## THE FOURTH PILLAR IN THREE COUNTRIES
### CANADA: Adapted from the Keynote Address to the Creative City Network, Canada

### Judy Spokes on behalf of Yazmine Laroche, Head of the Cities Secretariat, Canada

The first thing that needs to be said is that Yazmine Laroche, Head of the Cities Secretariat, Canada, was to present on the Canadian experience with cultural sustainability and the four pillars approach. Unfortunately her Prime Minister, Paul Martin, trumped us, insisting that Yazmine remain in Canada to complete some important policy work for him. As you'll see, that is one of the strengths of cultural sustainability policy making in Canada—it has been embraced across all tiers of government and is embedded in the national political agenda.

We then approached Nancy Duxbury, Director of Research and Information for the Creative City Network, to present a paper as she had already been booked to be part of our local government workshop. However for family reasons she had to cancel her trip at short notice. We were obviously disappointed not to have her involvement as her organisation has played an important role in supporting the fourth pillar approach in Canada.

Fortunately Nancy, Yazmine and their staff have assisted us by providing recent papers and helped us put together this presentation.

This presentation of the Canadian Fourth Pillar experience is based, in particular on Yazmine's keynote address to the Creative City Network conference which (due to Yazmine's late unavailability) was presented by the Cities Secretariat's Adam Ostry. It also draws on Adam's own panel presentation at the same conference.

The content of those presentations (ideas and facts) has been reframed to address the purpose and context of this conference – to provide an overview of cultural sustainability in Canada, its focus, the infrastructure and thinking that supports it and the progress of its implementation. Where appropriate the language is taken, with only minor changes, from those sources.

As it has contributed much to the momentum of this topic, the New Deal for Cities and Communities seems an appropriate place to begin to contextualise the fourth pillar in Canada. The New Deal is a national planning and infrastructure support agenda that has been championed by the Prime Minister since at least 2002, before his elevation to national leader.

Recognizing that culture plays an important role in the long-term health and prosperity of a community and acting on that realization are two different things. That's where the New Deal for Cities and Communities comes in. It's a commitment that extends beyond rhetoric to practical ways to fund communities now and into the future so that communities can confidently begin to set their own course. As Prime Minister Martin stated recently,

> Our New Deal for Cities and Communities is about making the lives of Canadians better by making the places they live better. It began in our first budget with a rebate for municipalities on the GST – which translates into a federal investment in communities of some $7-billion over 10 years. It will continue this fall as we work with provinces, cities and communities on the mechanism and ramp-up for our transfer of a portion of the gas tax – which will mean an additional federal investment of $2-billion a year when fully implemented.
> Paul Martin, Prime Minister's Reply to the Speech from the Throne, October 5, 2004

Because the New Deal is such a prominent expression of the policy aspirations of the Canadian Government, and because it intrinsically acknowledges the contribution of culture to sustainable cities it is a cornerstone in construction of a significant national cultural policy agenda. Canada is fortunate to have a developed network of government and non-government agencies who are contributing to the implementation of both the New Deal agenda and the broader notion of cultural sustainability. It's what Adam Ostry refers to as the 'Federal Family'. I think you'll agree it's an impressive list.

Firstly there is the Department of Canadian Heritage and its portfolio agencies with a cultural mandate (which include the Canada Council for the Arts, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board among others). Canadian heritage plays a key leadership role and its experience and research in community-based cultural initiatives (such as the Cultural Spaces and Cultural Capitals programs) is greatly valued. Complementing this work are agencies such as Parks Canada, Public Works and Government Services, and the Department of Infrastructure and Communities which incorporates the Cities Secretariat, the agency directly responsible for implementing the New Deal strategies. These are important partners in the area of physical infrastructure, including the properties, cultural facilities and heritage buildings that define the community landscapes and enhance 'sense of place'.

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Departments such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Department of Social Development (SD) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) look after the social inclusion dimension of culture particularly the needs of immigrants, youth, Aboriginal people, the voluntary sector and the social economy. Regional Development Agencies create links between creativity and innovation and regional development issues. The Rural Secretariat is an important office because it recognises that the scale and scope of issues differ across big and small communities and require different approaches.

Statistics Canada's groundbreaking work on a project reporting on trends and conditions in Canada's twenty-seven Census Metropolitan Areas is important. The nine chapters provide in-depth analysis based on 20-year time series of census data, 1981-2001, and represent the first time such a comprehensive statistical study has been undertaken on Canadian cities. The Culture Chapter has just been released (October 22nd).

Working with these national agencies are a range of important organizations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities—a key partner for municipal engagement. Their readiness to become involved has been reflected by the increased profile of creativity, cultural planning and development issues at their most recent AGM in Edmonton. The Creative City Network itself plays an important role, is a valuable resource on all fourth pillar issues and publishes an excellent biweekly e-newsletter. Interest groups and think tanks, such as the Canadian Policy Research Network also play an important part (including interesting work by Neil Bradford on Creative Cities).

Providing a conduit between government and communities is the PM's Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities with a mandate to provide advice to the PM and the Minister on the New Deal. This committee is chaired by a former premier of British Columbia (Mike Harcourt) and includes 14 members with regional and sectorial experience and expertise in different domains. The Cultural Subcommittee of this group will be devoted to an exploration of cultural sustainability.

One of the acknowledged challenges of the Fourth Pillar in Canada is its relative infancy as a component of public policy. Even those with a keen interest admit that the cultural pillar is at an earlier stage of development than the other pillars and that to some degree it is the least defined and is less well understood by decision makers. There is some work to do to make this pillar more resonant and robust. And, not surprisingly, Canada is looking to the international context, including the work being done at a local government level in Australia.

One area in which decision makers are still coming to terms with the Fourth Pillar is in defining its scope. In Canada the focus is on the role of arts and creative practice in making communities that are robust and sustainable.

It is said that culture, for all the rich meaning with which Canadians imbue the word, is one of those things that are easy to take for granted. But the fourth pillar substantiates the role artists play in the fabric of towns and cities, and the colour and texture they add to neighbourhoods. It confirms the value of the great diversity of the Canadian community, with immigration now accounting for more than 50% of total population growth —the different dialects, foods and lifestyles that are encountered every day. Culture, as one Ottawa city councillor put it, is 'the poetry of a city's existence'.

In the Speech from the Throne that opened the most recent session of Canadian parliament on Oct 5th, the Government recognised that 'what makes our communities vibrant and creative is the quality of their cultural life'. The word 'culture' can refer to an all-encompassing notion of 'ways of life' or a more traditional view by discipline (arts, heritage, cultural industries, etc.). There is, in Canada as elsewhere, no single, universally accepted definition for culture that applies in the term 'cultural sustainability'.

So perhaps the starting point, rather than focusing on 'culture' should be to consider sustainability—'meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs'(Brundtland Commission 1987). Sustainability is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs. It is a concept that, in a governmental context, also recognises the importance of community involvement.

Therefore a Canadian definition of cultural sustainability that might also work in other jurisdictions could be:- the highest attainable level of creative expression and participation in cultural life, measured against the lowest impact /disruption to the environment, to social aspects of society, and to the economy.

Canadian cultural agencies see increasing acknowledgement and inclusion of cultural dimensions in international sustainability discourse, including, in some jurisdictions the identification of a distinct 'fourth' pillar dedicated to 'culture', expanding beyond the traditional perception of culture as a subset of the social dimension. Examples include Agenda 21 for Culture – (May 8, 2004) where international representatives of local governments met in Barcelona and agreed upon a guiding document for public

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cultural policy. Also of note is the extension of the triple bottom line to a quadruple bottom line for municipal planning purposes in parts of Australia and the Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities, Principle 6 which states 'Recognise and build on the distinctive characteristics of cities, including their human and cultural values, history and natural systems'.

While seeing culture as a distinct dimension of sustainable communities is significant progress, a challenge with culture sustainability is to not diminish its importance by seeing it as a 'frill' pillar - in other words, nice to have if the other, more pressing social, economic and environmental issues of a community are being addressed. Rather, we can view cultural sustainability objectives as part of the process of meeting a community's basic needs, particularly where they relate to social sustainability and quality of life. The close inter-relationships between the four pillars of culture, environment, social equity and economy are seen as extremely important.

Canada has made much of the linkage, exposed in particular by Richard Florida, between the cultural life of cities and their economic success. The Creative City Network also shares this view, stating that: 'Strong, creative communities attract business and industry, which bring employment opportunities and add to the wealth of the community'.

It's fascinating to see this kind of process in action, and Canada offers a number of living laboratories where the magnetism between people and place is occurring quite naturally. You can see it in Old Montreal, an area that not long ago was the preserve of souvenir shops and restaurants that catered to the transient tourist crowd that dominated the area. Today, the area is being rapidly transformed into a residential neighbourhood, as actors, photographers, musicians and artists take up residence in the area's old stone buildings.

Along with them has come a burgeoning mini-economy of funky coffee shops, bars and boutiques. You can literally feel the energy on the streets. Another example of this was highlighted this past summer by Ontario's public television network when it set out to find Ontario's most creative community. The winner – chosen from some very impressive entrants – was Bancroft, a small community that sits just south of Algonquin Park. Best known for its rich mineral deposits, Bancroft is literally teeming with culture from amateur theatre to artists and craftspeople. Virtually everyone in the community is involved in some form of cultural pursuit it seems. The draw for most of those featured in the documentary that the town put together as its contest entry was the pristine, healthy environment, the rural lifestyle and the fact that they could make a living with their art there.

As with the economic benefits the social pay-offs for addressing cultural sustainability can be great- positively influencing social cohesion/social capital, capacity building, inter-cultural trust, public safety, youth engagement and community health. For example the National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth (1998/99) found that Canadian children who participated in activities like music, arts and clubs had reduced risk of obesity, higher self esteem and better social interaction, greatly reduced likelihood of smoking and overall better health.

Given the fairly broad understanding of cultural sustainability, there is a capacity, in Canada, to work cooperatively across the various levels of government. Examples such as the recent Winnipeg and Vancouver Agreements providing national, provincial and local governments with a framework for cooperation. The Vancouver Agreement, for example, is a commitment by the federal government, the Province of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver to work together to support sustainable economic, social and community development in Vancouver. The Agreement addresses three main themes: community health and safety; economic and social development; and community capacity building. (http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/planning/dtes/agreement.htm).

Cooperation around the issue of cultural sustainability is also demonstrated by Culture Montreal's engagement of Catalytix Inc. (Richard Florida's research company) working with three levels of government to do an extensive statistical and qualitative study of the Montreal region's role in the creative economy, including assessments of its talent, technology, tolerance and territory assets, and qualitative and quantitative assessment of its creativity assets.

Broad support for the cultural agenda does not end with the role of government. Evidence of the community's passion for culture can be found in the furor that arose in Ottawa when arts funding was threatened during the city's budget deliberations early this year. Signs proclaiming support for the arts went up on lawns and in store fronts, and more than a thousand people marched on City Hall to protest the proposed cuts.

Wisely, Ottawa City councillors took the arts programs off the table. With good reason, too, since Ottawa is home to some 35,000 people who work directly or indirectly in the cultural sector. As the spectre of another Ottawa winter approaches it's not the weather that keeps those culture workers in the city. Weather – no matter how inclement – is no match for the pull of those other, cultural, attractors.

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Canada's vision is of a shared, long-term concept of what Canadians want their communities to look like. It will require applied planning, purposeful planning, planning that looks way out into the future, yet is rooted in the reality of the community, and is built by the people with the most at stake. Vision is a critical piece in making long-term planning effective and purposeful, but equally important is the need to include multiple stakeholders in the planning process, and to have clear and measurable outcomes. The need to look beyond the short- and medium-term… to 100 years out and beyond… presents a challenge, but it's worth rising to. The challenge is first to have the opportunity to dream and then to construct the roadmap to make the dream real.

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