

# **KICKING HORSE CULTURE QUALITY OF BENEFITS ASSESSMENT**

**Prepared for Golden Area Initiatives**

**April 2009**

**Vis-à-vis Management Resources Inc.**

## SUMMARY

Arts and culture are central to a healthy community. However, in many communities arts and cultural organizations face an ongoing challenge to justify public investments. It is generally acknowledged that this is because it is difficult to measure and fully understand the benefits of arts and culture. Based on interviews in late 2008 with local politicians and other community leaders, this study provides a summary of:

- Perceptions about arts and culture benefits for the Golden area,
- Kicking Horse Culture's role in contributing to those benefits, and
- Opportunities for increasing the impact of arts and culture benefits for the community in the future.

The results indicate that the community arts and culture scene in Golden is strongly valued. By and large the views of the local politicians and the other community leaders were very similar.

'Best things' about arts and culture in Golden far outnumbered the 'worst' (by 2:1). Common themes of 'best things' included the breadth and diversity of arts and culture, degree of professionalism, and benefits for youth. Numerous individual events were cited as bests. Weaknesses most frequently identified were the need for more linkages between organizations, the need for even more involvement of youth and teens, the need for more exposure of local talent, and the need for more summer entertainment.

Arts and culture in Golden are valued for bringing people together, building and uniting community, adding to quality of life and cultural awareness, and providing benefits for youth. Arts and culture are also recognized as being important for the economy - primarily for bringing revenue into the community (grant money and tourists), keeping money in the community, and providing some employment and related income.

Kicking Horse Culture's arts and culture programs and activities are considered to contribute positively to realizing a number of social and economic benefits. Foremost among social benefits are helping the Golden area be a fun place to live, helping children learn, building community identity and pride, and increasing citizen engagement. Kicking Horse Culture is considered important for its economic contributions as well. Expanding the economy, bringing in revenues, and helping to retain revenues within the community were generally viewed as being the three areas of highest economic contribution. Kicking Horse Culture was also considered to contribute positively to attracting and retaining professionals in the community.

People voiced a strong sense of loss when asked “What if there was no Kicking Horse Culture?” A few examples of some of the responses include:

- *A segment of our community would be lost.*
- *We'd lose good people as they moved away.*
- *A much blacker place to live.*

A number of people recognized that expression of cultural values would re-emerge. However, the many powerful responses to the question clearly demonstrated the key role that Kicking Horse Culture plays in the community.

Two external funders, Columbia Basin Trust and the BC Arts Council, were also contacted. Both offered extremely positive assessments on Kicking Horse Culture. It was particularly interesting to learn that through its leveraging Kicking Horse Culture has the sixth highest Community Arts Association budget in BC and based on a peer review process it was identified as one of the highest performing arts councils in BC. The Columbia Basin Trust representative considered Kicking Horse Culture to rank within the top 5% of cultural organizations in the Columbia/Kootenay area.

Regarding appropriateness of funding sources for arts and culture, there was general support for a mixed source of funding including local tax dollars.

A number of suggestions for improving the arts and culture scene in Golden were identified. Showcasing more local talent, enhancing communications and marketing efforts, more coordination within the cultural sector, and expanding venues and programs were the dominant themes.

Overall the results indicate that arts and culture and specifically Kicking Horse Culture make a significant contribution to the social and economic well-being of the Golden area in a wide variety of ways.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the study findings:

1. **Local artists** - *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture assess the demand among various levels of local artists for increased exposure and examine a variety of approaches for addressing that demand within the community.*
2. **Information about audiences** - *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture seek funding from the local tourism organization to conduct a market study to determine where its audiences/customers are from, what motivates them, their spending habits etc.*
3. **More for youth** –*We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture continue its support of initiatives and programming for youth and look for additional opportunities for youth to experience arts and culture in the local area.*
4. **More summer entertainment** –*We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture work with the local Tourism Association, local government and possible sponsors to develop a plan for enhancing summer entertainment in the area.*
5. **Cooperation and collaboration**
  - a. A number of people identified a need for more collaboration amongst arts and culture groups in the community. This is often a difficult issue with community groups because some can be fiercely independent and significant energy may be invested to coordinate groups with little return on the time invested. We also recognize that the benefits of enhanced cooperation and collaboration can be great. Therefore *we recommend that Kicking Horse Culture explore ways to engage local groups across the arts and cultural sector with the goal of enhancing communication, cooperation and collaboration among them.*
  - b. Several people raised concerns about the potential for unfair competition between Kicking Horse Culture initiatives particularly the gallery and local businesses. We discussed this issue with three business owners and the impact was generally described as being neutral. Those individuals however, were interested in considering cooperative opportunities/ideas that would result in business enhancement. *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture meet with other businesses to identify cooperative or collaborative approaches to support them.*

6. **Board renewal and succession planning and transparency**– *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture carefully consider the issue of representativeness the next time Board membership is up for renewal. We understand that the executive director is currently mentoring a potential successor and we encourage him to continue to do so. The organization should also ensure transparency regarding its budget and take steps to ensure that people know that it continues to be transparent.*
7. **Tourism/cultural tourism** – *We recommend that local government seek funding to enhance the current tourism plan with more cultural content that will benefit both local residents and tourists. Planning should include development of a major (provincial, building towards international) cultural event that can be hosted by the community.*
8. **Ongoing activities and funding** –*We congratulate the community of Golden and surrounding area, and Kicking Horse Culture on the incredible arts and culture and community building successes that have been achieved to date. We have heard and believe that the Golden area represents a fantastic model for other communities to emulate. We recommend that local government continue it's funding of Kicking Horse Culture and that Kicking Horse Culture continues to build from the substantial base that it has established.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Arts and culture are central to our society; defining who we are as individuals, families, and communities. However, it is a constant challenge to justify public investments in arts and culture because it is difficult to measure and fully understand those benefits.

Impact assessments of cultural organizations generally have focused on economic benefits as measured in relation to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Contribution to GDP is a crude but important measure. However, GDP is not well tailored to a local situation. It doesn't account for the efforts of volunteers nor does it assess the value that the community places on an activity. No social benefits are considered and many indirect economic benefits are completely ignored. No one measure can tell the whole story.

A 2007 report<sup>1</sup> prepared for the BC Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts summarizes recent research findings related to the benefits of arts, culture and heritage activities and infrastructure. Those benefits are broad ranging and extremely important to life in a community. We talked with a wide variety of people as part of that report and we were struck by the comments of the Chief Administrative Officer of one of our municipalities who said

*Recreation and culture are the mortar between the bricks that create a community. They make people want to be here. Communities that are built without them are built without heart.*

Arts and culture enrich and improve the quality of our personal lives through the development of skills and self esteem, and general well-being -including physical and mental health. Arts and culture-related gatherings, facilities, and programs can anchor communities by supporting and building social relations, community cohesion and civic engagement. The arts, culture, and heritage benefit the economies of communities by stimulating economic activity, providing employment, and reducing social costs. There

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<sup>1</sup> Vis-à-vis Management Resources Inc. 2007. *A case for investing in arts, culture and heritage infrastructure*. Prepared for the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. <http://www.cultureandcommunities.ca/downloads/A%20case%20for%20investing.pdf>

are also environmental benefits that arise from restoration of historic buildings and through creative works which help us value the environment.

This study, initiated by Golden Area Initiatives (GAI), identifies some of the benefits of arts and culture to the Golden area and the role Kicking Horse Culture has played in realizing those benefits. In addition it identifies opportunities for increasing the impact of arts and culture in the future.

## BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

During the summer of 2008 Kicking Horse Culture commissioned an assessment of the economic impact of Kicking Horse Culture within the Golden area. The study<sup>2</sup> found that total expenditures over the past 5 years were just over \$670,000 and those expenditures contributed \$669,000 to national GDP, \$400,000 of which contributed to regional GDP. In addition the report noted that if Kicking Horse Culture maintains its 2008 level of spending and adds projected incremental activity associated with a gift shop, then the contribution to GDP over the next 5 years would be roughly \$1.65 million.

In subsequent discussions between Kicking Horse Culture and GAI<sup>3</sup> regarding the GDP impact assessment it was acknowledged that, although the study showed that local government investments made a significant contribution to the local economy, the assessment was relatively narrow and not particularly informative for non economists. It was felt that a broader identification of social and economic benefits attributable to Kicking Horse Culture's activities would contribute valuable information to guide the future direction of the organization.

As a result, GAI commissioned Vis-à-vis Management Resources Inc. to conduct an assessment and prepare a supplemental report on the benefits that arts and culture and specifically Kicking Horse Culture contribute to the community. It was agreed that a meaningful measure of the social and economic benefits could be obtained based on the views of individuals who in one way or another are leaders in the community. This report summarizes the information gained through interviews of community members including local elected officials. In addition, views were solicited from two outside agencies that are familiar with and contribute funding to Kicking Horse Culture.

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<sup>2</sup> Outspan Group Inc. 2008 Golden District Arts Council Economic Impact Analysis of Organizational Spending. 16pp

<sup>3</sup> GAI receives funding for community economic development initiatives on behalf of the Town of Golden and Rural Golden (Area A of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District-(CSRD)).

## APPROACH

Vis-à-vis conducted a series of interviews/conversations with eight local politicians and 23 local people (community leaders) from the Golden area who were identified by GAI as influencing or being influenced by Kicking Horse Culture's activities. Twenty one were interviewed in person and ten were interviewed by telephone. In addition, representatives of two agencies that contribute funding to Kicking Horse Culture, the Executive Director of the BC Arts Council and the Northwest and Southwest Community Liaison for the Columbia Basin Trust, were interviewed by phone to determine their views regarding Kicking Horse Culture. (See Attachment 1 for a list of interviewees.)

All interviews were conducted during late November and December 2008 with a few follow up (clarifying) questions occurring in January 2009.

Topics covered during the interviews included:

- Involvement in arts and culture;
- The Golden community arts and culture scene;
- Strengths and weaknesses of arts and culture in Golden;
- Social and economic benefits of arts and culture in general to the community;
- Contribution of Kicking Horse Culture's activities and initiatives;
- What if there was no Kicking Horse Culture?
- Ways in which Kicking Horse Culture's could improve;
- Appropriate sources of funds.

Details regarding specific interview questions included in Attachment 2 are available by contacting Vis-à-vis Management Resources at [visavis@uniserve.com](mailto:visavis@uniserve.com) .

## FINDINGS

### The Community Arts Scene in General

We began with a number of general questions about arts and culture in the Golden area to determine top of mind perceptions regarding the social and economic benefits that arts and culture contribute to the community. The overall impression of the arts in Golden was summed up by one person as *amazing for its size*. A number of interviewees noted that the quantity and quality of the events in the last five years had significantly improved and they attributed this to Kicking Horse Culture and its professional staff.

- *[KHC's professional staff] brings professionalism.*
- *[KHC' professional staff] has brought it a long way.*
- *The Kicking Horse crew does a fantastic job.*

The quality and variety of events, the presence of a gallery and the high performance value for the cost of a ticket were frequently mentioned as positive factors. In particular, recent multicultural events were praised and the 'Kicks' programming concept acknowledged for its quality and variety.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of Arts and Culture in Golden

Interviewees were also asked to offer what they felt were the 2 or 3 'best things' and 2 or 3 'worst things' about arts and culture in Golden.

Overall the 'best things' far out numbered 'worst things' by roughly a two to one ratio. Frequently cited 'bests' or strengths were: the breadth and diversity of arts and culture, the degree of professionalism, the benefits for youth, and numerous individual events. The weaknesses most frequently raised were: the need for more linkages between

organizations, the need for more activities/programs for youth/teens, and the need for more summer entertainment. A more detailed assessment of strengths and weaknesses identified by community leaders and local politicians is presented below.

## **The Strengths**

### *Community Leaders' Views*

The responses to the request for “best” and “worst” things about art and culture in Golden were overwhelmingly positive. Most common responses fell within three general themes:

- Gaining a broader perspective on art, culture and diversity - 7 responses (30%);
- The professional level of events - 7 responses (30%);
- The importance of school involvement and exposure for young people - 6 responses (26%).

Many other “bests” were mentioned including:

- The social opportunities that are provided;
- Attracting people to the community;
- The success of the ‘Champions’ program that enlisted the support of local business and drew employees into events;
- The success of the market and winter craft fair;
- The positive impact that the renovated AGOG building has on downtown;
- The Bridge concerts and the value for cost of the performances;
- Affordable and family friendly events;
- Various economic benefits;
- Passionate people who are involved in programming; and
- The opportunity to build on the mountain culture already in place.

### *Local Politicians Views*

The three most frequent 'best things' about arts and culture in Golden identified by local politicians fell into three categories:

- The variety of activities/performers/choices - 4 responses (50%);
- Quality of performers/performances - 4 responses (50%); and,
- The amount of local talent - 3 responses (37.5%).

Other 'best things' included:

- Exposure to arts and culture for children/schools;
- Not having to travel to other places e.g. Banff or Calgary;
- Providing employment/self employment;
- The art gallery;
- Community involvement – strong culture of doing things on our own;
- Specific performances/events; and,
- Affordability of events.

## **Weaknesses**

### *Community Leaders*

The four most common themes regarding weaknesses identified by this group were:

- Need for more youth/teen involvement - 5 responses (22%);
- Not enough summer entertainment - 5 responses (22%);
- Poor coordination among community arts organizations - 4 responses (17%); and
- The need for exposure for more local artists - 4 responses (17%).

Less common observations about weaknesses included:

- Need for a good multi-use space for performances and creation
- Doesn't bridge other lifestyles i.e., sports;
- Poor coordination between Kicking Horse Resort and Golden;
- Inadequate marketing outside of Golden;
- Gallery competes with other businesses;
- Need more accountability or a business plan for big goals KHC;
- Representativeness of Kicking Horse Culture Board;
- Holding more cultural/historical events and gallery exhibitions;
- Collaborating with other businesses for mutual benefit; and,
- Setting artistic standards too high (in relation to exposure for local artists).

### *Local Politician's Views*

The most frequently mentioned 'worst thing' about arts and culture in the community mentioned by politicians was lack of exposure or opportunity for exposure of local talent - 4 responses (50%).

Other issues that were mentioned fell into 5 general categories:

- Lack of good multiuse space for performance and creation;
- Value provided for tax dollars and difficulty in measuring benefits (it was also noted that a lot of businesses don't take advantage of opportunities);
- Not enough integration between arts and culture and other organizations;
- Need for more performances that appeal to non arts and culture segments of the population; and,
- Live Kicks concept being used by the ski hill resort<sup>4</sup>.

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This was noted by one person. We understand that without Kicking Horse Culture or the local government's permission or input a summer event at the resort was billed as a Kicks event. The

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## General View of the Benefits of Arts and Culture for the Community

### Social Benefits

Those interviewed were asked for their top of mind assessment of the social and economic benefits of arts and culture for the community. Both the community leaders' and local politicians' views of the social benefits obtained through arts and culture could be categorized under the following themes:

- Bringing people together/building a united community (increased social engagement) -14 community leaders (61%) and 6 local politicians (75%);
- Adding to quality of life/increased cultural awareness - 11 community leaders (48%) and 4 local politicians (50%);
- Experiential benefits for youth - 8 community leaders (35%) and 4 local politicians (50%)

By bringing people together both as performers/participants and as audiences, it was noted that arts and culture create a tighter community, and a stronger identity and pride in the community. Arts and culture were also considered to expose people to new ideas and values and enhance social interaction which, in turn, promotes awareness, tolerance and learning about diversity and culture.

Encouraging local business champions to sponsor events and sending staff to the events with complimentary tickets was cited as an opportunity for exposing new audience members to venues without concern for the cost. Interviewees frequently commented that exposure to arts is an important part of education noting that including school programs in planning arts and culture programs and activities was important for learning.

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Kicks concept was seen as a successful branding device for the Golden arts scene, which should not be used by other commercial ventures.

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Examples of comments related to the above themes include:

- *Enriched by diversity*
- *Allows seniors to get out and visit*
- *Provides a feeling of belonging*
- *Makes a more vibrant community*
- *Allows kids to experience a bigger world out there – a wide variety of things*
- *Plants seeds for further exploration through education*
- *High calibre performers bring people out which is good for mental health*

### **Economic Benefits**

The community leaders group and the local politicians both identified three main economic benefits of arts and culture for the community:

- Bringing revenue into the community (grant money and tourists) - 11 community leaders (48%) and 6 local politicians (75%)
- Keeping money in the community - 6 community leaders (26%) and 4 local politicians (50%)
- Providing employment and related income - 5 community leaders (25%) and 4 local politicians (50%).

The local politician's comments tended to emphasize economic benefits somewhat more than the community leaders. This may be because people who are attracted to politics are more inclined to be aware of the funds that have been leveraged to support arts and culture. In addition those who run for public office may be more inclined to consider the value for money derived from programs that receive public funding.

Examples of comments relating to the three themes include:

- *Arts and culture are key to tourism - they want to enjoy full flavor of the place.*
- *People will stay longer if they find the local economy pleasant to participate in.*
- *Draws people into Golden who come to ski or develop in the area.*
- *Does stimulate some of the economy and creates a spin off opportunity.*
- *Craft fair has blossomed and creates welcome revenue.*
- *Enhancement in opportunities to spend*
- *Keeps people here who may go to Banff etc.*
- *Revenue stays in the community if the choices are competitive*
- *Gives local people a choice of income opportunities*

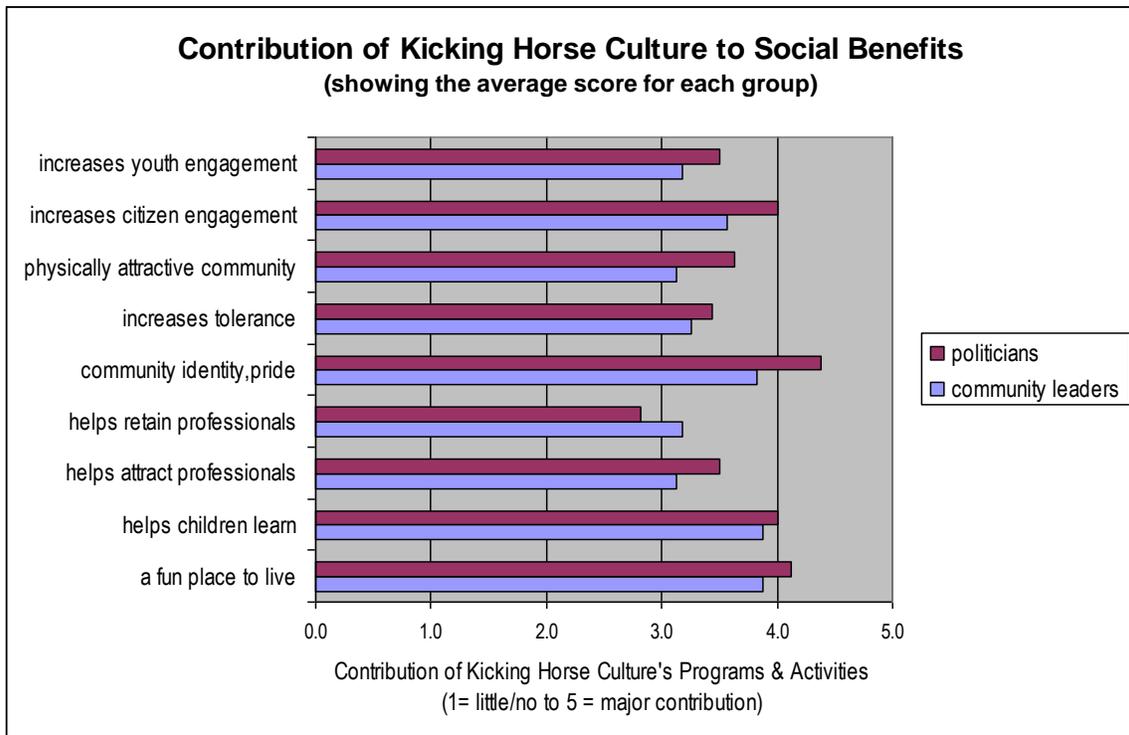
A total of six respondents noted that arts and culture events represented good value. Interestingly the question about economic benefits of arts and culture prompted eight respondents to note the much more could be done to enhance the economic benefits derived from arts and culture in the community; enhanced promotion and developing a big event were the most common suggestions for increasing economic benefits.

## **Benefits Attributed to Kicking Horse Culture**

To identify specific benefits that Kicking Horse Culture contributes to the community, we asked people to consider a list of benefits that experts attribute to the presence of a vibrant arts and cultural landscape within a community. We asked people to tell us the extent to which Kicking Horse Culture's initiatives and programs contributed to various types of benefits. People were asked to respond on a 1-5 scale where 1 meant Kicking Horse Culture contributes very little or nothing and 5 meant it made a major contribution. The average scores for the 23 community leaders and the 8 local politicians are summarized in the graphs below.

In general, both community leaders and local politicians feel that Kicking Horse Culture contributes significantly to the general social benefits enjoyed by the community as a result of arts and culture. Overall, the highest scoring categories of social benefits were:

- Fun place to live – 87% of the interviewees rated Kicking Horse Culture’s contribution as a 4 or 5;
- Helps children learn - 77% rated Kicking Horse Culture’s contribution as a 4 or 5;
- Community identity and pride - 74% rated Kicking Horse Culture’s contribution as a 4 or 5; and,
- Increases citizen engagement - 63% rated Kicking Horse Culture’s contribution as a 4 or 5.



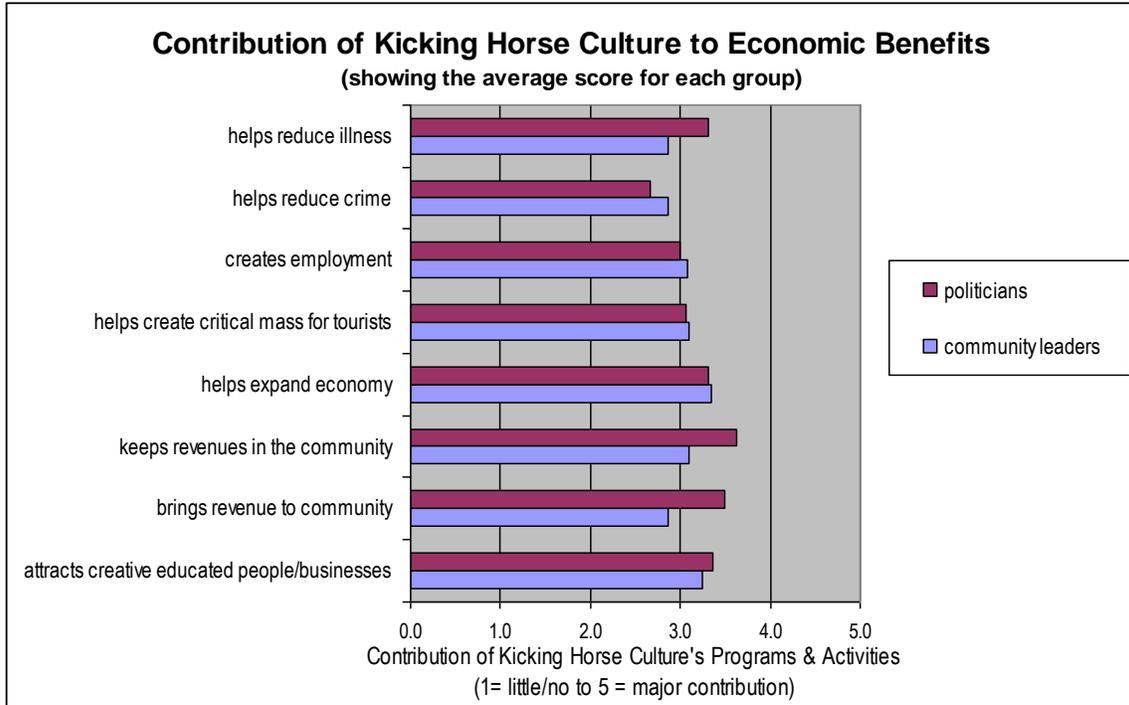
In the past ten years the role of culture, the arts and heritage in building vibrant, high quality, diverse communities that attract residents, particularly educated, creative people has received considerable attention in the literature<sup>5</sup>. One would expect that small rural towns in British Columbia that offer attractive arts, culture and recreational amenities could be expected to be more successful in attracting and retaining healthcare and other professionals who are in short supply than communities that do not offer as much.

For that reason we thought it would be interesting to look at the responses 11 individuals that we interviewed who were identified as professionals regarding attraction and retention of professionals. Our premise was that they would provide the most realistic assessment of Kicking Horse Culture's contribution to attracting/retaining professional. Over 55% of those who were identified as being professionals felt that Kicking Horse Culture made quite a significant (rating of 4 or 5) contribution to attracting and retaining professionals and 91% provided ratings of 3 or higher. The average score for both attraction and retention offered by the professionals was 3.6. This was much higher than we had expected it would be.

As a rule, the average scores regarding economic benefits were slightly lower than for the social benefits although most categories still averaged over 3.0. As the graph below shows, average scores regarding the economic benefit categories were generally quite similar. "Helps expand the economy" was the highest at 3.5. Interestingly local politicians on average gave more positive ratings to the categories relating to "bringing" and "retaining revenue" and the "helps reduce illness" than the community leaders.

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<sup>5</sup> See Florida, Richard. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. Parseus Book Group.



This may simply indicate a greater awareness of the leveraging of funding that Kicking Horse Funding and the GDP study that was commissioned. The economic impact of Kicking Horse Cultures programs and activities in Golden is difficult to pinpoint with accuracy. The recent study by the Outspan Group placed monetary value on the arts in terms of GDP, broken down by national, provincial and regional impact. Kicking Horse Culture has been able to use local government funding of \$80,000 to leverage funding from other sources to a total of \$320,000 (a 4 to 1 ratio).

In addition to bringing funds to the community, 45% of interviewees believed that (rating of 4 or 5) that Kicking Horse Culture’s arts and culture programs and activities made a significant contribution to retaining revenues in the community (74 % provided ratings of 3 or higher). As noted earlier a number of people said that as a result of Kicking Horse Culture activities they didn’t feel the need to go to Banff or Calgary for a cultural treat as often.

## What if there was no Kicking Horse Culture?

Imagining how the world would be without something often helps to jar people into thinking about benefits a little differently. When interviewees were asked, “What if there was no Kicking Horse Culture?”, 18 out of 22 (82%) of community leaders and 7 out of 8 local politicians (87.5%) indicated that there would be a significant loss. Several examples include:

- *A segment of our community would be lost.*
- *Lacking a core; empty*
- *A much blacker place to live.*
- *It would be a huge void. Kids would miss out on a lot.*
- *We’d lose good people as they moved away.*
- *More drinking. A less attractive place to move to.*
- *We would go back 5 to 10 years ...there definitely wouldn’t be a much to do. The ripple effect would be drastic.*
- *It would be a dull place to live.*
- *There’d be much less of sense of community.*
- *All of the happenings wouldn’t happen.*
- *It would be a much darker town..... not a livable community.*

If a number of people had said things wouldn’t be much different if there was no Kicking Horse Culture then we would have concluded that either those people were not aware of the benefits that Kicking Horse Culture contributes to the community or Kicking Horse Culture simply doesn’t provide many benefits to the community. However responses from both the community leaders group and the local politicians lead to the conclusion that the loss of Kicking Horse Culture as a driving force in the arts and culture scene would be a significant step backward.

Loss of community energy and vibrancy, loss of personal happiness, loss of the momentum that has been built in the last 5 years, loss of opportunities and exposure for children, loss of a sense of cohesion in the social structure of the area and loss of economic benefits including tourism were some of the issues that were identified. It was also noted that there would be aesthetic and emotional impacts at least initially. However, there was also a sense that some entity would re-emerge to replace it was reflected in comments like *someone one would sporadically step up*.

The answers to this question also clearly demonstrated the key organizational role that Kicking Horse Culture plays in community building, fostering a sense of being in a special place. We heard a number of stories about ways that Kicking Horse Culture contributed to the community from intercultural initiatives to inspiration provided through direct contact with visiting artists, and Kicking Horse Culture's significant contribution to the enjoyment of guests hosted by Golden and associated enhancement of the community's reputation.

## **External Funder's Impressions of Kicking Horse Culture**

We contacted representatives of two outside agencies that contribute funding to Kicking Horse Culture, the BC Arts Council, which keeps statistics on 75 Community Arts Association's in British Columbia, and the Columbia Basin Trust. Both provided extremely positive assessments on Kicking Horse Culture.

It was particularly interesting to learn from the BC Arts Council representative that through its leveraging, Kicking Horse Culture has the 6th largest community arts association budget in the province. This was attributed to Kicking Horse Culture's leadership and its support from and connection to the community. It was noted that funding provided by local government allows the agency to leverage significant levels of funding from other sources.

The BC Arts Council representative noted that in a peer review evaluation process Kicking Horse Culture was identified as a leader for its innovation, diversity, quality and quantity of programming and its commitment to education and diversity. Being able to support paid staff was recognized as a key ingredient of Kicking Horse Culture's success.

This past year Kicking Horse Culture was one of only five community arts councils to receive the highest level award for community performance provided by the BC Arts Council<sup>6</sup>. When asked from a comparative perspective how Kicking Horse Culture compared to other community arts councils, from the top 10% to the bottom 10%, we were told that Kicking Horse Culture was in the top 10% for sure.

For a second opinion we contacted the Columbia Basin Trust. The Trust representative with whom we spoke identified Kicking Horse Culture as being solid and reliable "it always does what it says it is going to do". Compared to other cultural organizations in the Columbia/Kootenay area, Kicking Horse Culture was considered to rank in the top 5%.

The Trust representative also regarded the organization as being innovative and identified Kicking Horse Culture's greatest strengths as being its professional staff and the strong community support which is grounded in an understanding of how arts, culture and heritage affect lives. It also appears that Kicking Horse Culture and Golden have benefited significantly from Kicking Horse Culture's ability to leverage Columbia Basin Trust funding that could not go directly to the local government due to eligibility criteria.

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that Bill Usher, the Executive Director of Kicking Horse Culture, is on the Board of the BC Arts Council but BC Arts Council staff informed us that he does not take part in any Council decisions regarding Kicking Horse Culture.

## **Appropriate Sources of Funding**

People were asked how they felt arts and culture activities should be funded in the community. Overall there was support for a mixed source of funding.

### **Community Leaders' Views**

A mixed source of funding including government support was identified the most appropriate means of funding by 16 (70%) of the residents interviewed. We actually suspect that this number would be higher with more prompting. Interestingly this question led respondents to address or comment on a number of issues. Three people expressed concern regarding transparency of Kicking Horse Culture's budget. And three also commented that taxpayers' money should not support unfair competition with the private sector. Two wished to see arts and culture organizations join forces with other amateur or professional cultural organizations in the area to maximize the effect of expenditures. (This may not be an easy task as heritage, arts and cultural groups are often strongly independent.) Three people wished to see a big event as a major revenue generator.

Two expressed a willingness to pay slightly more for memberships and/or for tickets. Two more felt that free events were of such high quality that gate fees would be acceptable. These later comments are offset by other comments that we heard in the interview process from people who felt that free events were important for enhancing accessibility.

### **Local Politicians Views**

All of the local politicians indicated support for a mixed funding model including taxpayer support. One stated simply that the municipality should support Kicking Horse Culture because it helps build community. Other sources of funding mentioned included foundations and trusts, business and corporations and own source revenue. One of the local politicians suggested the following as potential sources of funding for specific projects: Columbia Basin Trust – Community Development and Community Initiatives programs, Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust and Grants in Aid, Economic Opportunity Funds, Vancouver Foundation, and gaming. Two individuals expressed

concern that benefits provided by Kicking Horse Culture are difficult to quantify. They alluded to the unknown economic spin offs and the lack of research regarding revenue distributed through Kicking Horse Culture.

## Opportunities for Improvement

Not surprisingly there was some consistency between the areas identified as being the worst things about arts and culture in the Golden area and ways that Kicking Horse Culture could be strengthened. Frequently noted suggestions fell into four themes which are summarized below.

- Feature more local artists - Develop more opportunities to showcase and support the development of homegrown art/artists. Suggestions included the staging of amateur performances, hosting summer schools (e.g., in culinary arts, music etc.) in local venues (e.g. college), and encouraging Kicking Horse Resort residents to stage or contribute to events.
- Enhance communications and marketing – Continue to promote Kicking Horse Culture’s positive profile and develop a marketing strategy and marketing tools to target sectors (e.g., youth, seniors) and improve exposure. A large sign or marquee downtown and on the highway or at the mill to update residents and visitors on events was suggested several times. It was suggested by several interviewees that the physical appearance of Golden could be enhanced with more street art and cultural constructs. The mural on the AGOG building, the foot bridge over the Kicking Horse River, and the plaza and fountain area on 9<sup>th</sup> street were mentioned as a positive result of the heritage, arts and culture scene and a focal point for further downtown improvements.
- Connect and coordinate organizations - Link up with more agencies to coordinate volunteers and act as a bridging group that empowers community arts. This was seen as a positive way to combine skills and support with other groups, instead of fragmented organizational approaches. An obvious benefit underlying this concept is increased efficiency. That said it should be recognized that this is no easy task as heritage, arts and cultural groups are often strongly independent.

- Expand venues/programs – Suggestions included developing tourism and reaching out to other segments of the community; leading a cultural tourism plan with further research into the potential for revenue growth in the Golden area; thinking bigger - larger venues, main events, advertising widely to attract visitors to signature/flagship events; growing a niche business in arts and culture education, or special events; increasing programming for youth; reaching out to those who do not purchase memberships or do not typically participate e.g., ‘Tastes of Golden’ culinary evenings; offering more free events; encouraging dinner and show packages; and “Bring back ‘Summer Kicks!’”
- Build a solid foundation – Continue to build Kicking Horse Culture slowly and surely. Focus on grass roots local culture, i.e., as one person said *focus on what makes Golden “Golden” –like the Swiss guides, the fall fair, the great book on Golden memories*. Develop a diverse board that is more representative of the community. Continue to update and use the findings and recommendations of the 2006 Cultural Scan to set direction and priorities. Ensure the budget is transparent, e.g., separate the gallery budget from the gift shop budget. Use local sourcing when possible, e.g. services for printing, advertising and other expenses.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The premise underlying this study is that community leaders and local politicians should know the benefits that Kicking Horse Culture provides to the people of Golden and the surrounding area. The Outspan Group study indicated that Kicking Horse Culture makes a significant contribution to the local and provincial GDP. However, most people don't really connect with GDP. This survey was about what people, who know and care about their community, believe Kicking Horse Culture contributes to their community. The conclusions that follow are based on what we heard in interviews and what we learned about the community and Kicking Horse Culture through the process.

### **What Value Does Kicking Horse Culture Provide to the Community?**

We were impressed by how thoughtful, engaged and accommodating those that we interviewed were. To place the ratings provided in this study in context we asked a number of knowledgeable people to rate the Community Arts Council in our own community based on the questions that we had asked Golden residents about Kicking Horse Culture. The ratings from Golden dwarfed those that we received for our own Arts Council. To get another perspective we also asked the Executive Director of the BC Arts Council where he felt Kicking Horse Culture would rate comparatively based on our criteria. He was not surprised by Kicking Horse Culture's scores noting that he thought it would score significantly higher on those criteria than most other community arts councils in the province.

The results of these interviews indicate that Kicking Horse Culture makes a significant contribution to the social and economic well-being of the Golden area in a number of important ways. From a social perspective, the arts and culture programs and activities that Kicking Horse Culture provides make Golden a more enjoyable place to live. They gather people together. They promote community pride. Social engagement and cultural awareness are increased. Furthermore, on average, people believe that Kicking Horse Culture makes a high contribution to helping people learn and from what we heard, it is

clear that children in the Golden area are exposed to positive experiences that they wouldn't normally be exposed to in many other communities of a similar size.

Kicking Horse Culture's arts and culture programs and activities are generally felt to contribute to attracting and retaining professionals to the community. On average the individuals identified as professionals were likely to indicate this more strongly than the other interviewees. The impact on a community of not being able to attract top flight professionals or having your professionals lured away to more attractive communities can not be overstated. In this day and age professionals call the shots on where they will practice and raise families. Communities that offer sub-standard social and recreational amenities/experiences will find it increasingly difficult to attract and retain professionals. That in turn can have negative impacts on attracting and retaining businesses, other residents and a high calibre workforce.

We were somewhat surprised that the average score for 'help retain revenue in the community' was so high. Several people noted that because of the quality of Kicking Horse Culture entertainment they weren't as likely to go to Banff or Calgary for entertainment. Instead they stayed in the Golden area and saved money that would be spent and re-spent locally. The benefit of revenue retention is difficult to quantify without detailed information and we have no real means for making an estimate. Instead for illustrative purposes to indicate what it could mean we provide the following example. Imagine that, in total, in a given year because there was lots of relatively high caliber arts and cultural activities to pursue in Golden, residents did not make 500 out-of-town trips. If we further assume that average total spending per forgone trip for fuel, food and beverage, lodging, entertainment, shopping, etc. would have totaled \$300 per trip, then those trips would have resulted in \$150,000 leaking out of Golden and stimulating another community's economy.

On the other hand we were somewhat surprised that the average ranking regarding attracting revenue was not higher since Kicking Horse Culture leverages significant funding from outside the community. We were impressed to learn that the Kicking Horse Culture is the sixth largest community arts council budget in the province which is testament to both the community's contribution and Kicking Horse Culture's ability to leverage. There is significant value added here. Tourism revenue related to having more cultural amenities may also contribute to local revenue. Again, this is hard to place an actual value on but over time the value could become quite significant.

Local government currently invests \$80,000 in Kicking Horse Culture which in turn leverages that money at a 4:1 ratio and supports a vibrant arts and culture scene in the Golden area. The population of the area is roughly 8000. Given all of the benefits, an average of \$10 per capita for Kicking Horse Culture's contributions to the community seems like a real bargain. We suspect that if there was no Kicking Horse Culture the negative impact on revenues to local businesses and the social costs to the community would exceed much more than \$10 per capita.

Related to this is the fact that Kicking Horse Culture contributes significantly to maintaining and enhancing the civic centre assets. We were told and subsequently confirmed that because it is eligible to receive Columbia Basin Trust funding that local government is ineligible for, Kicking Horse Culture can access Trust funding to support capital upgrades of the centre.

Kicking Horse Culture is believed to contribute to avoidance of costs related to crime or illness. Unfortunately this is particularly difficult to put a value on.

We feel that even if it were only remotely likely that Kicking Horse Culture activities and programs help to create a community that can successfully compete to attract and retain professionals, then that alone is worth \$10 per capita to Golden's area residents. The benefit to a community of attracting and retaining professionals is difficult to quantify but - like having fun, being proud of your community, sharing enjoyment with your neighbours, and feeling that your kids have opportunities to be exposed to positive experiences, - we feel that having peace of mind that your doctors, nurses, lawyers, accountants, your kid's teachers or whoever enjoy their community and aren't pre-occupied with relocating to a better town is worth a lot more than \$10 per capita per year.

There are a number of suggestions for how Kicking Horse Culture could be even better but it is generally agreed amongst a number of residents including local politicians that Kicking Horse Culture is a significant asset to the community.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of this study we recommend the following for strengthening the organization and arts and culture in the Golden area.

1. **Local artists** - *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture assess the demand among various levels of local artists for increased exposure and examine a variety of approaches for addressing that demand within the community.*
  
2. **Information about audiences** - *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture seek funding from the local tourism organization to conduct a market study to determine where its audiences/customers are from, what motivates them, their spending habits etc.*
  
3. **More for youth** – Although it was clearly recognized that Kicking Horse Culture contributes significant benefits to youth, a number of people felt that there should be even more. *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture continue its support of initiatives and programming for youth and look for additional opportunities for youth to experience arts and culture in the local area.*
  
4. **More summer entertainment** – There is clearly a desire in the community for more summer entertainment. *We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture work with the local Tourism Association, local government and possible sponsors to develop a plan for enhancing summer entertainment in the area.*
  
5. **Cooperation and collaboration**
  - a. A number of people identified a need for more collaboration amongst arts and culture groups in the community. This is often a difficult issue with community groups because some can be fiercely independent and

significant energy may be invested to coordinate groups with little return on the time invested. We also recognize that the benefits of enhanced cooperation and collaboration can be great. Therefore ***we recommend that Kicking Horse Culture explore ways to engage local groups across the arts and cultural sector with the goal of enhancing communication, cooperation and collaboration among them.***

- b. Several people raised concerns about the potential for unfair competition between Kicking Horse Culture initiatives particularly the gallery and local businesses. We discussed this issue with three business owners and the impact was generally described as being neutral. Those individuals however, were interested in considering cooperative opportunities/ideas that would result in business enhancement. ***We recommend that Kicking Horse Culture meet with other businesses to identify cooperative or collaborative approaches to support them.***

- 6. ***Board renewal, succession planning and transparency*** – A few people suggested that the Board should be more representative of the community. For many non-profit organizations board renewal is an ongoing challenge. Ensuring a broadly representative Board with the skills and energy to support the organization is critical to its success. Similarly, well qualified committed staff are essential. Throughout the study we heard that the current executive director has made a major contribution to Golden’s arts and culture scene. Although only two people that we spoke with mentioned succession, we feel that it is important to pay attention to succession. A few people also expressed concern about the transparency of Kicking Horse Culture’s budget.

We are not familiar with Kicking Horse Culture’s Board but ***we recommend that the organization carefully consider the issue of representativeness the next time Board membership is up for renewal. We understand that the executive director is currently mentoring a potential successor and we encourage him to continue to do so. The organization should also ensure transparency regarding its budget and take steps to ensure that people know that it is being transparent.***

- 7. Tourism/cultural tourism** – Cultural or place-based tourism is based on a community or region’s special character or story. It draws upon heritage, culture, the arts, recreation, people, traditions etc. People who are drawn to a location for outdoor and resort tourism also represent a significant community cultural tourism market and can contribute significant benefits for local businesses and the community. We feel that Kicking Horse Culture could contribute significantly to a more culturally infused community tourism plan. ***We recommend that local government seek funding to enhance the current tourism plan with more cultural content that will benefit both local residents and tourists. Planning should include development of a major (provincial, building towards international) cultural event that can be hosted by the community.***
- 8. Ongoing activities and funding** –We congratulate the community of Golden and surrounding area and Kicking Horse Culture on the incredible arts and culture and community building successes that have been achieved to date. We have heard and believe that the Golden area represents a fantastic model for other communities to emulate. ***We recommend that local government continue it’s funding of Kicking Horse Culture and that Kicking Horse Culture continues to build from the substantial base that it has established.***

## **ATTACHMENT 1: List of Individuals Interviewed**

### **Community Leaders**

Richard Campeau

Karen Cathcart

Mike and Mandy Cantle

Janet Crandall

Michael Dalzell

Joyce de Boer

Jane Doel

Glen Ewan

Lynn Heaton

Jackie Jackson

Louise Jackson

Miro Micovsky

Rob Miller

Steve Paccagnan

Colleen Palumbo

Doug Parkinson

Ken Piggott

Randy Priest

Ian Robinson

Rhonda Smith

Phil Taylor

Jon Wilsgard

**Local Politicians**

Jamie Fitzgerald

Chris Hambruch

Kuljit Jaswal

Mike Magnusson

Caleb Moss

Ron Oszust

Mike Pecora

Aman Virk

**BC Arts Council**

Jeremy Long

**Columbia Basin Trust**

Lynda Lafleur

## ATTACHMENT 2: GAI Project Interview Questions

1. Could you briefly tell me what your involvement with culture and the arts in the Golden area has been?
2. I wonder if you could tell me what best describes the arts and culture scene overall in the Golden area for you. Let's say on a one to 5 scale where 1 is we need a lot more arts and culture and 5 is there is too much arts and culture. So for example 3 would be just about right. (1 2 3 4 5)  
Record comments as well.

Note: Due to inconsistent interpretations of this question quantitative results are not reported in the findings.

3. How about social benefits; what social benefits do you feel that arts and culture provide for the community?
4. What do you feel the most important economic benefits arts and culture provide to the Golden area?
5. What do you feel are the 2 or 3 best things and 2 or 3 worst things about arts and culture in Golden?
6. I asked you a couple of open ended question about benefits or the importance of arts and culture to the community earlier because we wanted to get your top of mind

answers. If it's alright I'd like to go through a list of benefits that experts attribute to the arts and culture and I'd like you to tell me the extent to which you think Kicking Horse Culture contributes to them for the community through its initiatives and the programs it supports. Let's use a 1-5 scale where 1 is Kicking Horse Culture contributes very little or nothing and 5 is -it makes a major contribution.

Let's start with some personal and social benefits

So –Kicking Horse Culture's initiatives and programs

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| a. Make Golden a fun place to live                                   |           |
| So very little or no contribution is 1 and a major contribution is 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. Help children learn   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Help to attract professionals to the community                    | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Help to retain professionals in the community                     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Contribute to our community's identity and pride                  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. Increase tolerance in the community                               | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. Help create a physically attractive community                     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| h. Increase citizen engagement                                       | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| i. Increase youth engagement   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Now I'd like to get your opinion on some socio-economic benefits.

Kickinghorse Culture's initiatives and programs

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| j. Help attract creative, educated people and businesses  |           |
| So no contribution is 1 and a major contribution is 5   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| k. Bring significant revenues to the community  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| l. Keep significant revenues in the community (does it help keep money in the community that might otherwise leak out?) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| m. Help expand the economy  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| n. Help create a critical mass of things to do for tourists   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| o. Create employment  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| p. Help reduce crime and associated costs   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| q. Help reduce illnesses and associated costs   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Are there any other benefits that you can think of that Kicking Horse Culture supports?

7. When we talk about benefits we often become fixated on the status quo or what we already have. I'd like to turn that around a little bit and ask you - What if there were no Kicking Horse Culture agency? What do you think the impacts on the Golden community would be?
  
8. What about doing things better? Are there 2 or 3 things that you'd change about what Kicking Horse Culture does or the way it does things?
  
9. My second last question is how do you think arts and culture activities should be funded in this community?
  
10. Finally are there any comments you'd like to make?