



## Councillors Josh Matlow and Kristyn Wong-Tam



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Budget Chief & Budget Committee Members  
City Hall  
100 Queen St. West  
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Dear Budget Chief and Committee Members,

### **Re: Achieving the \$25 per capita arts and culture funding in the 2013 Operating Budget**

#### **Background:**

For ten years, various Toronto City Councils have periodically affirmed and re-affirmed our commitment to increase the per capita arts and culture funding to twenty-five dollars (\$25). Unfortunately, previous political commitments remain unfulfilled. The effects have been significant. The City of Toronto has now fallen drastically behind other major North American cities in its funding for the arts, with an investment of only \$18 per resident. Our major and direct competitors, including Chicago (\$26), Montreal (\$32), New York (\$74) and San Francisco (\$87) all invest significantly more in their cultural activities.

As recently as August 2010, City Council once again reaffirmed the importance of arts and culture with a commitment to increase the funding from \$18 to \$25 per capita in the 2013 budget by approving the *Strategies for Arts and Culture Funding* by a 40-1 vote.

Toronto's own Culture Plan already recognizes the importance that the arts play in building the strong economic and social environment necessary for Toronto to compete and prosper as a creative city in North America.

Large cultural amenities such as the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario along with vibrant galleries, live music venues, and local theatres help draw tourists from across the country and beyond into Toronto. Creating opportunities for residents to be active in the arts through a painting class, dance lesson or immersive participatory events like Nuit Blanche provides a recreational activity beyond sport but also fosters innovation, a shared sense of identity and social cohesion.

According to the University of Toronto's Martin Prosperity Institute, there are 83,000 people directly employed in the cultural sector, representing 6 per cent of our total workforce. Creative industries grew at a rate of 2.9 per cent between 1991 and 2009, exceeding growth in other key sectors such as financial services (2.4%), medical and biotechnology (1.7%), and the food and beverage industry (1.4%).

In November 2012, the Supreme Court decision to deny the sign industry any further appeal on the City's billboard tax will potentially raise an estimated \$10.4 million toward the \$17.5 million annual investment needed to reach the relatively modest \$25 per capita funding goal.

The business case is clear. The revenue source is available. We can delay no longer. Toronto's economic competitiveness must include the strategic fulfillment of our decade-long pledge to increase the per capita arts and culture investment to \$25.

**Recommendation:**

Budget Committee request that appropriate staff along with the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture produce a Briefing Note for the wrap-up budget meeting outlining the social and economic benefits of increasing to \$25 per capita funding for arts and culture.

Respectfully submitted,



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