

My name is Laurie-Shawn Borzovoy and I am the Chair of Urban Arts. I'm here today not just to represent my own organization, but also to speak on behalf of Toronto's 6 Local Arts Service Organizations or LASOs, which include Urban Arts, Arts Etobicoke, Scarborough Arts, Lakeshore Arts, North York Arts and East End Arts.

Over the last few months, it has been heartening to observe and participate in the most recent phase of the City's research, consultation and extremely informed, creative thinking around how to improve and grow Toronto's arts and culture sector, policies and practices. And while there is broad consensus that increased funding is fundamentally key to the strategies of the Creative Capital Gains Report and Community Arts Action Plan, it is also broadly understood to be a tool to achieve our vital and shared *cultural* goals. The LASOs whole-heartedly

support the principles and priorities that have been articulated so well in the 2 new reports before you today.

Now proudly numbering 6 organizations and located throughout the City, the LASOs play a unique and key role in supporting these goals- particularly vis a vis access to and inclusion in cultural activity for ALL Torontonians and developing our cultural riches in geographic areas outside the downtown core. Each of our organizations is different, but we are all anchored in our local neighbourhoods and provide programs, services, experiences, education and spaces developed in response to and reflective of these specific areas of the City. We are often the gateway and first point of contact for youth and newcomers who go on to make valuable contributions to our sector, as professionals, educators, audiences and volunteers, or simply

enriching and educating themselves by participating in the transformative experience of artistic activity. Jokingly the LASOs say that we have a combined history of well over 100 years of community-engaged practice. But it's true! From Arts Etobicoke established in 1973 to the 2 newest organizations established over the last two years, we have served thousands of Torontonians across all 44 wards for over 4 decades. There is a wealth of experience, knowledge and refined practice within our organizations - developed by our artists, staff, volunteers, community partners and members. And yet, as all of you have heard from us over the years, at numerous deputations, we have been underfunded and under-resourced. As a result of being insufficiently supported, we have been unable to FULLY meet the Community Arts Action Plan goals. I would like to direct you to Appendix No 5 in the Creative Capital Gains Funding Update, which is a

collaborative 4-year business plan developed this past spring by the 6 LASOs. It identifies 4 priority areas for new funding, which are to: 1. Support sustainable operations 2. Invest in community leadership by building human resource capacity 3. Expand and stabilize existing programs, responding to our communities' needs and 4. Increase participation and support for community arts activities through stronger collective communications. We have detailed these plans and incorporated a financial request that would allow each LASO to achieve these stated goals over the next 4 years, all of which are consistent with the revised Community Arts Action Plan and the Creative Capital Gains Report Update.

We join the Toronto arts sector today to lend our support to these 2 new reports and offer our commitment to the ongoing process of refining, and

evaluating our progress, together in achieving this shared vision of a culturally vibrant City.

Thank you very much.