

Culture-led regeneration in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods

Weston- Mt. Dennis pilot study



1. Culture-led regeneration in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods: Weston-Mt. Dennis pilot study

We propose undertaking a study to develop a culture-led regeneration strategy and action-plan for the Weston-Mt. Dennis neighbourhood and to use this study process as a pilot to inform future strategy development across Toronto's other priority neighbourhoods.

The study process will create the opportunity to:

- understand what already exists in the Weston St Dennis neighbourhood
- how best to leverage the neighbourhoods unique cultural resources and assets
- identify unrealized potential and opportunities for action in the neighbourhood which serve local priorities
- to build a shared vision for the way in which the arts and culture can deliver on a quadruple bottom line :

A diverse, dynamic cultural environment

A richer, inclusive social fabric

A stronger local economy

A cleaner, greener environment

This project offers an exceptional opportunity to understand and identify the very real potential of the arts and culture to

make a significant contribution to the regeneration of priority neighbourhood communities.

1.1 The Study process in summary

The study process will lead to two overarching outcomes:

An actionable strategy and action-plan to support culture-led regeneration in the Weston-Mt. Dennis neighbourhood focusing on the partnership, services, facilities and programs that meet the needs and aspirations of that neighbourhood's diverse and underserved

The study process will allow us to identify and map the full range of existing cultural assets and resources in the Weston-Mt. Dennis neighbourhood, including:

- Community cultural groups and organizations
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Physical places and spaces
- Arts and cultural programs and activity
- Services and resources
- Creative and cultural businesses and employment
- Partnerships

The Study will consider how to leverage these existing assets and resources to build new partnerships and new opportunities to support arts and cultural activity, facilities and resources which make a contribution to the social, physical and / or economic regeneration of the neighbourhood and which reflect

neighbourhood priorities. This potentially includes some or all of:

- Physical arts and cultural infrastructure
- Arts and cultural education,
- Arts, cultural and creative industries skills, training and employment programs
- Design in the public realm and public art programs
- Virtual infrastructure
- Services and support
- Arts and cultural programming and activities

For the purposes of this study culture will be understood taken to include the full range of performing and visual arts practices, heritage, festivals, events, cultural spaces and facilities, the cultural and creative industries.

1.2 Our Approach

Our process is founded on collaboration, engagement, and consensus building. We will develop and then work closely with both a Steering Group and Local Advisory Group throughout the project and will engage key stakeholders from the beginning of the process in order to build consensus for the project.

Artscape will ensure that its approach to community engagement and communications focuses on expanding the circle of supporters and generating momentum for the project.

Our methodology is focused on:

- Effective, accessible and sensitive communication and engagement with key stakeholders in the community including potential individual users and community based cultural organizations, key organizational partners and potential programming partners.
- Consensus building by identifying and articulating shared values and describing areas of potential consensus.
- Managing expectations through meaningful processes that invite participants to problem-solve with the team, thereby becoming invested in strategies, approaches and solutions.

Artscape will wish to work with the Steering Group and Local Advisory Group to ensure that project communication, consultation and engagement processes are sensitive and accessible and sensitive in terms of language, timing and location.

Artscape is proposing to work with local arts and cultural organizations and other key agencies in the neighbourhood to identify an organization and / or individual to join our study team as Research Assistant and Community engagement Co-coordinator. The study process will benefit from having local, on the ground expertise and contacts from the start and we would hope that the opportunity to work with our team on this project would also offer a capacity building and leadership development opportunity to local organizations.

1.3 Culture-led regeneration

Over the past 20 years or more in Canada, Europe and America the role that arts and culture can play in the social, economic and environmental regeneration of communities has been firmly established and the multiple individual and collective benefits

that the arts and culture bring to community revitalization and to the development of socially inclusive, sustainable and healthy communities well documented.

Supporting community well-being and social inclusion

The arts and culture play a significant role in supporting community well-being; in engaging community activism, volunteerism and leadership; in building capacity and resilience. The arts and culture play a central role in celebrating and promoting understanding of and between diverse cultures, histories, traditions and communities. The opportunity to celebrate and share community cultural events and activities is an important tool for bridging social and economic difference through shared cultural engagement. There is a growing body of international policy which addresses the role of the arts in combating social exclusion experienced as a result of aging, poverty or lack of opportunity.

Transforming the lives of individuals

The arts and culture play a transformative role in the lives of individuals, building confidence, skills and social capital and often transforming the life chances of participants. Participation in arts and cultural activity can make a significant impact on educational attainment and learning targets. There is a growing body of research and practice that identifies the role of arts participation and opportunity in supporting at risk youth and intergenerational exchange. Similarly a growing body of practice, policy and research supports the therapeutic benefits the arts can bring to healthcare.

Transforming economies

The arts and culture have a central role to play in the development of economically sustainable and healthy communities. The arts and culture are increasingly understood to have a central role to play in the development of economically sustainable cities and

investment in arts and cultural facilities, participation in arts and cultural activities and training and skills development has been employed strategically across the US, Europe and the UK as a key tool in the regeneration of physically declining and socially and economically deprived communities. To succeed in a transforming global economy, creative and knowledge based skills are essential and in Toronto one of the fastest growing employment sectors is the cultural and creative industries.

Transforming places

Arts and cultural facilities, arts and cultural events, celebrations and festivals and the quality of design in the public realm all play a critical role in bringing places back to life, creating vibrant, distinct and authentic places where people want to live, work and play. They contribute to environmental sustainability and are a central piece of the evening economy, bringing life, economic activity and a sense of safety to places once deserted after dark.

3. Work program

1.0 PHASE I: GOVERNANCE AND INITIATION

1.1 Project Governance

To ensure that the project benefits from the advice and engagement of key City- wide and local agencies and individuals with a stake in the role of culture in the revitalization of priority neighbourhoods a two-fold approach to project governance is proposed as follows:

Project Steering Group

- Offer strategic advice and guidance
- Ensures specific and unique needs and opportunities identified and addressed

Proposed membership to include: City of Toronto, United Way, Toronto Arts Council, representatives of the Employment Study Committee and representatives of key local cultural organizations.

Local Advisory Group

- To build local ownership
- To advise on and support local engagement
- To support local cultural assets/resources identification
- To advise on key issues, challenges and opportunities in the development of a culture- led regeneration strategy for the Weston- Mt. Dennis area.

Proposed membership will include representatives of key local arts and cultural, training and educational and youth organizations; representatives of local business organizations including the BIA, and local service agencies / organizations.

Identification of Steering and Local Advisory Group Members

In order to build the Steering and Advisory Groups and the start the process of building understanding and support for the project our first step will be to undertake a series of up to 10 interviews with key city- wide and local individuals and organizations to:

- Ensure that key individuals are engaged in the process from the outset and are built into project governance
- Further refine and frame the study approach
- Start to identify local assets and opportunities

1.2 Steering Group and Local Advisory Group Meetings #1

Steering group

The objective of the initial meeting with the Steering Group will be to clarify the project objectives, confirm the study scope, deliverables and timelines. Artscape will present a more detailed draft of the task breakdowns for discussion and refinement.

If not provided already, the Steering Group will supply a project bibliography and digital access to relevant documents and studies. This meeting will also be an opportunity to identify relevant stakeholders to interview (city- wide and local) and Key meeting dates, engagement processes and public consultation initiatives will be confirmed

Local Advisory Group

The objective of the first meeting of the Local Advisory Group will be to introduce the scope and potential of the study and to discuss particular issues, opportunities and challenges in the

local community. Key meeting dates, engagement processes and public consultation initiatives and the likely scope of invitations to public consultations and to user group discussions will be confirmed.

This will be an important opportunity for the Advisory group to identify key individuals and organizations in the community to be interviewed or otherwise engaged in the process.

2.0 PHASE II: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

2.1 Documentation & Best Practice Review

Artscape will undertake a comprehensive review of existing documentation that pertains to this initiative and its wider context. In addition Artscape will review a range of examples of successful examples of culture-led regeneration strategies – both in Canada and internationally, with a view to extending understanding of best practice in this field.

2.2 Baseline data collection

Artscape will gather key baseline data in order start to identify the full range of existing cultural assets in the Weston-Mt. Dennis neighbourhood, including:

- Community cultural groups and organizations
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Arts and Cultural places and spaces
- Arts and cultural programs and activity
- Education, training and employment programs
- Services and resources

- Creative and cultural businesses and employment
- Partnerships

Data Sources will include (and not be limited to):

- Toronto Arts Council
- Weston Mt Dennis BIA
- City of Toronto EDCT
- Statistics Canada (Census/ Community profiles)
- Info Canada (Business directories)
- Local / community media sources
- Local stakeholder organizations
- Review of documentation provided

Costs associated with data purchase are indicated in the attached budget.

In addition a Research Assistant and Engagement Co-ordinator will spend time in the neighbourhood undertaking on-the ground research.

Community profile and Mapping

A community profile will be compiled which will set out a baseline profile of the neighbourhood's arts and cultural assets including mapping of key data. This will include mapping available economic and business data i.e Creative and Cultural industry establishments by location and sector.

Contact database

A contact database for the project will also be established and will be updated throughout the study process..

2.3 Key Stakeholder Interviews

Artscape will undertake up to 15 interviews with additional key stakeholders identified by the Steering and Local Advisory groups. This will include both key stakeholders in local arts, cultural,

business, educational and services organizations and additional interviews with key stakeholders in organizations and agencies with a strategic involvement in addressing priority neighbourhood needs across the City of Toronto.

Interviews will focus on:

- Identifying key issues, challenges and opportunities for the arts and culture to contribute to neighbourhood regeneration
- Identifying specific opportunities within the neighbourhood
- Identifying potential partners and / or resources and / or tools needed or available

2.4 Steering Group Meeting and Local Advisory Group Meetings #2

Artscape will report back on findings of the first two phases of work in Power Point format to the Steering and Advisory groups.

Final proposals for community engagement will be confirmed and agreed.

Phase 1 & Phase 2 Deliverables

Up to 25 one on one interviews with key local and strategic stakeholders

Build Project Steering Group

Build Local Advisory group

Undertake Documentation and Best Practice Review

Establish baseline data and provide Community Profile

3.0 PHASE III: UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Prepare & Facilitate Local Focus Groups

Artscape will prepare and facilitate up to five focus groups of up to 20 individuals each to identify key issues, opportunities and priorities for culture to support regeneration objectives in the neighbourhood. Invitations to join focus groups will seek to ensure a balance between service providers and users and between local not for profit, local business and public sector agencies and their stakeholders.

Final decisions on the themes of focus groups will be made in consultation with the Steering and Advisory groups but possible themes will include:

- Cultural spaces and resources
- Education, Skills and Employment
- Social inclusion and community Safety
- Young people
- The public realm

Artscape will seek to ensure that both communication about and the format of these two focus groups are accessible and encourage participation. Artscape will generate written summaries of Focus Group discussions.

3.3 Community Visioning Event

We will plan and facilitate a public consultation workshop to engage members of the local community directly in the study.

Engaging Local Arts and Cultural Groups in Visioning Event

We will aim to work with local arts and cultural organizations in the neighbourhood to develop and deliver an engaging, arts infused and relevant event which stimulates positive discussion; focuses on opportunities and contributes towards a long term vision for culture- led regeneration in the neighbourhood.

Commissioning Contributions to Visioning Event

Subject to confirmation of available budget we would like to be able to offer up to 3 small commissions to local arts and cultural organizations to enable them to prepare for and attend the event. This might include for example commissioning a video, music or dance piece specifically to contribute to the visioning event.

A written summary of the outcomes of the workshop will be provided to the Steering Group.

3.4 Interim Findings Summary Report #1

Artscape will provide a written summary of the research and findings to date and will set out the key themes and issues that have emerged.

3.5 Steering Group Meeting and Advisory Group Meeting #3

These meetings will review progress to date and will focus on giving direction on priority setting and recommendations as the study moves to its final phase.

Phase 3 Deliverables

Up to 5 themed focus groups attended by up to 100 individuals

1 community visioning event attended by up to 100 individuals

4.0 PHASE 4

4.1 Additional Interviews and Follow Up

As necessary we will undertake additional and / or follow up telephone interviews to seek clarification or further information on specific opportunities, projects or programs identified through the engagement process.

4.2 Draft Report and Action Plan

Artscape will develop a draft Culture- led Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan for the Weston-Mt. Dennis Neighbourhood. The plan will:

- identify exiting cultural assets and resources in the community
- set out the potential contribution that culture can make to the regeneration of this community
- Identify specific opportunities for the arts and culture in the neighbourhood
- establish priorities for investment and development which have emerged from the study
- Set out the partnerships, resources and tools required to take the strategy forward over a 5 year time line.

4.2 Steering and Local Advisory Group Meetings # 4

The meetings will review the draft plan and contribute to the development of the Community open House and City Wide Project Review.

4.3 Final report

A consolidated final report will be prepared and submitted to the Steering Group and to the Local Advisory group.

4.4 City-Wide Project Review

Artscape will prepare and facilitate a half day capacity building workshop for key partners from the non-profit sector across Toronto who are actively engaged with Priority Neighbourhood

initiatives, to explore how the methodology used and proposed initiatives from this study might be applied elsewhere in the City's priority neighbourhoods.

4.5 Community Open House

In order to close the feedback loop on the engagement process Artscape will plan and facilitate a Community Open House to communicate the outcomes of the study process as it relates directly to the Weston- Mt. Dennis neighbourhood.

Phase 4 Deliverables

Additional telephone and Follow up interviews as required

Draft Strategy and Action Plan for Review

1 x Steering and Advisory Group meetings

Summary of Project Deliverables

Creation of project governance

Up to 25 one on one interviews with key local and strategic stakeholders plus additional follow up interviews as necessary

Documentation and Best Practice Review

Community Profile and Mapping report

Up to 5 themed focus groups attended by up to 100 individuals

1 community visioning event attended by up to 100 individuals

Up to three commissions to local arts and cultural groups to contribute to Visioning

5. Artscape profile and relevant experience

Artscape Inc. is a not-for-profit, urban development organization that has been engaging the cultural and creative sector in sustainable city-building since 1986. Artscape's work focuses on connecting people, places and ideas to cultivate vibrant, creative communities that generate cultural, economic, environmental and social dividends. To this end, Artscape's development approach recognizes the complexity of cities by actively seeking opportunities for cross-sector collaboration and broad-based community partnerships.

As Canada's leading practitioner in multi-tenant space development for the creative and cultural sector, Artscape has over 20 years of experience in developing unique facilities that deliver sustainable and affordable production, rehearsal, exhibition, and living space for creative practitioners, entrepreneurs and organizations. Artscape has transformed a portfolio of underutilized buildings across Toronto into dynamic community assets that serve to enable innovation and creativity. The organization's success is driven by their capability to work effectively across disciplines to align values, leadership, investment and policy.

Artscape believes that the arts and culture can transform the lives of individuals and communities. Artscape projects are designed to build and leverage the local community's cultural assets and creative resources while serving as catalysts for neighborhood growth and transformation. Our efforts have earned us a reputation as an international leader in the fields of culture-led regeneration and city-building through the arts and our commitment to this practice is enshrined in our Strategic Plan and in our Vision and Mission statement, as follows:

Vision: Artscape is committed to building a world that engages art, culture and creativity as catalysts for community transformation, sustainability, prosperity and livability.

Mission: Artscape unlocks the creative potential of people and places to build vibrant, resilient and inclusive communities.

6. Core study team qualifications

Tim Jones is the president and CEO of Artscape

Tim has worked as a developer, grants officer, theatre and festival producer, capacity building specialist, consultant, activist, CEO, and board president. As CEO of Artscape, Tim has played a lead role in numerous capital projects in the arts ranging from: multi-tenant centres, retreat and conference facilities, performance venues, heritage districts, and neighbourhood revitalization strategies. In this capacity, he has managed and coordinated numerous teams of consultants on design and construction projects.

Pru Robey is Acting Director, Special Projects at Artscape and will be the project lead and main client contact during this study process.

Pru has over 20 years experience as a manager, promoter, funder and consultant in the arts, culture and creative industries in the United Kingdom and Canada. Pru has advised arts and cultural organizations and agencies; all tiers of government; higher education, economic development and urban regeneration agencies on policy and strategic development for the arts, culture and creative industries.

Karol Murillo is the Research Planner at Artscape and will provide data analysis, research and consultation support to the study.

Karol has worked as a researcher and project coordinator in various economic and community development initiatives throughout Toronto, focusing on sector engagement processes, economic research, and business development in various urban contexts.

Full Biographies of our core team available on request.

Project Research Assistant and Community Engagement coordinator

Artscape is proposing to work with local arts and cultural organizations and other key agencies in the neighbourhood to identify an organization and / or individual to join our study team as Research Assistant and Community engagement Co-coordinator. The study process will benefit from having local, on the ground expertise and contacts from the start and we would

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