



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### 2013-2017 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto

<b>Date:</b>	May 8, 2013
<b>To:</b>	Economic Development Committee
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### **SUMMARY**

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This report provides the Economic Development Committee with an updated 2013–2017 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto and addresses the community arts sector questions raised at the October 16, 2012 meeting of Economic Development Committee.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council endorse the *2013-2017 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* which comprises recommendations from the Community Arts Action Plan External Advisory Committee.

#### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications associated with the adoption of this report except as will be dealt with separately through the Culture budget setting process.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

City Council, at its meeting on December 1, 2008, adopted the *Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto*. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-17315.pdf>

At its meeting on October 16, 2012 the Economic Development Committee received a progress report on the *2008-2012 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-50821.pdf>) and recommendations from the Community Arts External Advisory Committee for the *2013-2017 Community Arts Action Plan*.

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/ed/comm/communicationfile-32369.pdf>).

The committee requested that the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture's report back on the effectiveness of Toronto Arts Council Arts in the Parks Handbook; organizations that can assist in developing small to medium live/work units for artists; and the Local Arts Services Organizations strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getMinutesReport&meetingId=5701>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

Community members and stakeholders who attended the public consultations leading to the development of the *2008-2012 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. They included:

- 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 *2008-2012 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* provided a strategic roadmap for community members, arts organizations, artists, stakeholders and governments to join together to take targeted actions to address the gaps. As indicated in the 2012 progress report, significant gains have been made in each of the action areas.

## **COMMENTS**

To ensure sustainable progress in Toronto's community arts sector, the Community Arts Action Plan External Advisory Committee made recommendations and suggested actions for the next phase of the Community Arts Action Plan. These recommendations and actions have been incorporated into the *2013-2017 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto*.

## **2013-2017 Community Arts Action Plan**

Community Arts Action Plan External Advisory Committee recommends that:

**The City continue to maximize opportunities to enhance funding for community arts.**

### **Actions:**

1. City Council continue to review the use of funds collected through the Third Party Sign Tax to address identified service gaps in the community arts sector.
2. Cultural Services work with funders and community partners to support programs that would enhance the youth arts business and youth arts social enterprise sectors.
3. Recognizing the leadership of Toronto Arts Council in developing capacity for community arts, increase funding levels to TAC grants programs. Increased funding to TAC would make it possible to advance equitable funding for underserved communities, including seniors and youth, and an enhanced Community Arts Grants portfolio.

**The City create more accessible space for community arts across the city:**

### **Actions:**

1. Cultural Services work with partners from the arts and business sectors to develop and implement a "Cultural Hot Spot" program that celebrates and promotes Toronto's neighbourhoods as cultural and economic destinations.
2. Cultural Services continue to explore opportunities to promote access to physical space for community arts activities based on community input gathered through the *Making Space for Culture* ward-by-ward community infrastructure consultations.
3. Cultural Services continue to facilitate partnerships to expand the use of public as well as privately-owned space for community arts activities and events.

**The City continue to raise the profile of the community arts sector:**

### **Actions:**

1. Cultural Services work with partners to create a *Community Artist in Residence* program (similar to the *Poet Laureate* program) whereby an artist will take on an "ambassador/champion" role to raise awareness and support for Toronto's community arts sector and to develop legacy community arts projects.
2. Cultural Services work with partners to continue to support and promote community arts events and initiatives that provide career and employment opportunities for youth, as well as feature Toronto's thriving culture in diverse neighbourhoods.

## **The City facilitate and develop effective mechanisms for sharing resources:**

### **Actions:**

1. Cultural Services work with partners to support the development of a central network for community arts groups and artists to connect, share information and leverage their resources, and invest in current technology – i.e. a mobile website and mobile app.
2. Cultural Services work with partners like Toronto Public Library, TTC, Local Arts Service Organizations, neighbourhood malls, etc. to create a “springboard program” where QR codes (quick response codes) can be placed in strategic locations, to provide the public with quick and timely access to community arts program information.

The above action plans are being co-ordinated with the implementation of the approved Creative Capital Gains strategy and the new culture funding planning.

### **Toronto Arts Council Arts in the Parks Handbook**

The following is the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture's response to the Economic Development Committee's questions regarding how the Toronto Arts Council handbook has improved the playing field for arts activities in city parks.

In 2011 the Toronto Arts Council, in collaboration with community partners, Toronto's Parks and Environment Committee, Cultural Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, created the step by step Arts in the Parks Handbook to make it easier for non-profit arts groups to program arts events in Toronto parks. For broad community access, the Handbook has since been posted on TAC's website and has currently been updated for 2013. It will be electronically circulated once per year to all TAC clients, members of the Neighbourhood Arts Network, Local Arts Service Organizations, and referenced at TAC information sessions. The Handbook also acts as a companion to the *Toronto Special Events Planning Guide*.

Since its inception, the Arts in the Parks Handbook has proven to be most useful for artists and arts organizations that are mounting small scale performances, events and exhibitions and are either first time users or infrequent users. As an outcome, TAC has received fewer queries and complaints about accessing Toronto parks. Three testimonials listed below attest to its effectiveness.

*“The Toronto Arts Council handbook offers a much needed support tool for both newcomer artists and youth arts organizers who are either entering or further developing their community engaged art practices.”*

***Angie Aranda, Neighbourhood Arts Network***

*" I would like to strongly commend the Toronto Arts Council for producing 'Arts Events in Toronto Parks, a handbook for Arts Organizations' which gives arts organizations and artists clear instructions for applying for access to Toronto Parks. Access to public space by artists is a central part of our democratic tradition. This handbook is a valuable tool to help arts organizations achieve their production goals to enliven the city."*

**David Anderson, Artistic Director, Clay & Paper Theatre**

*"The Art in Parks Handbook is a wonderful tool for artists to use when planning a park event. The handbook also helps facilitate communication between artists and park officials. Events in Toronto parks revitalize our city and make our communities safer and more vibrant. As an advocate for building bridges between artists and communities, I welcome this helpful tool."*

**Sylvie Bouchard - Festival Director Dusk Dances**

### **Developing Small to Medium Facilities for Artist Live/Work Spaces**

The following is the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture's response to the Economic Development Committee's questions regarding organizations that can assist in developing small to medium facilities for affordable and sustainable live/work space for artists.

*Creative Spaces Outside the Core* is a new community-led, capacity-building and partnership development initiative designed to support the planning and development of community cultural hubs and other forms of arts infrastructure in areas outside of Toronto's core.

This initiative seeks to address the issue of developing community hubs and arts and cultural infrastructure in priority neighbourhoods and those with emerging clusters of creative activity which often have the least capacity to plan and develop cultural infrastructure.

The project partners will include Artscape, representatives from the six Local Arts Service Organizations, Toronto Arts Council, BeautifulCity, ArtsBuild, United Way, Civic Action, YMCA, Toronto Community Housing, community arts organizations and youth arts organizations, and Toronto Cultural Services.

This project will also incorporate the study "Making Space for Culture" that identifies cultural facility issues, challenges and opportunities in 20 wards to-date.

### **Local Arts Service Organizations Strategy**

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture's response to the Economic Development Committee's questions regarding the Local Arts Service Organization strategy; its initial intentions, initial funding and any significant funding changes since the strategy's inception are included in Appendix 1 Local Arts Services Organizations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Cultural Services strongly supports and promotes community arts. Life-long cultural participation and engagement are key contributing factors to prosperous, healthy, liveable communities. Building on the success of the *2008-2012 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto*, and in tandem with the *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto* (adopted by City Council in 2011), the goal of the *2013-2017 Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto* is to continue to provide a roadmap that will further ensure barrier-free arts and cultural opportunities for all.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

Michael H. Williams, General Manager  
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## **ATTACHMENTS**

**Appendix 1:** Local Arts Service Organizations