

Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto Progress Report

Date:	September 28, 2012
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	All
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SUMMARY

This report seeks to provide City Council with an update on activities in the community arts sector since the adoption of the *Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* by Council in December of 2008.

The *Community Arts Action Plan* has served as an effective planning framework to help community arts organizations, artists and community partners to better work together to address the priorities identified in the Plan and achieve significant outcomes.

As the five year term of the *Community Arts Action Plan* comes to a close in 2012, the External Advisory Committee, comprising old and new members, reconvened to review outcomes of the Plan and to discuss future strategies for enhancing community arts development across Toronto. The Advisory Committee also developed recommendations to continue to strengthen the community arts sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. The Economic Development Committee receive the update on the *Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* for information; and
2. The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture report back in six (6) months with an updated *Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto*, building on the success of the 2008 to 2012 Action Plan and the directions set out in the report *Creative Capital Gains, 2011*.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting on December 1, 2008, adopted the *Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto*. (Appendix 1).

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-17315.pdf>

At its meeting February 8, 2010 the Economic Development Committee received an update from Cultural Services staff in consultation with an External Advisory Committee. (Appendix 2)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-26761.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Community members and stakeholders who attended the public consultations leading to the development of the *Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* identified four major areas to be addressed to meet community needs and to build the strength of the community arts sector over a 5-year time frame (2008-2012). The areas are:

- 1) enhancing funding for community arts
- 2) creating more accessible space for community arts across the city;
- 3) raising the profile of the community arts sector and
- 4) sharing resources

The *Community Arts Action Plan* provides a strategic roadmap for community members, arts organizations, artists, stakeholders and governments to join together to take targeted actions to address the gaps. As a result, significant progress has been made in each of the action areas.

COMMENTS

Community Arts Sector Key Accomplishments 2008-2012: (See Appendix 2 for details)

1. Enhancing funding for community arts

Although funding continues to be a challenge, there has been an increase in municipal grants as well as the development of alternative funding frameworks to support youth initiatives in underserved communities. Some examples are:

- a. Municipal grants for the community arts sector through the Toronto Arts Council Community Arts Grants and the Local Arts Service Organizations have grown from \$1,376,997 in 2008 to \$1,405,084 in 2011.
- b. Since 2008, ArtReach Toronto in partnership with Cultural Services and Toronto Community Housing Corporation and Manifesto, has facilitated the *Youth Arts Pitch Contest* which has provided over \$70,000 in start up funds and business

training and support for youth-led organizations and creative entrepreneurs from underserved communities.

- c. The *Micro Loan Program* (2010-2011) launched by UrbanArts and supported by Alterna Savings, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Community Foundation, Laidlaw Foundation, Renewed Computer Technology, and the City of Toronto, provided \$5,000 loans to 15 young arts entrepreneurs to help them start their own businesses.

2. Creating more accessible space for community arts across the city

To meet the growing needs of the sector, there has been an increase in space available for arts programming and organizations. In addition, alternative spaces have been used. Some examples are:

- a. The Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre with 60,000 square feet for arts studios, offices, performance, and Artscape YOUNGplace with over 75,000 sq. feet for cultural and community programming.
- b. *City on the Move: A Festival of Young Artists in Transit* (2010/2011) opened up performance space on TTC subways and buses for over 400 young urban artists.
- c. *Art on the Move*: an on-going inter-generational mobile arts project, created by Arts Etobicoke and Lakeshore Arts in 2009, wrapped 13 vehicles with art in collaboration with public and private owners and engaged hundreds of all-ages community members led by professional artists.
- d. The *Bridging Project and Festival*: an arts-intervention project started in 2010 by Scarborough Arts, Cultural Services and community and institutional partners on and under the Lawrence Avenue Bridge to connect residents from diverse communities in Kingston-Galloway Orton Park.

3. Raising the profile of the community arts sector

Arts organizations, artists and stakeholders identified the need to strengthen awareness of the innovative and successful programs happening in neighbourhoods across the city. A variety of projects have been carried out to serve the community and at the same time build awareness of the importance of the arts in community building. Some examples are:

- a. Producing large-scale, high profile programs and events to engage artists, communities and the public. Since 2006, *Manifesto Festival of Community & Culture*, an award-winning and critically-acclaimed festival culminating in a massive free outdoor concert at Dundas Square, has created a platform for collaboration and growth of new art forms. This annual festival attracts an average of over 46,000 residents and visitors.

- b. Creating new awards to acknowledge youth and community contributors. In 2008, the Toronto Arts Foundation created the *Arts for Youth Award*. Since 2011, the Neighbourhood Arts Network has been presenting the *ACE Awards* for community arts. In 2012, ArtReach Toronto created the *Youth Arts Award* to honour youth artists and organizations.
- c. Creating programs to allow youth to prosper and shine in their own community. *Live Arts Inc*, a virtual cultural incubator for young creative entrepreneurs and enterprises was successfully piloted in 2010 by Cultural Services and *Sew What?!* was created by Art Starts to connect youth with training and mentors in the fashion industry.
- d. Engaging and growing the talent of First Nations Youth. Since 2008, the Red Slam Collective has been facilitating a Slam Poetry Workshop Series in partnership with Art Starts, Art City, Association for the Development of Native Visual Artists and Performers, TDSB Aboriginal Education Centre, Ontario Arts Council Aboriginal Artists in the Schools Program, Reztore Pride, and Sagaty to engage urban youth from Aboriginal communities.
- e. Incubating umbrella organizations to build the sector. As recommended by the *Creative Capital Gains Report*, a new LASO, North York Arts is currently being incubated by the Toronto Arts Foundation. Since 2011, the East End Arts Working Group has been convened to plan for and create a new local arts service organization in East York.

4. Sharing resources

Community arts organizations, artists and stakeholders recognized the wider impact and opportunities available through leveraging and sharing resources. Increased focus in this area has resulted in effective partnerships for community arts initiatives and information being disseminated widely using new technologies and other means. Some examples are:

New tools developed:

- a. Special Events, Cultural Services created an on-line *Special Events Planning Guide* in 2012 to provide expert advice for community organizations and others wanting to produce events in the city. As well, in 2010, Toronto Arts Council, Cultural Services and Park, Forestry and Recreation created the handbook *Arts Events in Toronto Parks* to make the process of planning events in City Parks more accessible for community arts organizations.
- b. Online toolkits as well as innovative art-based evaluation tools have been developed to capture the impact of arts programming, to enhance accountability of the sector, and to inform future programming directions. Some examples include award-winning tools created by Arts for Children and Youth and ArtReach and the evidence-based program FROM 3 TO 3, a

partnership between Arts Etobicoke, U of T and TDSB, and that by ArtReach Toronto.

- c. New networking opportunities:
Launched in 2010 by the Toronto Arts Foundation in partnership with Art Starts, the Neighbourhood Arts Network has become an effective tool to connect artists, and facilitate resource sharing through cross promotion and on-line and in-person networking.
- d. New research is underway to better understand how Toronto residents interact and engage with the arts. In 2011/12, the Toronto Arts Foundation, in partnership with Art Starts, OCADU, and York University and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, launched an *Arts Impact Study* based in Weston Mount Dennis, St. James Town and Malvern. Results of the pilot study will be available in 2013.

CONCLUSION

The arts are an integral part of a healthy culture, nourishing creativity and providing social and economic benefit. The *Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* has been key in providing strategic directions for the City, and community partners and organizations to collectively address gaps identified by community members. A strong community arts sector will further the *Creative Capital Gains'* vision for building a socially and economically healthy urban community.

CONTACT

Nadira Pattison
Manager, Arts Services
Economic Development and Culture
Tel: 416-338-1263
Email: npattis1@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Michael H. Williams, General Manager,
Economic Development and Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto
Appendix 2: 2010 Toronto Community Arts Action Plan Updates