ahead is not to create culture, but to amplify and align what works — designing policies, partnerships, and supports that honour the people and practices already sustaining it.

Future planning should:

- Treat cultural investment as maintenance of belonging.
- Embed accessibility and cultural safety into every design decision.
- Formalize relational governance through ongoing collaboration between departments, volunteers, and Indigenous partners.
- Position volunteer care and recognition as a measurable performance indicator.
- Keep the hamlet lens central, connecting distinct identities within one Township story.

9.6 Transition to Next Steps

These insights now serve as the conceptual foundation for Phase 2: Co-Creating Strategies. The next section translates this learning into tangible opportunity areas — the early directions the community itself has proposed for how Loyalist can evolve from a well-loved cultural network into a fully integrated, sustainable system of civic life.

SECTION 10. NEXT STEPS – TESTING AND CO-CREATION

10.1 Purpose

This final section bridges the learning from Phase 1 into the collaborative design work that follows. The next phase of Loyalist Township's Arts, Culture & Heritage (ACH) Master Plan will not prescribe actions outright; it will co-create strategies that reflect community experience and municipal capacity.

Moving from discovery to design, this phase will validate what residents, staff, and partners have already expressed and transform that shared insight into implementable strategies through structured collaboration between Council, staff, and the community.

“We’ve done the listening. Now it’s time to build together.”

> Community Working Group participant

10.2 From Understanding to Design

Phase 1 has established a clear foundation:

- Loyalist’s cultural ecosystem already functions as a connected network of belonging.
- Residents value continuity, care, and participation over formality — relationship over hierarchy.
- Culture operates as civic infrastructure, sustaining the Township’s vision of *“Thriving, innovative, and sustainable communities where all people are valued.”*

Phase 2 will build directly on these insights. Rather than introducing new directives, it will begin with reflection and iteration — testing, prototyping, and learning before finalizing strategies.

10.3 Guiding Principles for Phase 2

Four guiding principles will shape the next phase of work:

- **Shared Ownership** – Strategy development will engage the Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG), the Community Working Group (CWG), and Council in partnership rather than sequence.
- **Evidence and Empathy** – Each direction will be grounded in both data and lived experience.
- **Iterative Design** – Strategies will be tested and refined through pilot projects, journey-mapping, and prototyping before being finalized.
- **Transparency and Reflection** – Participants will see how their input informs decisions, reinforcing trust and accountability.

These principles reflect Evoke's commitment to human-centred design — approaching cultural planning as a practice of learning with, not prescribing to, the community.

10.4 Framework for Testing and Co-Creation

Phase 2 will convene three inter-linked engagement streams to carry ideas forward:

1. Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG)

The IWG will translate Phase 1 insights into internal coordination opportunities — aligning Facilities, Parks, Recreation, Planning, Emergency Services, Finance, Engineering and Communications to strengthen cultural service delivery. This cross-departmental collaboration will explore operational efficiencies, shared communication channels, and mechanisms to better support community partners.

2. Community Working Group (CWG)

The CWG will take part in design workshops that define community-driven priorities. Using human-centred design tools such as journey mapping, concept canvases, and prioritization grids, the group will help identify feasible strategies and pilot projects that match community capacity.

3. Council Dialogue and Validation

Council will play a confirming and aligning role — ensuring that proposed directions integrate with municipal objectives, resource planning, and broader frameworks such as the Recreation Master Plan (2025), the Official Plan (2019–2036) and the Strategic Plan (2024–2027).

10.5 Anticipated Outcomes of Phase 2

By the conclusion of Phase 2, Loyalist Township will have:

- **A Draft Strategy Framework** – outlining 5 to 7 co-created strategic directions that position arts, culture, and heritage within Township priorities.
- **A Collaborative Governance Model** – clarifying how the IWG, CWG, and Council share responsibility for cultural development.
- **A Prioritization Map** – identifying short-term pilots, mid-term goals, and long-term investments.
- **An Evaluation Lens (MEL Framework)** – establishing measures of social impact, inclusion, and participation to guide future reporting and Council review.

10.6 Reflections and Closing

Phase 1 concludes with readiness. Loyalist Township has articulated who it is, what it values, and how culture already sustains its communities. This process has already proven that Loyalist’s greatest strength is not its size but its connectivity — a network of residents who care deeply for one another and the places they share. As Phase 2 begins, Loyalist is poised to model what cultural planning can be when it is rooted in empathy, partnership, and belonging.

“Culture is the way we take care
of each other.”

> Focus Group Participant

APPENDICES

INTRODUCTION

This Appendices provides the supporting data, analysis, and engagement detail that underpin the *Loyalist Township Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan — Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report*.

While the Report synthesizes findings into narrative analysis, cross-cutting themes, and strategic directions, this companion document is intended for staff, Council, and interest holders who require detailed evidence and background to inform decision-making and future implementation.

The appendices include engagement tables, raw participation numbers, financial and current condition data, benchmarking comparators, focus group highlights, thematic coding analysis, and survey results. Together, they provide the transparency and depth necessary to support the credibility of the plan.

How to Use This Document

- Use the Existing Conditions Report for high-level findings, strategies, and directions.
- Refer to this Appendices when more detail is needed on methodology, data sources, or the voices of participants.
- Each appendix is stand-alone, but they collectively demonstrate the breadth of input and evidence gathered in developing Loyalist's first integrated Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan.

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APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACCESSIBILITY (AODA)

Refers to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which sets standards to ensure people of all abilities can participate fully in public life, including cultural programs and facilities.

ACH (ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE)

The integrated system of creative practices, cultural expression, and historical resources within a community. In Loyalist, ACH includes museums, archives, festivals, arts, heritage sites, community and volunteer supports.

CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

In relation to arts, culture and heritage, civic infrastructure is not just a collection of “arts buildings,” but a system combining place + process + people that sustains cultural life across time. Civic infrastructure refers both to:

1. **Physical and built elements (hard infrastructure)** — the buildings, spaces, and amenities that support cultural life (e.g. museums, galleries, theatres, libraries, performance venues, public parks, plazas, streetscapes, heritage buildings).
2. **Social, institutional, programmatic, and governance systems (soft infrastructure)**
The policies, management practices, programming, community engagement, funding mechanisms, partnerships, cultural governance, maintenance, and activation strategies that enable those physical spaces to be used, sustained, and meaningful.

This holistic view (hard + soft) is spelled out in research on civic infrastructure: the physical asset alone is insufficient — its value is realized through programs, activation, governance, upkeep, and relationships.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT CHARGE (CBC)

A municipal funding tool under Ontario’s Planning Act that allows municipalities to collect contributions from developers to support growth-related community needs, including cultural spaces.

CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM

The interconnected system of artists, heritage organizations, cultural workers, volunteers, facilities, and audiences that together shape cultural life in a community.

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

This is a Township administered program, funded by Windlectric Inc and Kingston Solar GP, that provides grants to community groups, volunteers, and not-for-profit organizations. The program is designed to encourage grassroots initiatives, strengthen community capacity, and enable resident-led events and projects that contribute to quality of life across Loyalist Township’s communities.

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The buildings, spaces, and digital platforms that support arts, culture, and heritage activities — from museums and galleries to performance spaces, archives, and public art.

ENGAGEMENT (PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT)

The process of involving community members, Interest Holders, and partners in decision-making, ensuring that diverse voices shape cultural planning.

FPIC (FREE, PRIOR, AND INFORMED CONSENT)

A principle of Indigenous rights that requires governments and organizations to seek Indigenous Peoples' consent before undertaking projects that affect their lands, cultures, or resources.

HERITAGE ASSETS

Buildings, landscapes, collections, and stories that reflect a community's history and identity. Examples in Loyalist include Fairfield Gutzeit House, Babcock Mill, and Bath Museum.

HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN (HCD)

An approach to planning and engagement that places people's needs, experiences, and ideas at the core of decision-making.

INCLUSION AND REPRESENTATION

Ensuring that cultural planning reflects the voices and identities of all community members, including Indigenous, Black Loyalist, newcomer, youth, and 2SLGBTQIA+ perspectives.

INTEGRATED PLACE STRATEGY

A multi-hub approach that recognizes Loyalist's dispersed geography.

INTEREST HOLDERS

Individuals or groups with a vested interest in cultural planning outcomes, including residents, artists, heritage groups, Indigenous partners, volunteers, local businesses, and Township staff.

LIFECYCLE FUNDING

Sustainable financial planning that accounts for the full lifespan of cultural assets — from maintenance and upgrades to renewal and replacement.

PUBLIC ART

Artworks in public spaces that are accessible to all, ranging from permanent sculptures and murals to temporary installations and artist-led activations.

VOLUNTEERISM

The contributions of residents who give their time, skills, and energy to support cultural programs and heritage operations, forming a backbone of Loyalist's cultural delivery system.

YEAR-ROUND ACTIVATION

The use of cultural spaces and programs across all seasons, expanding beyond summer events to foster continuous engagement and community participation.

APPENDIX B – ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY TABLES

B.1 Purpose and Overview

This appendix provides a comprehensive record of all engagement activities that informed the Loyalist Township Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan — Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report.

The goal was to ensure representation across all hamlets, age groups, and interest-holder perspectives including youth, seniors, cultural organizations, businesses, volunteers, and equity-deserving communities.

B.2 Participation by Method

Engagement Method	# Participants	Notes
Community Questionnaire	219	Includes 174 community questionnaire responses + 24 written surveys + 21 Youth Survey
Sounding Boards (Pop-Up Comment Maps)	95	Collected at community spaces across all hamlets
Arts & Culture Idea Labs (Adults + Youth) held in Bath and Amherstview	78	14 Arts Lab, 12 Heritage Lab, 18 Events Lab, 7 Business Lab, 6 Student Idea Lab
Focus Groups (Hamlet-based)	35	Amherstview (7), Wilton (7), Odessa (1), Amherst Island (13)
Community Interviews	8	Local artists, heritage leaders, tourism partners, business owners
Indigenous Conversations	6	2 Mohawk, 2 Algonquin, 2 Ojibwe/Alderville First Nation voices

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 441

B.3 Geographic Distribution (Community Questionnaire)

Hamlet / Area	# Participants	Notes
Amherstview	110	Largest and fastest-growing population base
Bath	65	Strong heritage and waterfront identity
Odessa	40	Linked to heritage assets (Babcock Mill)
Wilton	20	Small hamlet, heritage and rural lifestyle
Amherst Island	38	Distinct geographic and cultural community
Township-wide / digital	157	Survey respondents who did not specify location

B.4 Demographic Highlights (Community Questionnaire)

- **Youth (under 25)** – 21 participants (via youth labs, student responses, and surveys)
- **Adults (25–64)** – Majority of participants, particularly in focus groups and surveys
- **Older Adults (65+)** – Well represented in museums/events discussions and written surveys
- **Indigenous Voices** – 6 contributors (2 Mohawk, 2 Algonquin, 2 Ojibwe/ Alderville First Nation)
- **Business / Tourism / Volunteer Interest Holders** – Represented in community interviews

APPENDIX C – CURRENT CONDITIONS DATA

C.1 Purpose and Overview

This appendix provides the detailed baseline data and descriptive profiles that underpin the “Current Conditions” section of the Loyalist Township Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan Existing Conditions and Engagement Summary Report.

It compiles demographic statistics, cultural infrastructure and staffing data, heritage site profiles, arts and events inventories, and volunteer counts. Together, these illustrate the current capacity, reach, and operating context of the Township’s Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) portfolio.

C.2 Demographic Profile

Indicator	Loyalist Township (2025 est.)	Key Notes
Total Population	~18,600	Fastest growth occurring in Amherstview
Population Growth Rate (2016–2021)	+7.2%	Higher than Lennox & Addington County average
Youth (0–24 years)	23%	Strong family base, new school investments
Older Adults (55+)	30%	Aging population creating cultural and recreational needs
Median Age	44.7	Older than provincial average
Immigrant/Newcomer Population	Moderate	Steady increase
Housing Tenure	82% owned / 18% rented	Higher ownership than provincial average
Median Household Income	\$102,000	Above provincial average, potential for cultural philanthropy

C.3 Heritage, Culture & Tourism (HCT) Staffing

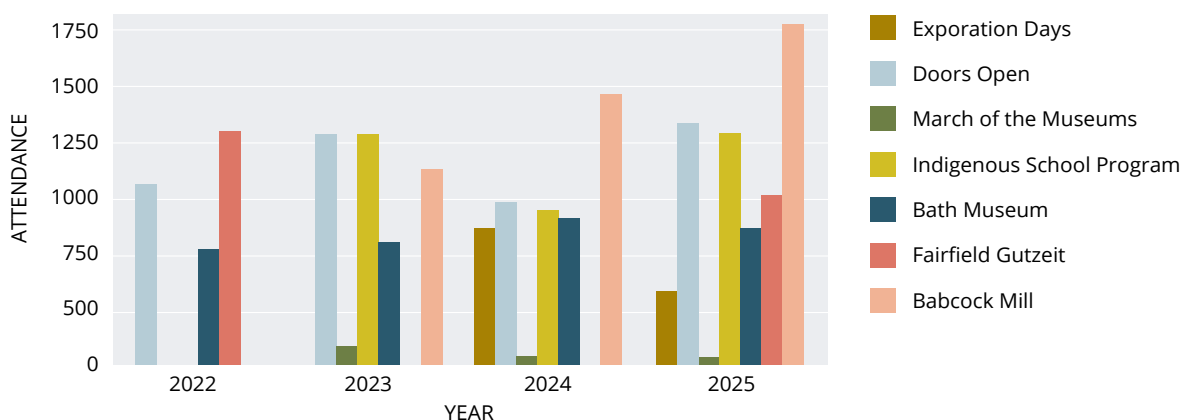
Staff Role	# Positions	Notes
Full-Time HCT Staff	3 FTE	Lead all cultural planning, sites, programming, and community partnerships
Summer Students	6	Provide seasonal site operations, visitor services, events support
Volunteer Base (est.)	127	Support museums and event operations

Key Constraint: This lean workforce is responsible for the activation of all Township-owned historic sites, care of the historic collections, Township community and cultural events and programs, volunteer management, and cultural outreach, which limits capacity for year-round operations and growth.

Museum Attendance

- **Doors Open:** Is a reliable annual draw (840–1,250).
- **Indigenous School Program:** Is fully booked (800–1,200 annually).
- **Babcock Mill:** Nearly doubled attendance (1,018 → 1,764).
- **Bath Museum:** Steady attendance numbers hovering around 750. Shoulder season programming continuing to expand but restricted by capacity limitations.
- **Fairfield Gutzeit House:** Recently reopened for eight weeks this summer following a two-year restoration.
- **Neilson Store Museum:** ~1,500 annually

LOYALIST HERITAGE AND MUSEUM PROGRAM ATTENDANCE (2022–2025)

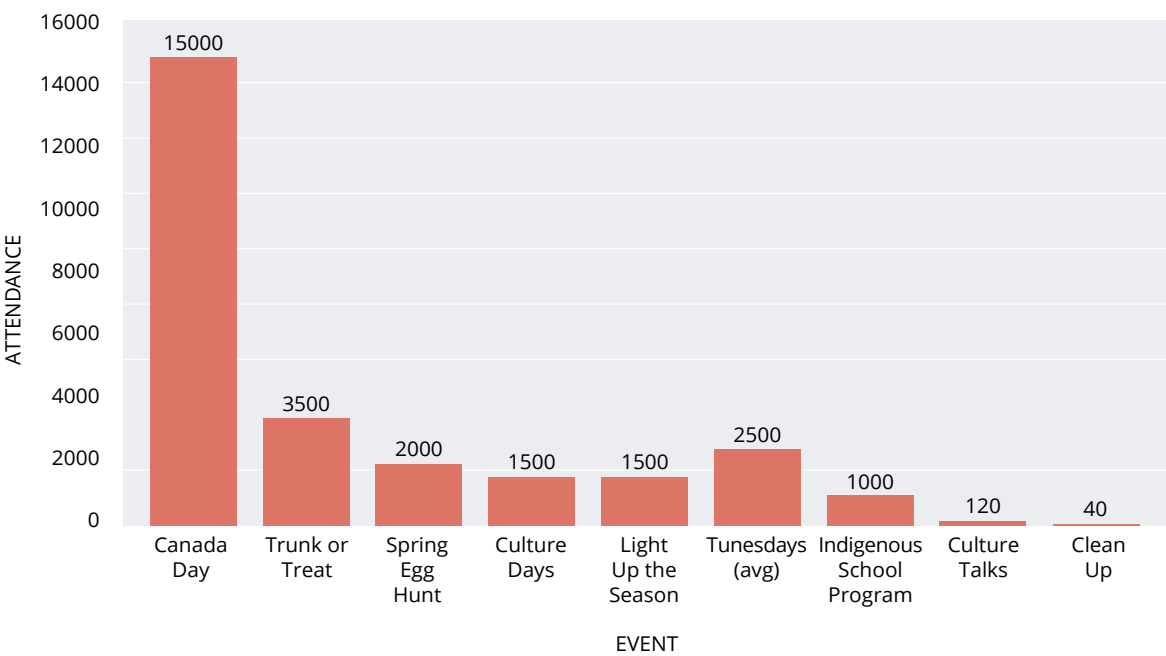


Event Attendance Analysis

Loyalist’s cultural engagement is anchored by festivals, with Canada Day drawing an impressive 15,000 participants, far surpassing all other events. Mid-scale gatherings such as Trunk or Treat (3,500) and the Spring Egg Hunt (2,000) provide strong secondary anchors, while Culture Days (1,500) and Light Up the Season (1,500) form the next tier.

Emerging series like Tunesdays (averaging 2,500 annually) demonstrate potential but remain modest in scale compared to the Township’s festival capacity. Heritage sites such as the Bath Museum (~1,000 annual visitors) and school-based Indigenous programming (~1,000 students) deliver steady impact, though at a higher per-capita cost. Smaller initiatives such as Culture Talks (120) and Earth Day Clean Up (40) illustrate depth of engagement but contribute minimally to overall reach.

EVENT ATTENDANCE ANALYSIS (2024 EXAMPLE)



Overall, Loyalist has evolved into a festival-driven community, with heritage maintaining a consistent yet secondary role, and smaller programs adding breadth rather than volume.

- **Strengths** – Large-scale, efficient festivals with strong returns on investment.
- **Challenges** – Heritage and mid-size programs carry higher costs per participant and require repositioning to enhance visibility and impact.
- **Opportunities** – Event attendance has grown nearly sevenfold from 2022 to 2025, signaling momentum that can be leveraged in the Township's 10-year plan.

APPENDIX D – BENCHMARKING

D.1 Purpose and Caveats

Benchmarking allows Loyalist Township to understand how its current cultural staffing, funding, and delivery compare to other municipalities in Eastern Ontario. It provides a directional rather than definitive picture of where Loyalist stands — highlighting both opportunities and structural constraints.

Because no two municipalities account for culture in the same way, benchmarking must be read with caution and context. Variations in reporting, staffing structures, and inclusion of tourism or heritage within departmental budgets create what analysts often call an “apples-to-oranges” problem.

Key caveats include:

- **Inconsistent budget transparency.** Not all municipalities publish cultural actuals at the same level of detail; in many cases, costs are embedded within Recreation, Facilities, or Community Services cost centres.
- **Differing scopes.** Some include tourism marketing, archives, or public art within culture; others do not.
- **Variable accounting practices.** Grants, in-kind support, or capital maintenance may appear in separate divisions.
- **Data access.** In smaller jurisdictions, full breakdowns require Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, which are time-consuming and sometimes return incomplete datasets.

Accordingly, figures presented here are verified where possible through published budgets, Council reports, or departmental data, but should be interpreted as order-of-magnitude indicators rather than precise financial comparisons.

Per-capita investment is one signal of commitment — but in lower tier municipalities like Loyalist, *return on coordination* (e.g., volunteer enablement, shared marketing, grants leverage) can equal or exceed the return on raw dollars.

D.2 Understanding Tiers in Cultural Delivery

Municipalities in Ontario can be broadly understood in two tiers of cultural capacity:

Tier	Characteristics	Examples / Relevance
Tier 1: High-Capacity / Urban Systems	Dedicated cultural divisions with professional staff; stable MAT revenue; direct management of museums, public art, and tourism marketing; consistent multi-year budgets.	Cities such as Kingston or Brockville. Their per-capita spend is higher but reflects scale, not necessarily efficiency.
Lower tier: Small-Town / Rural Systems	Lean staffing; seasonal or volunteer-run sites; cultural roles dispersed across departments; reliance on grants and community groups for delivery.	Loyalist, South Frontenac, Prince Edward County (hybrid). Strength lies in adaptability, not bureaucracy.

Loyalist is a lower tier municipality, positioned between volunteer-driven rural models and mid-size professionalized systems. Benchmarking therefore compares Loyalist to municipalities of similar structure rather than to major urban centres.

D.3 Comparative Overview

Comparator	Governance Model	Distinguishing Features
Prince Edward County (PEC)	Decentralized cultural model within Recreation & Community Facilities.	Five municipal museums; mixed heritage + arts funding through MAT and The County Foundation.
Brockville	Centralized Cultural Services Department.	Integrates arts, heritage, tourism, and public art; strong professional staffing and MAT-funded events.
South Frontenac	Hybrid, volunteer-based model.	Community-led museum society under contract; minimal staff; modest grants program.
Loyalist Township	Evolving hybrid model.	Small staff complement; heritage and events managed across division; growing coordination role.

D.4 Prince Edward County (PEC)

PEC operates one of the most extensive rural museum systems in Ontario — five municipal museums stewarding over 35 heritage buildings and 50,000 artifacts. Cultural Services sits within Recreation & Community Facilities, led by a Supervisor of Museums & Cultural Services and a system-wide Curator, supported by site curators and the Prince Edward Heritage Advisory Committee (PEHAC).

Funding Streams (2025)

Program	Description	Value
Municipal Community Grants Program	Supports culture, heritage, recreation, and health organizations; co-administered with The County Foundation.	\$144,716 (cash + in-kind)
PEC Arts Fund (est. 2025)	MAT-supported fund providing \$3–\$15 K grants to local arts orgs.	\$60,000 total

Roles: Supervisor □ system operations; Curator □ exhibitions/collections; Site Curators □ daily delivery; PEHAC □ heritage advice to Council.

D.5 Brockville

Brockville's Cultural Services Department unites arts, heritage, tourism, and public art under one umbrella, providing centralized leadership and funding. The Brockville Museum and Arts Centre is municipally operated, while Heritage Brockville advises on policy and designations.

Funding Streams (2025)

Program	Description	Value
Festivals & Events Grant	MAT-funded program replacing Community Grants; supports nonprofit festivals/events.	\$66,000
Legacy Fund	Capital-grant fund for recreation/cultural infrastructure, managed by the Community Foundation.	\$9,300

Staffing Highlights: Curator, Program Coordinator, Collections Coordinator, Visitor Services, Theatre Technicians, Tourism Marketing Officer, and Events Coordinator — illustrating a fully professionalized model uncommon in lower tier contexts.

D.6 South Frontenac

South Frontenac's system remains primarily community-delivered. The South Frontenac Museum Society operates the museum under municipal contract; the **Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee** advises Council on designations. Festivals (Canada Day, Beats by the Beach) fall under Recreation Services with minimal arts integration.

Funding Streams (2024)

Program	Description	Value
Community Grants Program	Operating + capital micro-grants (max \$2.5–5 K).	\$52,118 across 21 projects
Museum Society Contract	Annual support for operations and maintenance.	< \$10,000

Staff/Volunteer Roles: Museum Society (volunteer), Heritage Committee (advisory), Recreation Staff (events).

D.7 Loyalist Township – Reading Its Position Fairly

Indicator	Loyalist Status	Comparative Context
Per-Capita Cultural Investment (2021–2025 avg.)	~ \$28 per resident	Half to one-third of Tier 1 comparators; consistent with lower tier benchmarks.
Staffing Model	3 FTE + 6 seasonal students	Comparable to South Frontenac; below PEC / Brockville.
Volunteer Dependence	High – core delivery mechanism	Typical for lower tier ; opportunity to formalize recognition/training.
Tourism Integration	Emerging – via CGP and partnerships	Potential to strengthen through RTO 9 and County alignment.
Regional Collaboration	Active Network	Strengthen regional promotion and corridor activities

Loyalist demonstrates exceptional community engagement relative to its staffing scale, suggesting that strategic coordination — rather than major structural expansion — will yield the greatest near-term impact.

D.8 Benchmarking Insights and Opportunities

Theme	Findings	Opportunities
Investment Gap	Loyalist invests half or less of PEC/Brockville on a per-resident basis.	Resident Survey suggests that the community supports investment in culture. Explore resident's willingness to increase the per capita investment from \$28 to \$X amount over 10 years.
Volunteer Reliance	Shared trait with South Frontenac; risk of burnout.	Consider structured volunteer pathways, recognition, and succession planning.
Tourism Alignment	Stronger in PEC/Brockville through MAT.	Explore cultural branding with economic development and RTO 9 partnerships.
Governance Maturity	Tier 1 models include formal Cultural Services roles.	Consider an advisory committee and/or supporting an arts council to expand capacity.
Sustainability Practices	Comparators use partnerships and foundations to buffer operating risk.	Research opportunities with local philanthropic or community-foundation partnerships.

D.9 Takeaways

- **Benchmarking is diagnostic, not prescriptive.** It clarifies where Loyalist's strengths and limits sit within its tier.
- **Lower tier success is leverage-based.** The most effective investments amplify volunteer energy, improve coordination, and unlock small capital improvements for four-season use.
- **Data transparency matters.** Continued collaboration with peer municipalities can improve regional benchmarking consistency and access to non-public financial data.

Loyalist's cultural system performs strongly for its tier and scale. With modest, targeted investments in coordination, recognition, and communication infrastructure, the Township can close its most significant gaps — achieving Tier 1 impact through lower tier means.

APPENDIX E – QUALITATIVE ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

E.1 Purpose and Overview

This appendix synthesizes qualitative insights from focus groups, Idea Labs, and student/youth dialogues conducted June–September 2025. These inputs offer nuanced, place-based perspectives that complement survey results and other engagement activities. Findings are organized by hamlet and by Idea Lab theme (Arts, Museums, Events, Business & Tourism, Youth/Students).

E.2 Hamlet Focus Group Highlights

Amherstview

Context: Rapid growth; suburban character; proximity to Kingston.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Desire to strengthen Amherstview's distinct cultural identity alongside growth.
- Interest in expanded programming, concerts, and a multi-use cultural hub integrating arts, recreation, and youth activity.
- Communication gaps; reliance on informal networks.

Participant voice:

"I don't always know what's going on — Loyalist needs one central calendar, one clear place for cultural info."

Odessa

Context: Babcock Mill, Fairgrounds, and United Church identified as cultural anchors.

WHAT WE HEARD

- The Mill is iconic but underutilized; interest in broader community use.
- Calls for improved signage and interpretation to tell local stories.
- Desire for a more visible Township presence and cultural leadership at events.

Participant voice:

"The Mill should be a landmark for more than just history — it could host markets, concerts, or school events."

Wilton

Context: Empire Loyalist heritage, limestone architecture, agricultural traditions.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Strong value placed on rural character and open landscapes.
- Interest in micro-scale cultural infrastructure (air conditioning, signage, trails, storytelling stops).
- Emphasis on engaging youth to sustain traditions.

Participant voice:

"We need to get kids involved now — they are the future carriers of our stories."

Amherst Island

Context: Distinct cultural identity; active arts and music; textiles, farm culture, stone walls.

WHAT WE HEARD

- The ferry functions as both connector and barrier to participation.
- Strong support for festivals, markets, and storytelling that reflect Island culture and generosity.
- Need for sustained support to volunteer-run activities.

Participant voice:

"The ferry is both our blessing and our curse — people want to come, but it's not always easy."

E.3 Idea Lab Summaries

The Ideas Lab summaries are gathered from lab participants and recorded as such.

Arts Ideas Lab (June 23, 2025)

Participants & context: 15 participants (artists, volunteers, cultural leaders, long-time residents) with strong representation from Bath and Amherst Island across visual, digital, performance, festival, radio, and artisan disciplines.

Participant voice: *"We're not starting from scratch — we've been making art and music here for decades, but we've been doing it in pockets."*

1) COMMUNITY ORIGINS & ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

- **What we heard** – Key people/places include Shirley Miller; Bath House Studio; Lakeside Gallery; The Hive; clubs (gardening, quilting, libraries, radio). Events noted: Canada Day in Bath, Stonewall Festival, brewery concerts, pantomimes. Partners: local museums, McKinnon Brothers Brewery, Greater Napanee Arts Association, Township staff.
- **Challenges** – Fragmented information; limited collaboration infrastructure.

Participant voice:

"There's no central place to find each other or to collaborate."

- **Interpretation** – A resilient but siloed ecosystem seeking connective tissue.

2) CREATIVE MOTIVATIONS & BARRIERS

- **Motivations** – Landscape, community, safe/welcoming spaces.
- **Barriers** – Isolation, few venues, fragmented communication, limited funding.

Participant voice:

"We end up reinventing the wheel in isolation."

- **Interpretation** – Inspiration is strong; visibility and infrastructure gaps limit sustainability.

3) COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

- **Current practice** – Word of mouth, radio, Engage Loyalist, scattered social media.
- **Future state (as voiced)** – Centralized calendar; coordinated campaigns.

Participant voice:

"If we just had one calendar — online or on paper — it would make a huge difference."

- **Interpretation** – Communication is viewed as foundational to growth and collaboration.

4) SUPPORTS NEEDED

- **Non-monetary** – Mentorship, residencies, business/leadership training.
- **Relational** – Studio tours, collectives, recurring gatherings, stronger school arts programs.

Participant voice:

"Sometimes support isn't about money — it's about people showing up, or about someone connecting the dots."

5) PERCEIVED TOWNSHIP ROLE

- **Connector** – Linking artists, businesses, and opportunities.
- **Destination-maker** – Public art/murals; arts tourism aligned with Naturally L&A branding.
- **Facilitator** – Enabling charitable vehicles to receive donations/grants.
- **Interpretation** – Emphasis on enabling conditions rather than direct production.

6) LOOKING TO 2035

- **Aspirations** – Murals across hamlets; a central hub with paid staff; fair compensation; artist registry; recurring theatre; regional recognition.

Participant voice:

"Artists deserve to be fairly paid. Exposure isn't enough."

Arts – Summary

1. **Strengths** – Grassroots culture; volunteer leadership; artistic resilience.
2. **Constraints** – Fragmentation; limited infrastructure; communication silos.
3. **Opportunities (as voiced)** – Connecting functions, integrated tourism branding, development supports.
4. **Long-term potential** – Growth toward a recognized arts hub while sustaining visibility, inclusivity, and fair pay.

Participant voice:

“We’re proud of what we’ve built in silos. Now we want Loyalist to help.”

Museum Ideas Lab (June 25, 2025)

Participants & context: 12 participants (museum volunteers, heritage advocates, cultural planners, newcomers). Conversations focused on vision, actions, tourism, connections, and local context.

1) VISION FOR MUSEUMS & HERITAGE

- **Themes** – Township-wide identity; inclusive storytelling (women, workers, newcomers, Indigenous perspectives); pride of place; alignment with sector standards (OMA/UNESCO).
- **Interpretation** – Interest in moving from static preservation toward active storytelling and engagement.

2) ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

- **Sustainability** – Memberships, curriculum-linked education, diversified revenue.
- **Community curation** – Crowdsourced stories; living history; community artifacts.
- **Partnerships** – Post-secondary and schools for research/program co-delivery.
- **Accessibility** – Transportation, digital, physical accommodations.
- **Youth & digital** – Apps, podcasts, QR codes, interactive projects.
- **Interpretation** – Innovation and inclusion are seen as central to relevance and sustainability.

3) CULTURAL TOURISM CONTEXT

- **Barriers** – Limited accommodations, transportation constraints, fragmented promotion.
- **Opportunities** – Driving tours, digitized maps, cultural passports, scavenger hunts, incentives; a centralizing “glue” role for communication.
- **Interpretation** – Modernized interpretation and coordinated promotion are viewed as necessary to attract/retain visitors.

4) FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

- **Models cited** – Doors Open; cultural talks; year-round uses (maker spaces, clubs).
- **Inclusion** – Welcoming newcomers and diverse residents.
- **Volunteerism** – Recognition alongside burnout/aging-out risks.
- **Interpretation** – Museums as social as well as cultural infrastructure.

5) LOCAL CONTEXT & CHALLENGES

- **Seasonality/demographics** – ~66 open days/year; winter population dips.
- **Infrastructure** – Reliance on Kingston amenities; cost of heritage upkeep.
- **Relative positioning** –
 - › **Bath Museum:** transitional (3–5).
 - › **Fairfield House:** preservation priority (rating 1).
 - › **Neilson Store:** active community space (rating 5).
 - › **Babcock Mill:** high potential.
- **Interpretation** – Context (aging demographics, external pull, upkeep costs) shapes pace and form of museum evolution.

Museums – Summary

Movement toward “living” community spaces; urgency around preservation plus creative engagement; tourism requires coordinated promotion and experience design; broad participation (youth, newcomers) seen as integral.

Events Ideas Lab (June 24, 2025)

Workshop purpose: Explore the character, strengths, challenges, and aspirations for Loyalist's event landscape.

1) WHO PARTICIPATED AND WHAT THEY VALUE

- **Participants** – Event organizers, musicians, museum volunteers, radio, residents (Bath, Amherst Island, Odessa represented).
- **What resonated** – Weekly gatherings (Live Music Sundays; markets) build connection; heritage events and “spectacle” (e.g., Tall Ships) reinforce identity.

Participant voice

“Waterside concerts: small venue, great artists — up-close experiences.”

2) WHY EVENTS MATTER (AS VOICED)

- **Belonging & pride** – “Events help us meet new people and feel part of a smaller, friendlier place.”
- **Tourism & economy** – Visitor spend and return visits.
- **Local talent & stories** – Platforms for artists, historians, makers.
- **Access & scale** – Small venues enable intimate experiences.

3) SPACES & INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Success factors** – Accessibility (washrooms), power, seating, acoustics, flexible setup, parking/bike racks, transit, affordability.
- **Identified gaps** – Purpose-built outdoor venue; event-ready parks; waterfront activation; scalable indoor options; logistics supports (insurance, planning templates, shared equipment); central promotion/booking; mobility/shuttles.

Participant voice:

“Give us a real outdoor stage with power — we’ll fill it.”

4) COMMUNITY IDENTITY & STORYTELLING

- **Assets** – Historic Bath, Amherst Island, waterfront, community radio (CJAI).
- **Underused stories** – Maritime/settlement history; oral histories (1930s–60s); Indigenous histories; pop culture (e.g., The Tragically Hip in Bath).
- **Ideas surfaced** – Historical theatre; ghost/nature walks; radio oral history; murals; destination installations.

5) GROWTH & INNOVATION

- **Emerging ideas** – Youth/family programming; outdoor/wellness; waterfront concerts; year-round rink with bandshell; arts/heritage activations; fireworks revival or drone shows.
- **Barriers** – Timelines/permits; perceptions around for-profit events; funding/equipment; insurance/security costs; volunteer burnout; fragmented promotion.

Participant voice:

"We don't need you to run every event — just make it easier to run them well."

6) 2035 VISION (THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT NOTES)

- **Backbone & coordination** – Single point of contact; clear steps; supportive policies; potential arms-length arts body to steward grants/capacity.
- **Vibrant places** – Year-round, accessible venues; waterfront boardwalks/docks; amphitheatre; "destination" feel.
- **Inclusive & bold** – Music, public art, storytelling, youth programming, climate-smart shows; social visibility.
- **Connected movement** – Transit/shuttles, cycling routes, wayfinding.
- **Momentum** – "If you build it, we'll show up."

7) STICKER VOTING – TOP ACTIONS (AS PRIORITIZED BY PARTICIPANTS)

- **Governance & coordination** – Arts council (8); single contact/streamlined approvals (broad support); Township-managed grant applications (3); easing restrictions where public benefits are clear (2).
- **Infrastructure** – Community hall upgrades (6); Centennial Park water intake relocation (5); permanent accessible washrooms/power-ready spaces (1 each); explore federal support for waterfront event facility (1).
- **Programs & promotion** – Restore fireworks or drone alternative (6); central events platform (3); maintain info boards; amplify all events.
- **Cost & risk** – Operational funding (2); insurance guidance (1); annual permitting/logistics support (1).
- **Cross-cutting priorities (from the room):**
 - › Governance & support – **Very high**
 - › Facilities & space – **Very high**
 - › Communications – **Moderate**
 - › Traditions & events – **Moderate**
 - › Funding & risk – **Moderate**
 - › Long-term vision (major waterfront venue) – **Emerging**

Events – Summary

- **Arts** – Embed artist opportunities at Township-supported events; residencies/installations; murals.
- **Culture** – Events as storytelling platforms (food, language, music); walks; radio oral history.
- **Heritage** – Animate Fairfield Gutzeit, Babcock Mill, historic streets.
- **Volunteers** – Recognition, training, youth pathways; centralized logistics supports.

Business & Tourism Ideas Lab (June 26, 2025)

Workshop purpose: Explore intersections between arts, culture, heritage (ACH) and local economic vitality (entrepreneurship, main street vibrancy, visitor appeal).

1) PARTICIPANTS & OPENING CONTEXT

Seven participants (business owners, Bath Business Bureau representatives, creatives, residents), with strongest representation from Bath and Amherst Island.

Participant voice: *"We've got the raw ingredients — heritage, talent, volunteers. The challenge is connecting the dots across hamlets."*

2) STRENGTHS IDENTIFIED

- **People & partnerships** – Strong volunteer/business backbone; pragmatic collaboration.
- **Place & lifestyle** – Heritage buildings, landscapes, authenticity; cost of living advantages.
- **Location & access** – Proximity to Kingston; increasing day-trip traffic; growing sense of township identity.

Participant voice:

"Visitors come for real things made by real people."

3) NEEDS & GAPS (PRIORITIZED)

- **Geography & perception** – Distance perceptions reduce cross-hamlet participation; opportunity to normalize drive times and connectivity.
- **Red tape & regulatory** – Liability/insurance and permits complicate pop-ups and events; interest in clearer processes and guidance.
- **Funding & know-how** – Limited awareness of grant programs; desire for skills development.
- **Information & communication** – No central hub; uneven cross-promotion.
- **Infrastructure** – Limited affordable, suitable venues; access constraints for schools/gyms due to liability.

Participant voice:

"We don't need the Township to do everything — we need help navigating and amplifying."

4) TOWNSHIP ROLE AS ARTICULATED BY PARTICIPANTS

- **Connector & knowledge hub** – Broker partnerships; host how-to sessions (grants, business planning, heritage maintenance).
- **Promoter & place-brand champion** – Celebrate openings and initiatives; elevate cultural nodes.
- **Targeted financial tools** – Consider start-up relief for creative businesses; CIP-style supports for adaptive reuse.
- **Liaison & advocate** – Interface with upper-tier/provincial/federal programs; hands-on guidance through processes.
- **Infrastructure & public realm** – Downtown revitalization, heritage maintenance, shade/amenities; make key areas "event-ready."

5) KEYWORDS SURFACED FOR VISION

Collaboration • Support • Cross-promotion • Awareness •
Mentoring • Skills-building • Facilitation • Listening

6) IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITIES VOICED (12–36 MONTHS)

- Single-window "Creative & Tourism Desk" with clear checklists.
- Township-wide "Creative Loyalist" portal (calendar, directory, funding calls, spaces, how-to guides).
- Quarterly workshops (grant writing, business planning, digital marketing, heritage adaptive reuse basics).
- Pilot pop-up zones (pre-cleared, simplified permits, insurance guidance).
- Micro-CIP stream for heritage adaptive reuse/creative storefronts.
- Cross-hamlet campaign ("15 minutes to...") highlighting realistic travel times and ferry/cycling links.
- Official Plan/Zoning Bylaw clarity for cultural facilities, pop-ups, adaptive reuse in key zones.

7) LONGER-TERM ENABLERS (3–5 YEARS)

Wayfinding and place branding; waterfront activation with ACH programming; creative business onboarding pack; partnership MOUs for shared promotion/equipment.

Business & Tourism – Summary

Authentic assets and collaborative culture position Loyalist for cultural tourism and micro-enterprise growth. Participants emphasized coordination, clarity, small targeted tools, and amenity fixes that lower barriers while preserving small-town character.

Youth Ideas Labs

(Ernestown Secondary School – June 2025; Amherstview – August 2025)

Purpose: Understand how youth experience culture; explore belonging, creativity, access, and leadership. Inputs included surveys, in-school workshops, sticky-note sessions, summer student feedback, and community forums.

1) PARTICIPANTS & CONTEXT

Students at ESS; youth at Amherstview Community Hall; summer students; online survey respondents.

Opening sentiments:

“Culture is where we feel like we belong.”

“It’s about fun, creativity, and being with friends.”

2) KEY THEMES

- **Belonging & purpose** – Inclusion, connection, and leadership opportunities are central; one-word 2035 visions included Happy, Resilient, Satisfied, Happening.
- **Creative spaces & events** – Interest in concerts, mural walls, creative hubs, youth-run festivals; mix of casual “chill nights” and performance opportunities.
- **Everyday creativity** – Youth already create (drawing, music, video-making); desire for low-barrier, everyday outlets.

- **Heritage & storytelling** – Preference for active, digital, hands-on formats (memes, short videos, experiential).
- **Access & infrastructure** – Transportation barriers (notably Amherst Island); needs include Wi-Fi, cooling, signage, performance facilities; recreation viewed as part of culture (skateparks, fields, trails).

Participant voice:

“Give us a place to hang out, jam, or make art — that’s what’s missing.”

3) TOP PRIORITIES (SURVEY + LABS COMBINED)

Theme	Mentions	Insight
Creative Spaces & Events	28	Concerts, festivals, mural walls, creative hubs, youth-run events
Belonging & Purpose	22	Leadership and volunteer pathways drive participation
Everyday Creativity	18	Informal, low-barrier hubs and activities
Heritage & Storytelling	15	Youth-driven, interactive formats
Access & Transportation	12	Barriers for rural/Island youth; need for connection
Sports + Recreation	10	Recreation spaces understood as cultural venues
Infrastructure Needs	8	Wi-Fi, signage, cooling, creative basics

4) YOUTH VOICE – DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- **Where youth spend time** – with friends (39%), parks (22%), online (13%), other (26%).
- **What would make Loyalist “more your vibe”** – concerts/movie nights (33%), creative spaces (29%), youth-run events (21%), mural wall (8%).
- **If given \$10K** – music/dance nights (38%), artist takeovers (25%), pop-up cafés (17%), youth-led history content (4%).

- **Creative expression** – art/drawing (25%), music (21%), making videos (17%), consuming content (17%), writing (8%), other (12%).
- **Event drivers** – free snacks + good music (33%), chill space with friends (33%), chance to perform (21%), prizes/giveaways (13%).
- **One word for Loyalist in 10 years** – happy, happening, resilient, satisfied.

5) YOUTH 2035 VISION

A Loyalist where youth feel belonging and pride; have hubs, concerts, murals, and festivals; experience heritage in youth-friendly formats; face fewer transport/infrastructure barriers; and participate as leaders and co-designers.

Participant voice:

“By 2035, Loyalist should be a place where youth feel seen, have space, and can shape what happens.”

6) OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED BY YOUTH (12–24 MONTHS)

Youth-run event pilots; mural walls/creative hubs (Amherstview & Bath); youth leadership/volunteer program; youth-driven museum projects; transportation pilots for major youth events.

7) LONGER-TERM ENABLERS (3–5 YEARS)

Dedicated Youth Cultural Hub; funded residencies/mentorships; youth perspectives integrated into OP and parks planning; ongoing Youth Advisory Council for ACH.

Youth – Summary

Youth equate culture with belonging, fun, and expression. They are already creating across informal spaces but report limited platforms and supports. Their vision emphasizes youth-led spaces and programming, contemporary storytelling, and practical access solutions.

Participant voice:

“We don’t just want to show up to an event — we want to help run it, design it, and make it ours.”

APPENDIX F – THEMATIC CODING SYNTHESIS (ALIGNED WITH IDEA LABS)

The following seven cross-cutting themes emerged consistently across all Idea Labs (Arts, Events, Heritage & Museums, Business & Tourism, and Youth), surveys, Indigenous engagement, and focus groups. They represent the common threads voiced by participants. By aligning the Idea Lab findings, survey inputs, and coded analysis under one framework, this Appendix demonstrates that residents, volunteers, youth, Indigenous partners, businesses, and cultural leaders are speaking to the same priorities. These themes inform the Loyalist Township Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan.

F.1 Place-Based Identity and Local Pride

What we heard across Labs:

- Strong attachment to hamlets (Bath, Odessa, Amherst Island, Amherstview, Wilton).
- Events and festivals (Canada Day, Tall Ships, Live Music Sundays, Waterside concerts) are moments of pride and identity.
- Youth imagine Loyalist in 2035 as *“happy, resilient, happening.”*
- Heritage sites like Fairfield Gutzeit and Babcock Mill are seen as symbols of Loyalist’s character — but need to be more visible.

Representative voices:

“Bath’s waterfront is part of who we are — but it’s underused.”

“Canada Day is when I see my neighbours — it’s our day of belonging.”

“We’re sitting on treasures — seven of the oldest buildings in Canada — and most people don’t know.”

F.2 Inclusive Storytelling and Representation

What we heard across Labs:

- Desire to broaden Loyalist's narrative beyond Loyalist settler history.
- Calls for Indigenous stories, Black Loyalist contributions, newcomer and youth perspectives.
- Youth want heritage told in digital, playful, hands-on ways (memes, videos, experiential tours).

Arts participants emphasized representation of diverse artists in programs and public art.

Representative voices:

"Museums need to share Indigenous stories — not just Loyalist ones."

"If history was told our way — TikToks, memes, hands-on — more of us would care."

"We need to unlearn the one-sided Eurocentric narrative."

F.3 Activation of Assets

What we heard across Labs:

- Underused outdoor and waterfront spaces could become cultural hubs.
- Events Lab participants called for an outdoor amphitheatre, waterfront docks, and event-ready parks.
- Arts participants asked for creative hubs and studio tours; youth asked for mural walls and casual hangout venues.
- Heritage assets are respected but often closed or seasonal; need activation through events, signage, and digital access.

Representative voices:

"Give us a real outdoor stage with power — we'll fill it."

"Fairfield Gutzeit has an amazing collection — but it's hidden most of the year."

"We want concerts, festivals, and youth-run events — things that bring energy."

F.4 Capacity and Collaboration

What we heard across Labs:

- Volunteers are dedicated but aging; burnout is a pressing issue.
- Youth and new residents are willing but need entry points, mentorship, and recognition.
- Arts and entrepreneurs called for mentorship, residencies, grant writing, and business training.
- Across Labs, participants stressed the Township can't do this alone — partnerships with schools, Kingston, PEC, and local businesses are key.

Representative voices:

"Volunteers are burning out — we need a system that recruits and trains, not just hopes people show up."

"Sometimes support isn't about money — it's about someone connecting the dots."

"Let us help run things — not just be in the audience."

F.5 Financial Sustainability and Value Proposition

What we heard across Labs:

- Questions about event costs vs. community benefit — need for tracking ROI and cultural impact.
- Call for creative funding streams: reserve funds, developer contributions, MAT allocations, corporate sponsorship.
- Participants asked for shared resources: Township-managed equipment, insurance guidance, collective promotion.
- Youth prioritized small investments with visible impact (murals, concerts, hubs).

Representative voices:

"We need to know what culture costs — and what it brings back."

"Insurance and permits are the hardest parts — can the Township help?"

"If we had \$10K, we'd spend it on music nights, murals, and pop-up cafés."

F.6 Youth Lens (Cross-Cutting)

What we heard across Labs:

- Youth want to be co-creators, not just participants — through youth-run events, art showcases, and leadership roles.
- Everyday creativity matters: music, drawing, video-making, martial arts.
- Barriers: transportation (especially Amherst Island), lack of spaces, Wi-Fi, and cooling.
- Youth want recognition, mentoring, and pathways into volunteering and leadership.

Representative voices:

"Culture means belonging, creativity, and connection."

"Give us a place to hang out, jam, or make art — that's what's missing."

"Digital media and music labs would keep youth here."

F.7 Collaboration with Indigenous Partners

What we heard:

- Indigenous engagement emphasized reciprocal, ongoing relationships — not one-off consultations.
- Need for co-created cultural visibility across hamlets (signage, public art, programming, storytelling).
- Opportunities to integrate Indigenous ecological knowledge into cultural and environmental planning.
- Participants called for shared stewardship of heritage assets, programming, and land-based storytelling.

Representative voices:

"We need ongoing relationships, not one-off invitations."

"Visibility of Indigenous culture should be in every hamlet, not hidden."

"Co-create programs — don't just ask us to comment on ones you've already designed."

APPENDIX G – COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Survey data provides a quantitative lens on community priorities, satisfaction levels, and participation patterns. It complements the qualitative engagement (Idea Labs, focus groups, interviews) by offering broad-based trends across Loyalist residents.

G.I Community Questionnaire (n = 198)

Satisfaction with Cultural Opportunities

Rating	% of Respondents
Very Satisfied	12%
Satisfied	38%
Neutral	26%
Dissatisfied	18%
Very Dissatisfied	6%

Insight: Over half (50%) expressed satisfaction, but nearly a quarter (24%) were dissatisfied, showing room for improvement in inclusivity, access, and variety.

Importance of Culture

Rating	% of Respondents
Very Important	68%
Important	22%
Neutral	7%
Not Important	3%

Insight: Strong consensus that arts, culture, and heritage matter to quality of life in Loyalist.

Top Priorities Identified

1. Year-round programming
2. Stronger youth engagement
3. Heritage site activation
4. Support for local artists
5. Volunteer sustainability

G.2 Youth Survey (n = 21)

Most Desired Programs

- Music and digital media labs (71%)
- Festivals and concerts (62%)
- Sports and recreation tied to culture (48%)
- Volunteer/student placement opportunities (38%)

Insight: Youth respondents want hands-on, creative outlets that connect culture with everyday life.

G.3 Sounding Boards (n = 95)

What is culture? Key Words Collected (frequency):

- Music (43)
- History (37)
- Food (33)
- Family (29)
- Diversity (22)
- Community (21)

Visualization: Word cloud (in report layout, represented here in list format).

G.5 Comparative Satisfaction (Adults vs Youth)

Group	High Satisfaction	Low Satisfaction
Adults (Questionnaire)	50%	24%
Youth (Survey)	43%	29%

Insight: Youth are slightly less satisfied overall, pointing to the need for a cross-cutting Youth Lens strategy.

G.6 Demographic Snapshot

- 60% respondents from Amherstview and Bath.
- 40% of respondents were representing families with children .
- 30% over age 55.
- 15% newcomers (within the last 10 years).

Insight: Surveys captured a broad cross-section, though newcomer and youth voices remain proportionally underrepresented.

G.7 Implications

- Residents value culture highly but see gaps in year-round opportunities.
- Youth and newcomers show lower satisfaction, requiring targeted strategies.
- Volunteerism and site activation remain critical leverage points for success.



evokeculture.ca

Evoke – Culture 2.0 is a forward-looking consulting collective that is committed to designing a valuable and future-oriented role for culture in civic life.



Loyalist Township Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan: Existing Conditions & Engagement Summary

For Council Information
January 13, 2026



Agenda

- Report back on Phase 1 findings and engagement
- Summarize the current cultural system across arts, heritage, museums, events, volunteers, and investment
- Present the community-identified themes and system insights
- Confirm readiness to continue with Phase 2 strategy development

OBJECTIVE

Provide Council with an update on the process and key emerging insights on the ACHMP

Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan Deliverables

1

To develop a 10-Year Arts, Culture and Heritage Master Plan to guide staff and Council in decision-making and investment.

2

- Event Enhancement Strategy
- Museums Strategy
- Arts Strategy
- Volunteer Strategy
- People and Financial Resource Assessment
- Implementation Roadmap

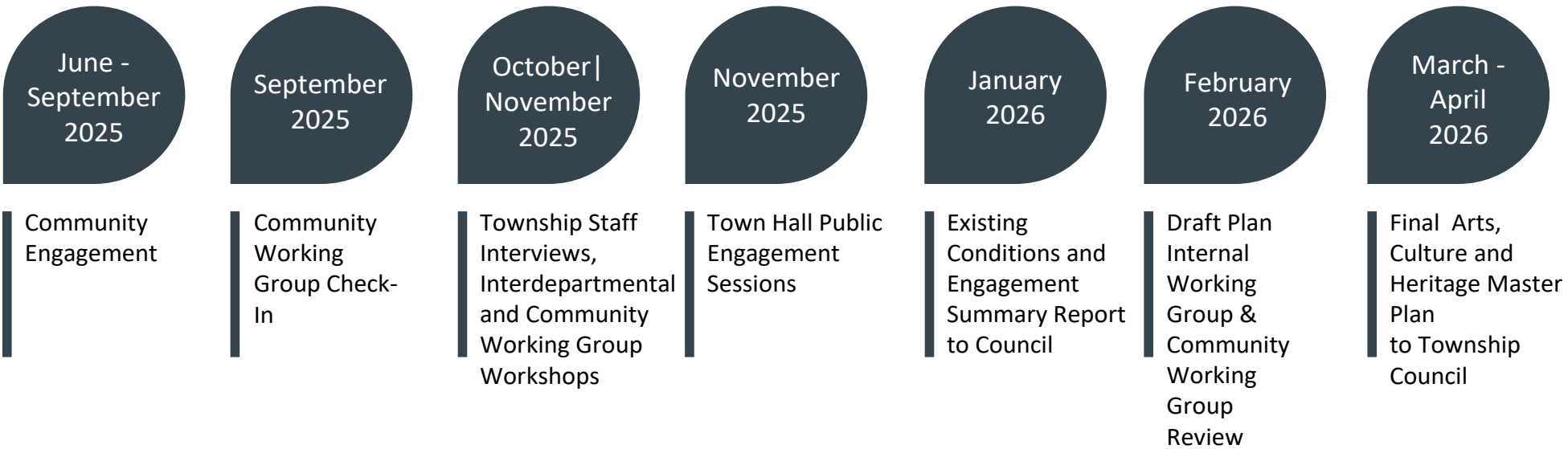
3

An aspirational vision to guide the development of policy, and the provision of municipal arts, culture and heritage services and programs.

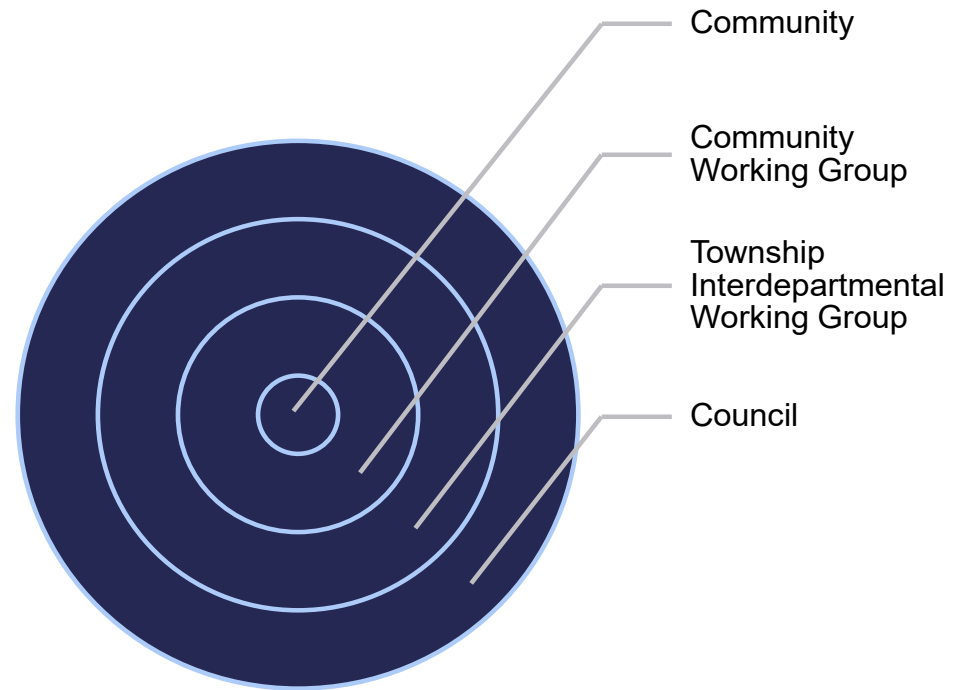
4

Include a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework with key performance indicators.

The Timeline



Plan Development Guidance



Scope of Phase 1

- Phase 1 examined:
- Loyalist's cultural landscape and context
- Existing municipal policies and frameworks
- Cultural assets, programs, and living heritage
- Financial investment patterns (2021–2025)
- Community and interest-holder engagement
- System-level insights and themes

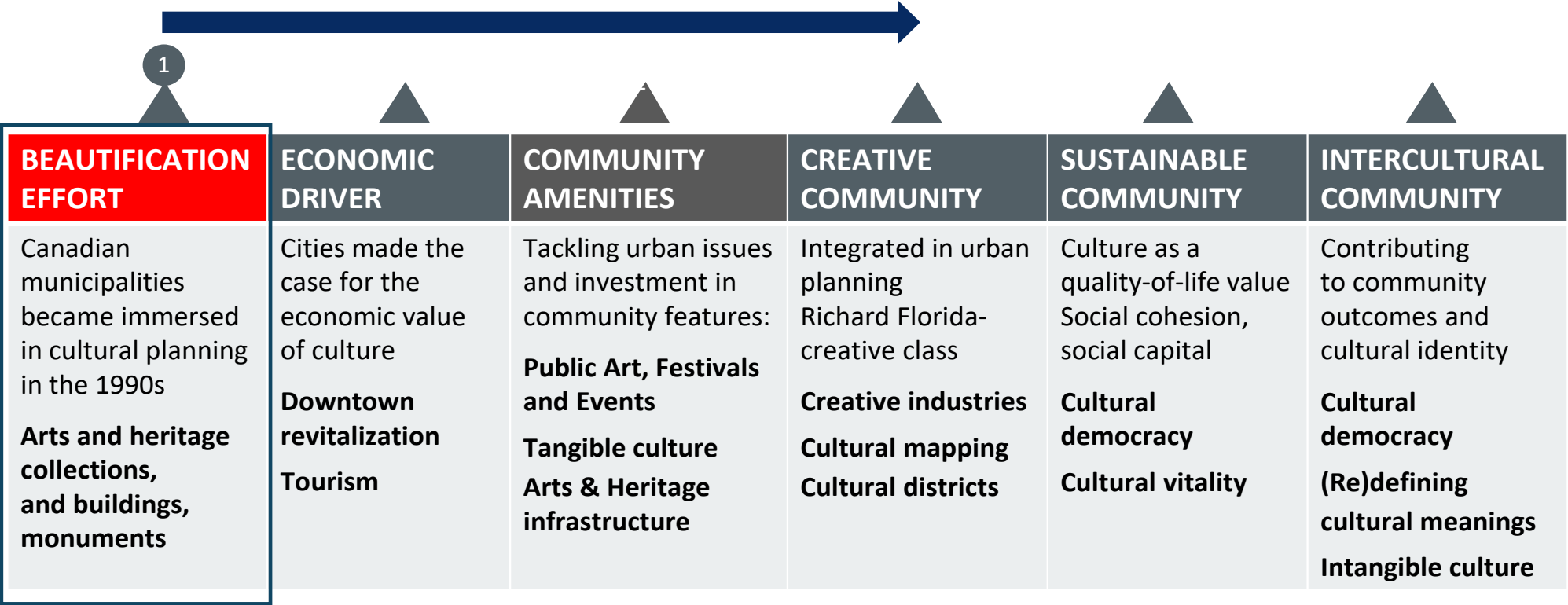
Where this report fits into the Plan

Planning progression

- Phase 1:
 - Evidence, engagement, and understanding – *completed*
- Phase 2:
 - Testing and co-creation of strategies by focus area (*underway*)
- Phase 3:
 - Drafting and Finalizing the Strategies, Implementation, resourcing, and evaluation (MEL)

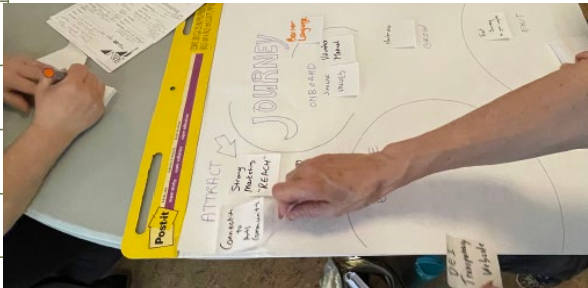
Today confirms the foundation for Phase 2 and 3.

Cultural Development Continuum: Where we are – Where we want to go



Engagement Overview

Engagement Type	# Participants
Community Questionnaire + Written Survey	198
Youth Survey	21
Student & Youth Idea Labs	27
Arts, Events, Heritage & Business Labs	51
Hamlet Focus Groups (4 sessions)	35
Sounding Boards	95
Community Interviews	8
Indigenous Conversations	6
Total Participants	441



Importance of Culture (Questionnaire Results)

Insight: Strong consensus that arts, culture, and heritage matter to quality of life in Loyalist.

Rating	% of Respondents
Very Important	68%
Important	22%
Neutral	7%
Not Important	3%

Community Satisfaction with Current Cultural Opportunities (Questionnaire Results)

Insight: Over half (50%) expressed satisfaction, but nearly a quarter (24%) were dissatisfied, showing room for improvement in inclusivity, access, and variety.

Rating	% of Respondents
Very Satisfied	12%
Satisfied	38%
Neutral	26%
Dissatisfied	18%
Very Dissatisfied	6%

Top Priorities Identified (Questionnaire Responses)

1. Year-round programming
2. Stronger youth engagement
3. Heritage site activation
4. Support for local artists
5. Volunteer sustainability

Themes Emerging From Across All Engagement Responses

1. Belonging and Connection

Culture is how Loyalist comes together across hamlets and generations.

2. Inclusion and Accessibility

Participation must be easy, affordable, welcoming, and culturally safe.

3. Volunteer Sustainability

Volunteers are the backbone of the system but require renewal and recognition.

Themes Emerging From Across All Engagement Responses

4. Youth Engagement

Youth want to lead, create, and shape their community.

5. Indigenous Partnership

Collaboration must be ongoing, reciprocal, and embedded.

6. Visibility and Communication

Residents need better coordination and shared promotion.

7. Year-Round Activation

Cultural life peaks in summer; infrastructure could enable four-season use.

Discussion Questions

- Do these priorities and themes reflect what you are hearing from residents?
- Are there priorities or themes on this list that you would see as particularly important to move on in the next 2 years?

Focus Area Findings & Analysis

Museums & Heritage: Current Conditions

- Municipally supported museums and heritage sites
- Strong volunteer involvement in operations and governance
- Emphasis on preservation, care, and stewardship
- Seasonal operation patterns
- Heritage is understood as a responsibility and point of pride

Museums & Heritage: What We Heard

- **Engagement findings**
- Strong attachment to heritage places and stories
- Desire for greater visibility and interpretation
- Respect for volunteer effort and stewardship
- Interest in activation beyond traditional use
- “We’re sitting on treasures – and most people don’t know.”

Museums & Heritage: System Insights

Insights

- Heritage in Loyalist functions as a **living practice** – sustained by people, care, and continuity rather than static preservation.
- The current emphasis reflects stabilization and stewardship appropriate to an early phase of system development.

Opportunity Signals

- Renew and connect heritage assets
- Expand interpretation to reflect more stories
- Improve visibility and seasonal activation
- Align heritage stewardship with long-term sustainability

Discussion Questions

- How important is heritage visibility and activation to Council?
- Considering the breadth of heritage properties throughout the Township, how do you view the role of mixed-use development at historic sites, and under what circumstances, if any, might divestment be appropriate?”

Arts & Creative Activity: Current Conditions

- Active artists and creative practitioners
- Informal networks and project-based activity
- Limited formal infrastructure
- Reliance on partnerships and events
- Arts activity is present but unevenly structured

Arts: What We Heard

- Strong creative energy across hamlets
- Desire for clearer pathways and platforms
- Interest in creative hubs and shared spaces
- Calls for broader representation

“There’s a lot happening – it’s just hard to find.”

Arts: System Insights

Insights

- Arts activity reflects an **emerging ecosystem** – driven by relationships, experimentation, and participation rather than formal systems.
- This aligns with the system's early developmental stage.

Opportunity Signals

- Support informal creation while improving visibility
- Create clearer participation pathways
- Activate shared and underused spaces
- Strengthen representation and storytelling

Discussion Questions

- In what ways could the Township better support arts within Loyalist?
- Where might structure help without limiting creativity?

Events & Festivals: Current Conditions

- Events are the most visible cultural activity
- High attendance and community pride
- Heavy reliance on staff and volunteers
- Seasonal concentration
- Events act as cultural anchors

Events: What We Heard

- Events create belonging and connection
- Expectations are high
- Capacity and coordination are recurring challenges
- Desire for improved scheduling and promotion

Events: System Insights

System Insights

- Events function as **primary access points** to culture and social life, particularly in a decentralized Township.
- They have played a central role in building momentum.

Opportunity Signals

- Improve coordination and visibility
- Support year-round activation
- Align events with broader cultural goals
- Reduce seasonal strain on capacity

Discussion Questions

- What role should events continue to play in Township life?
- How might year-round activity be supported?

Volunteers: Current Conditions

- Volunteers support museums, heritage, events, halls
- Informal systems and long-term commitment
- High reliance across all cultural areas
- Volunteerism is foundational

Over the past two years, the value of volunteer time directly supporting the Heritage, Culture and Tourism Division has averaged approximately \$19,600 annually.

Volunteers: What We Heard

- Pride in civic contribution
- Concerns about fatigue and succession
- Desire for recognition and coordination
- Uneven experiences across activities

Volunteers: System Insights

Insights

- The cultural system is **fuelled by people**, with care and trust sustaining activity.
- Volunteer sustainability is a central system consideration.

Opportunity Signals

- Strengthen volunteer recognition
- Improve coordination and support
- Create leadership and renewal pathways
- Track volunteer contribution and impact

Discussion Questions

- From Council's perspective, where do you see the greatest pressures emerging as activity grows?
- As expectations for cultural programming evolve, what balance should be considered between volunteer contribution and municipal support?
- Are there particular areas where Council feels greater clarity or consistency in volunteer roles and support would be most helpful over time?

Investment & Resourcing : Current Conditions

- **Financial overview (2021–2025)**
- Average per-capita investment: ~\$27
- Annual expenditures: **\$386K–\$715K**
- 60–65% allocated to staffing and seasonal positions
- Revenue recovery: 5–10%
- Significant in-kind volunteer contribution

Investment and Resourcing: System Insights

Insights

- Loyalist operates a **lean but loved** cultural system that demonstrates strong return on investment relative to scale.
- Current investment prioritizes stability and care.

Opportunity Signals

- Diversify funding sources
- Improve coordination and tracking
- Align growth-related funding tools
- Strengthen data to demonstrate impact

Discussion Questions

- How should cultural investment evolve as the system matures?
- What information would Council want to see in future phases?

Synthesis & Readiness: System-level Insights For Council

- Culture is civic infrastructure
- Belonging is built
- Heritage is a living practice
- Systems are relational
- Care is capacity

What Phase 1 Confirms

Readiness indicators:

- Strong engagement foundation
- Clear themes across all areas
- Functioning early-stage systems
- Community openness to co-creation

Phase 1 Conclusion

- Phase 1 confirms that Loyalist's cultural system is rooted in pride, care, and connection.
- The draft and final plan will build on this foundation through strategic focus.

“Culture is the way we take care of each other.”

Questions

