

2015 Report from the Board President, Elena Bird
Creative City Network of Canada Annual General Meeting
Thursday October 29th, 8:30 am – 9:15 am
Skaha Ballroom, Delta Grand Okanagan, 1310 Water Street
Kelowna, British Columbia

The Creative City Network is the most valuable network for our profession that operates today. We have a growing membership that is deeply-rooted in individual experiences and a community of practice that advances collective wisdom and local decision making. We have an established reputation as a national and international leader in local cultural development, and we operate as local and regional connectors that transform our communities through culture. We believe that the success of Canada's \$47.8 billion culture sector happens when a community – our communities – decide to invest in making the places we live, work, play, and visit an environment in which culture such as arts, creative industries, cultural heritage and public libraries, thrives.

Two years ago at our Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, the CCNC members adopted a strategic plan that focused on four key service priorities. They are: *Professional Development*; *Network Hub*; *Research*; and *Advocacy*.

Through the collective efforts and financial investment by our actively involved members and sponsors, our resourceful and dedicated staff, and our strong hard working board, we have been able to achieve these four key service priorities. Using the strategic plan as a guide, I'd like to take this opportunity to share our top achievements as a network this year.

Our Summits continue to be a huge success! This year will be the fourth sold out Creative City Summit in a row. Our annual Summits are the single opportunity for people in our field to meet face-to-face and share information and knowledge with peer cities across Canada. In 2010 we re-envisioned our Summits as a professional development experience that drew on the knowledge of the people in the room, while inviting keynote speakers to inspire new ways of thinking. Our peer-to-peer sessions continue to be popular and this year we received the most submissions ever. Each year, the host city and our new and continued sponsors make a significant contribution to our Summits, and in turn to our organization. In particular, in this moment of looking back, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our 2014 host city – the City of Hamilton – for a tremendous Summit last year. In addition to all of the local study tours and a welcome reception at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the City of Hamilton registered, and fully paid for 20 staff to attend the Summit. These are the opportunities that our members seek out and I want to thank the City of Hamilton for their leadership. I know that our Summit in the City of Kelowna will be as successful, and that by selecting Summit host locations for the next four years we have created a strong foundation for the network's future.

CCNC is continuing to evolve to meet the different needs of our growing professional network. We've heard from our members that while it is important to be connected to a broader conversation, those with particular subject-matter-expertise want to engage with their peers to help shape the networks tools and resources for their community of practice. Working with one of the most established local cultural planning fields – public art – CCNC is incubating a public art network within our broader network, to advance the field of public art in Canada. In January of this year, CCNC made an open call to its members to give us guidance on the formation of a CCNC Public Art Network Council. We received an excellent response and formed an Advisory Group from across Canada. The CCNC PAN Advisory Group has met several times, and is seeking your input on the draft CCNC PAN Council Vision and Mission. Materials about this are available at the CCNC Resource Table in the lobby, were discussed at the Public Art Round Table on Tuesday (Oct. 27), and are a topic of discussion as part of the CCNC in Your Community session, today at 9:15 am, following the AGM. It is the first time that we are incubating a network within our network. I'd like to thank all of the Advisory Group members and in particular Ciara McKeown, Project Manager, Sans façon studio, Helena Grdadolnik, Director & Public Art Consultant, Workshop Architecture Inc., and Jane Perdue, Public Art Coordinator, Urban Design, City of Toronto, for their leadership in this. This is an exciting development for CCNC, and is exactly the direction we need to be going in to ensure we are relevant and connected to new developments in our evolving community of practice.

Moving to research, CCNC through its participating municipal members, is working in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage Cultural Statistics Strategy Consortium to: safeguard and fund culture data inputs in a sustainable manner over the long term, create a common culture data pool accessible to all partners, discuss and plan for the future of culture data instruments and projects, and increase collaboration. Together with our partners that includes the provincial/territorial ministries of culture and/or heritage, Parks Canada, The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, Canada Council for the Arts, Library and Archives Canada, Telefilm Canada, Canadian Arts Data, The Cultural Human Resources Council, Ontario Media Development Corporation, Ontario Arts Council, and OCAD University, the Creative City Network of Canada is ensuring that we have the tools we need to measure the impact of culture. Thank you to the CCNC members who have invested in this research partnership since 2013. Next year, with our participating municipal partners we will be undertaking an exploratory study of municipal cultural indicators. If your municipality is interested in being part of this important conversation, please let me know.

Our fourth service priority is advocacy, by which we mean raising the profile of the great work we are doing, and the impact it has in creating vital and sustainable communities through culture. This year, CCNC took a significant step in establishing a Creative City Network of Canada Awards program. Under the direction of Jennifer Lord, CCNC General Manager, we hired an independent consultant, Diane Thorpe to work with an advisory committee to develop a CCNC Awards program that is arm's length from the CCNC Board of Directors. We wanted to ensure that from the very beginning, the CCNC Awards program was established as arm's length entity from the CCNC Board to guarantee there is an equitable, open, transparent

process for all our municipal members to participate in the program. Diane shared details about the program at our Summit welcome reception on Tuesday night, and we will be releasing more information on the program criteria and selection process. The reason why I believe an awards program is an important program development for our network is that it can generate buzz about the work we do through press releases, media coverage, raise the profile of our work with politicians, the public, and aligned fields such as City Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Economic Development, it is an opportunity in the whirl of working in the trenches for us as a community to take a moment and celebrate and share stories, and it can encourage us all to strive to meet a new standards of professional excellence.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our incredible CCNC Board of Directors for their work over the last year. In particular, I'd like to thank Nichola Reddington our CCNC Vice-President, City of Victoria who has chaired our Membership Committee who have done amazing work with our staff to develop new membership materials, support staff in attending the Culture Days Summit, and spark three successful regional workshops in Victoria (BC), St. Albert (AB), and Barrie (ON). Nichola also chaired the 2014 Creative City Summit in Hamilton, and was the host community coordinator for the 2012 Creative City Summit. Nichola is a steadying force that brings forward great ideas and has the leadership skills to work with diverse teams to achieve results. I recruited Nichola to the board following the 2012 Victoria Summit because I enjoyed working with her so much. I believe she will be an excellent Board President for CCNC in the next two years. I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge our General Manager, Jennifer Lord, for her formidable work. Jennifer is a joy to work with, keeps our office running smoothly while managing an expanding staff team, many committees, partnerships and contracts. If you haven't met either Nichola or Jennifer face-to-face I encourage you to take this opportunity to introduce yourself and let them know how the CCNC is valuable to the work you do.

We also have several outgoing Board Members that I would like to take this opportunity to thank for all of their contributions over the years. In particular, Ian Forsyth, our CCNC Past-President and formally with the City of North Vancouver (BC), John Ariyo, formally with the City of Mississauga (ON) and now at the City of Hamilton (ON), Kwende Kefenste with the City of Ottawa (ON), and Onalee Groves with the City of Barrie (ON). Thank you for everything you brought to the network over the years.

Following today's Annual General Meeting I will be stepping down as Board President. Four years ago, the board decided to move to a succession model in our executive to ensure there was stable leadership for our organization. I have been on the CCNC Board since 2008, and it has been an honour to serve you for two years as Vice-President, and two years as President. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Sheila McKinnon with the City of Surrey, for encouraging me to put my name forward for this position in 2011. The reason why I think it is important to share this with you is that it is these types of mentorships within our network that propel us forward. By sharing the value of the network with colleagues in your organization, meeting new people through our summits and regional workshops, and seeing the potential in our next generation we ensure our network remains an exciting and vibrant place.

So, thank you to Sheila, all of the CCNC Board members, our incredible staff, and in particular Jennifer Lord, our General Manager, who I truly enjoyed working with over the years. I look forward to continuing to work with the network as Past-President for the next two years.

Operating as a network of municipalities, organizations and individuals across Canada, by telephone and email, across different time zones, is not easy. So we are profoundly grateful to all the people who have made a conscious effort to invest their time, their dollars, their expertise, and their influence in your network over the past year, and since our inception in the late 1990's. When I look back at the founding documents of this network I am inspired by their thoughtful and visionary words. Today this network is a reflection of all of you. You are the ones that can shape this network and help it grow. As you can see we are making every effort to be nimble and respond to changes as we expand. I encourage you to get involved, sign-up for a committee, submit a peer-to-peer presentation, make an individual donation through CanadaHelps.Org, sponsor a Summit, encourage others in your community of practice to become a member, and to find your unique way to contribute to the Creative City Network of Canada.



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