TORONTO

STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED

"Making Space for Culture" Final Report: Creative Capital Gains (Implementation Action # 10)

Date:	May 2, 2014
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the "Making Space for Culture" project and make summary documents available. The project was undertaken to address one of the key recommendations of the Creative Capital Gains report: "that the City ensure a supply of affordable, sustainable, cultural space."

All 44 Wards were mapped and consulted through public meetings and an online survey. Existing community cultural infrastructure was mapped and verified to provide baseline data to prioritize and guide decision-making around future investment in cultural infrastructure. Phase One of the project, which comprised 20 Wards, was completed in the spring of 2013 and summarized in a report to City Council in December of 2013. Phase Two of the project, comprising 24 of 44 Wards was completed recently. The updated data is available online.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1.   The "Making Space for Culture" summary for each Ward be shared with that Ward Councillor as a separate document.

2.   Council direct the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture to work with stakeholders to develop action plans to address key issues identified in the report and report back to Council in late 2015.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications arising from these recommendations.

DECISION HISTORY

In May of 2011, City Council unanimously endorsed "Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto" which included as a key recommendation that the City "ensure a supply of affordable, sustainable cultural space."
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.ED3.3

In December 2013, Cultural Services submitted a report on Phase One of the "Making Space for Culture" project.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.ED27.3

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Ensuring a supply of affordable, sustainable cultural space for all citizens of Toronto is a key policy objective of the City. In the past decade, investment in the development of cultural infrastructure in the city has been concentrated in downtown Toronto where many of the established cultural institutions and most of the cultural industries are located. Previous mapping of cultural facilities inventory concentrated on the professional arts and culture sector.

"Making Space for Culture" was a research and planning project to map and understand the inventory of space for community cultural use, including spaces that are not exclusively used for cultural activities. The definitions of cultural space were deliberately wide in order to capture information about where activity is already happening and where there might be opportunity to increase access to spaces with existing inventory.

The project addressed three actions recommended in Creative Capital Gains Report:

      a)   Action 1.3: Direct Cultural Services to work with other agencies (Libraries, Parks, Forestry and Creation, the Toronto District School Board, etc.) and Toronto's City-owned museums to create an inventory of spaces across the city and promote the use of these existing spaces for community cultural use;

      b)   Action 1.5: Provide City Councillors with a ward-by-ward community cultural infrastructure priority list to guide their Section 37 funding allocations. This will require updating the cultural spaces inventory and collaborating with City Planning.

c) Action 6.6: Expand awareness and understanding about existing City financing tools (Section 37, TIEGS, etc.) to the cultural community.

Cultural development in Toronto depends on three necessary conditions: programming resources, affordable and sustainable space, and public demand. To have a solid understanding of cultural participation and current needs at the neighbourhood level, meetings were held in each Ward and maps were created for each Ward. Cultural Services is aware that there are existing spaces in communities which have potential for community cultural use, perhaps aided by small capital investments or changes in policy regarding use.

COMMENTS

In 2012, a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of Economic Development and Culture; Toronto Public Libraries; Parks, Forestry & Recreation; City Planning; and the Toronto Arts Council was convened to oversee Phase One the project. The City applied for and received a provincial grant of $73,100 from the Creative Communities Prosperity Fund from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, towards Phase One and an RFP for a consultant was issued. Lord Cultural Resources was the successful proponent and designed a process with staff and the Steering Committee.

Phase One of the project began in January 2012 with the updates to the existing cultural facilities database, and a review of mapping undertaken in 2006 as part of the "From the Ground Up" report: http://www1.toronto.ca/static_files/economic_development_and_culture/docs/Sectors_Reports/groundup.pdf on a Cultural Location Index for the city. The project, "Making Space for Culture" sought information from every part of the city and with varying levels of cultural activity. Following the completion of Phase One of the project, staff completed Phase Two of the project, developing 24 more maps and holding 24 more meetings following the model that was developed for Phase One. Twelve public consultations were held in the Spring of 2013 and another twelve were held in the Fall of 2013. All 44 Ward summaries are included in the attached report.

Along with the meetings in each of the 44 Wards, an online survey was made available for the duration of the project. There were a total of 439 responses and this input was taking into consideration in creating the Ward summary documents. The comments from the public were extremely varied with a few people quite satisfied with the amount and variety of cultural space, but many other calls for more affordable space, public art, and performance spaces.

Cultural space for the purposes of this project was defined using the following categories: Performance; Exhibition and Visual Arts; Screen-based; Library; Multipurpose, and Heritage. These categories are based on the federal government's statistical frameworks for culture and used by federal cultural infrastructure funding programs.

Performance space is space in which performing arts (dance, theatre, music, etc.) creation or presentation takes place. It includes, but is not limited to: dance studios, recording studios, rehearsal spaces, theatres, music halls, live music spaces, public squares, restaurants or bars with stages or performance spaces, churches, bandshells, amphitheatres, and multipurpose spaces with specific accommodation for performance (ie. Audience seating, lighting and sound equipment).

Exhibition/Visual Arts space is space in which visual arts creation or presentation can take place, in addition to pure exhibition space. It includes art galleries; museums; visual artist studios; photography studios; and regular exhibition space in private business such as cafes.

Screen Based space is space for the production and presentation of multimedia screen-based arts including digital, photography, and film. These include film studios, movie theatres, digital media labs (eg. ProTech Media Centres); and production and post-production facilities.

Library space is a Toronto Public Library branch with physical space for cultural activity.

Multipurpose space is space that is not purpose-built and can house a range of cultural activity across disciplines. These spaces include but are not limited to: parks, community centres, recreation centres, public squares, religious institutions, and schools. Because of the large number of facilities this could include, our project limited the inclusion of these spaces to those with some previous history of cultural activity and which was available to the public for use.

Heritage space is space used for heritage activity such as city museums, community museums, and archives. It should not be confused with buildings with heritage designations.

The complete data set with the list of cultural spaces per Ward is available on the City of Toronto Open Data website which allows the public to download, manipulate and create applications. Having this data available online increases transparency, accessibility and accountability. The data is available for download in Excel, MTM3 and WGS84 formats. http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=4f6bdda2f1405410VgnVCM1 0000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=1a66e03bb8d1e310VgnVCM10000071d60f89R CRD.

The data is also available on Wellbeing Toronto. Wellbeing Toronto is a map-based visualization tool that helps evaluate community wellbeing across Toronto's neighbourhoods. www.map.toronto.ca/wellbeing/. No data set of this kind will be completely comprehensive and up to date as the city is constantly changing, but it provides a useful overall view of the types of spaces available at the local level and the sites for potential investment.

Across the city there were consistent issues and themes that came up repeatedly. The most common complaint expressed was that community members had nowhere to go to find out what was happening at the local level, and that small organizations had a difficult time reaching beyond their existing audiences or communities. This is not so much a space issue, but a marketing and communications issue. The establishment of two new City-supported Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs), North York Arts and East End Arts, are intended to help address such issues. The new LASOs were just getting off the ground as the Making Space for Culture meetings were taking place. In addition, having individuals and organizations across the city to join the Neighbourhood Arts Network and other local cultural social media and networking sites could partially address this communications gap. This was encouraged at every meeting.

Participants frequently voiced concerns about the rising costs to use Toronto District School Board school spaces for community purposes. Organizations that previously rehearsed and performed in schools were scrambling to find other spaces as the cost to use TDSB space was too expensive, making them inaccessible. Concerted effort to resolve that issue would have the greatest impact on the community and amateur arts sector. Many participants across the city voiced frustration with the permitting process to use public space (parks, streets, squares, etc.) for festivals and music performances. They felt that the timelines required were often restrictive and did not allow for more spontaneous community gatherings and celebrations (e.g. the sudden availability of a major foreign touring artist to do a public performance, or a community celebration of a local Olympic athlete who unexpectedly reaches the podium).

Toronto Public Libraries were enormously valued in neighbourhoods across the city, not only for their spaces, but also for the knowledge of the staff. However, some organizations found the hours of use restrictive and the centralized booking process incompatible with local community needs. This was voiced by both community members and branch library staff. The new partnership program with the Toronto Arts Council funding artists in residence at some library branches will be a useful pilot to see how artists, local communities and local library branches can better work together to maximize the assets of the libraries.

The "Making Space" project made many presentations to the community about Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act. We trust this has increased the sector's overall knowledge and understanding of Section 37 as a catalytic tool for cultural infrastructure development. The Section 37 document produced as part of this project was sent to City Planning for its overall review of Section 37.

Most importantly, the research and information gathered through this project has been and will continue to be used by other organizations invested in cultural infrastructure development. The data of "Making Space for Culture" has already informed Artscape's "Creative Spaces Outside the Core" initiative. This is a project to identify sites and partners for creative hubs outside downtown Toronto. "Making Space" data will also be employed in supporting a collaborative project between the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) and ArtsBuild Ontario to rollout a new software application

called SpacefinderToronto. This "free-for-users" application is intended to connect those who need space with those who have space to rent. It is targeted specifically at the cultural sector but TAPA and ArtsBuild are also working with BIAs and other community sector organizations to build a robust potential user base. Both projects build on the data gathered through "Making Space for Culture" to build capacity, increase accessibility, and create better conditions for a creative city.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: "Making Space for Culture" – Community Consultation Summaries for 44 Wards