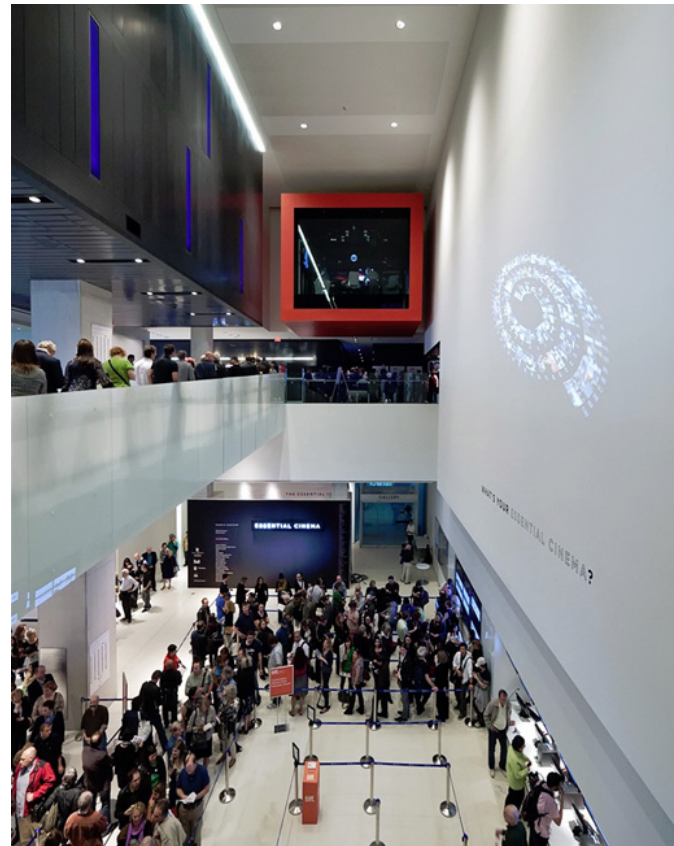


# Making Space for Culture

Community Consultation Summaries - Phase 1

March 2013



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## **Making Space for Culture Consultation Summaries**

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# Making Space for Culture: Overview

## BACKGROUND

*Making Space for Culture* is a long-term planning project led by the City of Toronto, Cultural Services on the subject of cultural infrastructure city-wide. Funded by the Province of Ontario, the study builds on the first recommendation made in *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, a report endorsed by City Council in May 2011. The report recommends “that the City ensure a supply of affordable, sustainable cultural space” for use by cultural industries, not-for-profit organizations and community groups in the City of Toronto. While there has been considerable public and private investment in major cultural facilities within the city in the past decade, the provision of accessible, sustainable space for small and mid-size organizations is a key factor in ensuring a vibrant cultural community.

The overall objective of the *Making Space for Culture* project is to help ensure a supply of affordable, sustainable cultural space across the City of Toronto. In addition, the project aims to:

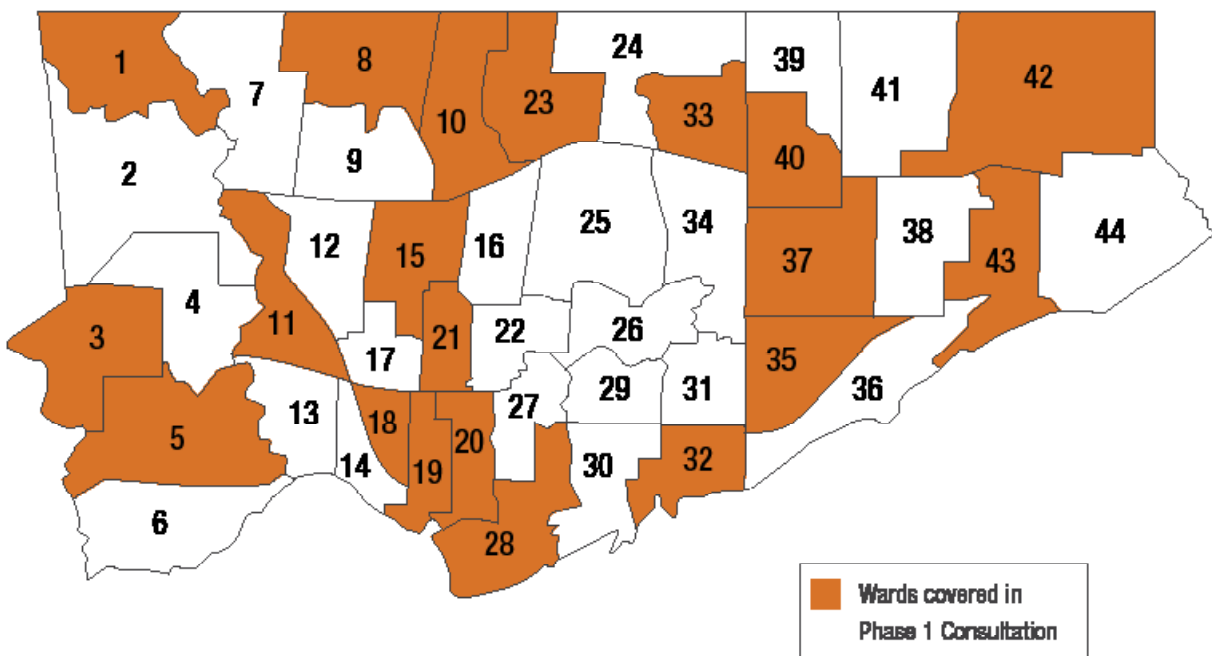
1. **Develop awareness** among citizens, staff, City Councillors and potential partners and funders of the needs of cultural and community arts organizations, either resident or providing programming in their ward, for suitable, accessible facilities, equipment and other capital needs.
2. **Assist with decision-making** regarding infrastructure investment in cultural assets.
3. **Disseminate knowledge regarding Section 37** as it relates to cultural facilities to City Councillors, City staff, cultural organizations, and other interested parties.
4. **Develop greater shared knowledge and strengthen collaboration and partnerships** across City divisions and agencies with real estate portfolios, as a by-product of the consultation process.

A desirable outcome of this process is to maximize the use of City assets and create greater efficiencies using existing real estate stock. By identifying underused spaces, or spaces which can be adapted or repurposed for cultural use, it may be possible to ensure a supply of cultural space at reduced cost.

## METHODOLOGY

Cultural Services worked with Lord Cultural Resources, in association with R.E. Millward + Associates, to undertake the consultation and study process. In this first phase, 20 of the city's 44 wards were selected for consultation and assessment.

These 20 wards were selected based on geography, level of development, and level of cultural development.



**Community consultations** were held in each of these 20 wards between May and October 2012. Participants were asked about existing cultural space and activities, gaps in service and infrastructure and future community needs and priorities. **An online survey** that posed questions on cultural participation was prepared and widely distributed through community and arts networks, providing an opportunity for those outside of the 20 selected wards to add their input.

Meeting minutes from the community consultations and feedback from the survey informed the **Ward Summary** documents, which provide a snapshot of the cultural infrastructure needs and priorities in their ward. These documents are intended to guide Councillors in their decision-making around cultural facilities and programs when opportunities for investment arise.

The **Cultural Facilities Database** was updated as a result of community consultations and a verification process, providing a solid basis from which to launch future work. The Database includes a full listing of cultural facilities within each of the 20 wards, and notes the ownership and potential uses of each space. There is potential for this resource to be made available to the cultural community.

**Guidelines for the application of Section 37** as it relates to the development of cultural facilities were produced for use by Councillors, cultural organizations and City staff. This document includes recommendations for using Section 37 as a tool to support the creation of and improvements to cultural space.

## CONSULTATION PARTICIPATION

The public consultations were publicized through the City of Toronto website, Councillors' offices and a number of networks including those of the Toronto Public Library, the Neighbourhood Arts Network, the Toronto Arts Council and Scarborough Arts Council, among others.

The majority of participants were artists, cultural practitioners, administrators or members of youth or community groups and small to mid-size cultural organizations. Approximately 206 individuals participated in the ward consultations; the table below indicates attendance by ward.

The survey was also publicized using the same networks; 376 surveys were completed in a 7-month period. Responses were received from across the city's 44 wards, with the majority of the responses attributed to Wards 18, 19, 20 and 21. 42% of all respondents identified as being a cultural professional, and 41% are in the 25-39 years age bracket.

| Date       | Ward                              | Councillor             | Participants |
|------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 6 June     | Ward 1 – Etobicoke North          | Crisanti               | 5            |
| 24 May     | Ward 3 – Etobicoke Centre         | Holyday                | 3            |
| 24 May     | Ward 5 – Etobicoke Lakeshore      | Milczyn*               | 5            |
| 4 June     | Ward 8 – York West                | Perruzza*              | 22           |
| 13 June    | Ward 10 – York Centre             | Pasternak*             | 21           |
| 14 June    | Ward 33 – Don Valley East         | Carroll*               | 4            |
| 22 May     | Ward 37 – Scarborough Centre      | Thompson*              | 4            |
| 18 June    | Ward 40 – Scarborough Agincourt   | Kelly                  | 7            |
| 27 June    | Ward 42 – Scarborough Rouge River | Cho                    | 2            |
| 29 May     | Ward 43 – Scarborough East        | Ainslie*               | 29           |
| 11 October | Ward 11 – York South-Weston       | Nunziata*              | 8            |
| 4 October  | Ward 15 – Eglinton-Lawrence       | Colle                  | 10           |
| 15 October | Ward 18 – Davenport               | Bailão                 | 20           |
| 23 October | Ward 19 – Trinity-Spadina         | Layton*                | 10           |
| 9 October  | Ward 20 – Trinity-Spadina         | Vaughan                | 8            |
| 18 October | Ward 21 – St. Paul's              | Mihevc*                | 10           |
| 11 October | Ward 23 – Willowdale              | Filion                 | 7            |
| 4 October  | Ward 28 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale | McConnell              | 23           |
| 17 October | Ward 32 – Beaches-East York       | McMahon                | 2            |
| 24 October | Ward 35 – Scarborough West        | Berardinetti Crawford* | 6            |

Note: Asterisks (“\*”) indicate that the Councillor attended the ward consultation.



## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

A number of issues and themes were echoed by participants across the city. While ward-specific feedback and priorities are included in the Ward Summaries, the overarching issues that impact upon the cultural community city-wide are included here.

### Potential of Existing Public Infrastructure:

- Elementary and high schools, which are evenly distributed city-wide, possess ideal facilities for a range of cultural uses, from rehearsals, meetings, and workshops to performances and community events. Unfortunately, costly permit fees and deteriorating facilities combine to render these spaces inaccessible to community groups that could most benefit from these spaces.
- It is recognized that school enrolment has been declining, and that some schools have been slated for closure. Finding a way to work with the school boards to gain access to these underused spaces should be seen as a priority from a community benefit and cost-saving perspective.
- Parks and field houses also present an underutilized opportunity to provide a network of support for a range of cultural activities.
- Libraries emerged as playing a key role in supporting community cultural activities City-wide. Most libraries operate at capacity, and are well-known within their communities for being amenable to making space available to a range of community groups and activities.

### Refurbishments and Specialization:

- Minor refurbishments to existing spaces can make a facility suitable to both the general public and specialized users – for example, sprung floors make library community rooms suitable for dancers, and soundproofing makes it usable by musicians.
- The artistic communities of many wards are reaching a point of maturity, and require more specialized facilities to meet their needs. Spaces that are geared to a more sophisticated production of music and performance (Ward 8), or that support entrepreneurs or small businesses (Ward 10) are needed.
- Supporting the maturation of a ward's artistic community in this way can result in the creation of a “centre of excellence”, in which a ward can excel in a particular cultural expression.

### Maximizing Privately-owned Space:

- Cultural organizations require consistent access to performance/presentation space, as well as administrative and meeting space. Partnerships with the private sector could open up spaces within office buildings or other spaces that community groups could rent outside of business hours and on weekends.
- Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) are uniquely poised to broker these partnerships between the cultural and private sector in their neighbourhood, highlighting mutual benefit to both the host and the renting group.
- BIAs are also in the position to animate vacant spaces such as empty storefronts, unused lots and lobbies, by inviting cultural organizations access to these spaces for performances and programs.

### Multi-purpose Community Gathering Space:

- Easily-accessible spaces in which the community can gather was expressed as a need in many wards. This space should accommodate a variety of cultural activities, from dance and music performances to cooking classes and fundraising events.
- Similarly, outdoor gathering spaces found in parks should remain accessible; obtaining a permit is an administrative challenge to most organizations; the permit process should be streamlined and be better-communicated.
- Upgrades to and expansions of existing cultural facilities, are often all that is required to allow cultural organizations to make the most of the space, whether it is to increase audience capacity, or to make the space easier to rent to other groups.

### Access:

- The age and standard of Toronto's built infrastructure varies across the city. A priority across the City is to ensure that existing cultural facilities meet physical accessibility requirements. Facilities in downtown wards in particular require basic refurbishments in order to bring them to standard.
- Accessibility of cultural space should also be considered in terms of transportation. Attendance at some existing cultural facilities could be increased if public transit services were more locally available. Local neighbourhood efforts such as a community bus could provide groups such as senior citizens and youth with a more reliable transportation option. In other cases, efforts to situate cultural spaces along public transit or walkable routes should be a priority.

### Marketing, Communication, Resource Sharing:

- Cultural activity takes place across the city, but learning of events happening outside of the downtown wards is difficult. These wards require a vehicle – possibly headed by a Local Arts Service Organization (LASO) or Councillor's office – through which to publicize events, performances, and cultural activities both within the ward and beyond.
- Community groups and arts and culture organizations would benefit from a centralized system of publicizing resources, and teaming up with other organizations across the city. This online portal could become the primary source of information on available rehearsal, practice, meeting and performance space in the city.

A summary for each ward is provided in the following pages. Meeting minutes from each ward consultation will be made available to the Councillor. The Section 37 report is a separate document.

## CONTACT

For further information please contact:

Cultural Services

Economic Development & Culture

City of Toronto

Tel: 416-397-5323 Email: culture@toronto.ca

## DATABASE DEFINITIONS

Cultural facilities across the city are categorized according to the functions they are able to accommodate. These categories were created in order to better appreciate the existing and potential uses of a range of spaces and facilities. The following definitions provide further detail on each category.

### ***Performance***

Spaces in which performing arts (dance, music, theatre, etc.) creation or presentation takes place. Includes but is not limited to:

- Dance studios
- Recording studios
- Theatres
- Music halls / live music spaces
- Restaurants and bars with stages / performance spaces
- Churches
- Band shells / amphitheatres / outdoor spaces that can accommodate performances (eg. Shakespeare in the Park, Manifesto Dance)
- Multipurpose spaces with specific accommodations for performances (eg. lighting, audience seating, etc.)

### ***Exhibition / Visual Arts***

Spaces in which visual arts creation or presentation can take place, in addition to pure exhibition space. Includes but is not limited to:

- Art galleries
- Museums
- Visual artist studios
- Photography studios
- Exhibition space in coffee shops

### ***Screen Based***

Spaces for the production and presentation of multimedia screen-based arts including digital, photography, and film. Includes but is not limited to:

- Film studios
- Movie theatres
- Technology labs (eg. ProTech Media Centre)

### ***Library***

- Toronto Public Library facility with physical space for cultural activity.

### ***Multipurpose***

Spaces that are not purpose-built and can house a range of culture activity ranging from creation to performance. Includes but is not limited to:

- Parks
- Community Centres
- Recreation Centres
- Churches

### ***Heritage***

- Designated Heritage space

### ***City Owned / City-Operated / Owned by Others***

- A city owned facility is a space “owned” by the City of Toronto insofar as it is listed as a capital asset for the City, its Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Corporations.
- A city-operated facility is a space in which the City of Toronto, or its Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Corporations, has a lease (long or short term) for the space.
- An owned by others facility is a space that is not held or operated by the City of Toronto, or its Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Corporations.



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