

Cultural Map Synopsis

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Overview:

Incorporating Kevin Lynch's Analytical Schema as our framework, we have undertaken the task of carefully reviewing and interpreting cultural maps submitted by the attendees of the "You Are Here Exhibition & Cultural Mapping Lab" hosted at the Kamloops Museum & Archives (KMA) during the previous year. Through our initial examination of a sample of cultural maps from Kamloops, we have successfully generated findings that are congruent with the survey responses collected during the KMA event.

Utilizing Kevin Lynch's analytical framework as a foundational basis, we conducted a comprehensive examination of cultural maps, meticulously discerning and delineating distinct paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. These characteristics serve as invaluable tools in facilitating our interpretation of cultural maps. The preliminary findings that have surfaced, and which are duly documented within the Cultural Strategic Plan, can be summarized as follows:

- Nature is a key aspect of Kamloops' cultural fabric and community identity.
- Kamloops' cultural planning should support Indigenous cultural recognition, celebration, and respect.
- Cultural infrastructure needs to be tied to Kamloops' existing and planned nodes and districts of activity. There is a desire to have a cultural hub or a multi-use space for arts and culture.
- Downtown Kamloops is an important destination for cultural activities and experiences.
- Culture provides a sense of shared identity and a sense of belonging.
- There is a need to better communicate and promote cultural experiences.
- Artists, creatives, and cultural actors are looking for innovative tools, resources, and support from the municipality, namely streamlining processes and reducing "red tape" when working with city processes.
- Cultural planning initiatives should centre inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in all aspects of cultural development including involving Indigenous voices and celebrating diversity.
- People who participate in cultural experiences would like increased diversity in types and formats to include more interactive and immersive experiences catered to different income levels and abilities.
- People want improved linkages to economic opportunity in the cultural sector and the creative economy.

Synopsis:

Guided by these initial thematic insights, we made a deliberate choice to undertake an in-depth examination of particular subsets of the cultural maps derived from the "You Are Here" project. Our focus centered on an analysis of the cultural maps contributed by Indigenous communities of Kamloops, with the objective of gaining a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of their unique cultural perspectives within the Kamloops context. Kamloops is in what is colonially known as the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, located at the confluence of the

North and South Thompson Rivers. The area is first home to the Tk'emlúpsəmc meaning “the people of the confluence”—known today as Tk'emlúps te Secwépəmc.

In our endeavor to extract the primary insights from the cultural maps crafted by Indigenous residents of Kamloops and to juxtapose them with our initial findings, we have discerned the following key points:

Key Points:

- Division by the Thompson rivers diminishes the mobilization of ideas, beliefs, and celebratory activities between the Northern and Southern sides of Kamloops, creating isolated areas or cultural pockets, devoid of significant interplay or integration.
- For many Indigenous communities, nature is at the forefront, serving as the initial conduit through which culture is imparted. Rooted in their traditions of storytelling and communal singing, often conducted in natural settings around the warmth of a fire, Indigenous individuals forge a profound connection with the natural world. This affinity towards nature is established by a deep-seated desire to preserve this important bond for future generations, a commitment evident in the pervasive infusion of natural landscapes throughout their cultural maps.
- Story telling stands as a cornerstone in the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge among Indigenous communities. It provides a platform for elders and knowledge keepers to share and instill their cherished values, beliefs, traditions, and languages to their future generations.
- A growing concern revolves around the diminishing prevalence and utilization of Indigenous languages, affecting not only Indigenous populations but also the broader Kamloops community. As time passes, the inevitable loss of elders possessing profound insights is increasing. This arises a pressing need for a strategic plan aimed at the reintegration and widespread adoption of Indigenous Native languages across various sectors of the Kamloops community.
- The need for community coherence within Kamloops. In the cultural maps, there is an emphasis on the need of shared commitment to fostering dialogue and interaction among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Such engagement is deemed pivotal in cultivating equality among all inhabitants of Kamloops and in promoting a heightened receptivity to a more inclusive and harmonious environment.
- Altering the prevailing mental association that distinguishes Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations as inhabiting their own “sides” of the city is instrumental in dismantling barriers that separate these communities. The geographical division imposed by the presence of the Thompson River acts as a hindrance to effective communication and mutual engagement between the two communities, consequently creating negative feelings of safety in Indigenous communities.

- Notably absent within the cultural maps is an emphasis on transportation infrastructure, emphasizing the profound influence exerted by the Thompson River on our community. Since there is a lack of cultural movement, we need cultural facilitators who can build a relationship between both sides of the river by focussing on creating long-standing communication.
- Lack of culture and safety seen in downtown. Through the maps and interviews, it was evident that there is a sense of community safety for people residing on the North side of the river. This was emphasized by the lack of drawings of the South side and downtown area of Kamloops on the maps.
- Strong importance given to cultural venues events such as the Kamloops Powwow Grounds.
- A prevailing sentiment of reverence for the principles of Indigenization, diversity, reconciliation, and the dissemination of knowledge is evident. Several interviews have outlined the potential of these values to mitigate instances of racism within our community, both online and in face-to-face interactions.

Quotations:

- “Anywhere I am, my culture is there”
- “People are considered as culture”

Conclusion:

The analysis of the cultural maps created by Indigenous peoples who attended the You Are Here Project at KMA has afforded us a heightened comprehension of the centers of cultural significance within Indigenous communities. These maps have also elucidated the specific areas where Indigenous individuals perceive potential for the City of Kamloops to play a pivotal role in fostering a more inclusive environment. Key facets in need of attention encompass the realization of community cohesion, the mobilization of culture and language, and the pursuit of reconciliation.