

Toronto Music Advisory Council

Overview of Key Accomplishments 2014-2018

BACKGROUND

In December 2013, City Council voted to create the Toronto Music Industry Advisory Council (TMAC), with a mandate to serve as a liaison between City Hall and the music industry and provide insight, advice and recommendations to the City on issues relating to the sector. The first TMAC meeting of the current 2014-2018 term of City Council occurred on May 27, 2015. Since that date, 15 meetings have been held with the final meeting taking place on June 20, 2018.

In accordance with TMAC's Terms of Reference, the Music Advisory Council is composed of 36 members, including the Chair of the Economic Development Committee; one other Member of the Economic Development Committee; four other Members of Council-at-large; the Executive Director, Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, or designate; the President & Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Toronto, or designate; and 30 music industry stakeholders collectively representing a range of knowledge, skills and experience.

TMAC is currently structured into three separate working groups:

1. Venue Protection and Sustainability
2. Community Outreach
3. City Partnerships.

Toronto Music Strategy: Supporting and Growing the City's Music Sector

One of the key milestones arising from the formation of TMAC – and TMAC's cornerstone achievement – has been the development of the Toronto Music Strategy in 2016. The Music Strategy was created through in-depth consultation with key stakeholders within the music community followed by extensive public input, and written in collaboration with staff in the Music unit of the City of Toronto's Film & Entertainment Industries section.

The **Music Strategy** identifies six major strategic areas for action:

- Support an environment friendly to music creators.
- Encourage the business of music in Toronto.
- Support music education.
- Promote Toronto's music sector locally and internationally.
- Foster alliances with other music cities around the world.
- Implement a process for monitoring progress and measuring success.

Since the Music Strategy was adopted by City Council in 2016, many of its suggested actions have been accomplished, with many others currently in progress. TMAC's ongoing role has primarily been to add detail to the Music Strategy's general suggestions through specific recommendations, helping guide the work of City staff in creating meaningful change to benefit Toronto's musicians and music community.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

Below are key objectives that TMAC has spearheaded efforts to address, as well as priority actions that have been executed in collaboration with City staff.

1) Creating an Environment and Opportunities to Support Local Musicians

TMAC has advocated for the development of policies and initiatives that support Toronto artists. Major accomplishments include:

- ***Arts / Music in the Parks (2016)***: The project arose from a recommendation in the Toronto Music Strategy and was initiated by City Councillor John Filion. Parks Forestry & Recreation, the Toronto Arts Council, and City Music staff collaborated to create a new free PF&R permit category to allow grassroots music event organizers access to park permits. The program is continuing for 2018.
- ***Toronto Music Directory (2016)***: An interactive map and searchable catalogue of local music industry services, retailers, supporting organizations and venues accessible online at City of Toronto [website](#). The project is to be expanded in 2018 to include individual artist listings.
- ***YYZ Live (2017)***: Inspiration for this performance series arose from a recommendation in the Toronto Music Strategy. After the success of the 2017 program, Music staff have worked with Pearson Airport to renew YYZ Live for 2018. A minimum of 150 performances (75 artists) will play on stages at Terminals 1 and 3 between June – December.
- ***Live from City Hall / City Hall Live (2016)***: This program provides paid showcases approximately 40 local acts annually, with total attendance of over 12,000. Performances take place at City Hall and at

venues around Toronto, in partnership with industry & community organizations. Music staff have renewed external sponsorship to continue the program throughout 2018.

PILOT PROGRAMS

Several priority recommendations by TMAC are still pending official Council approval, but are designed to uplift and support local music creators. These pilot programs currently include:

- **Tour Bus Parking:** A pilot program with three venues was done to alleviate parking restrictions of musician tour buses, and will be expanded to include more venues.
- **Musician Loading Zones:** A selection of venues is being chosen to pilot this program to create dedicated loading zones for musicians near live music venues.
- **Entertainment Zone Study:** A pilot study was done of entertainment venues along College Street to resolve issues concerning business licensing.
- **Posting:** Creation of dedicated posting zones differentiated from existing generic ones.
- **Wayfinding:** Adding music venues as cultural destinations to maps and kiosks via TO360.

Music staff are taking steps to coordinate with other city departments to help enact these recommendations.

2) Addressing Regulatory Burdens of Music Venues.

TMAC has spearheaded efforts and worked in collaboration with City Music staff and other city departments to advocate for the amendment of policies and by-laws to ease the regulatory burdens on music venues. This includes policies that aim to streamline regulations and permit processes or remove unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles for venues and spaces.

Major accomplishments include:

- **Eliminating posting enforcement (2015):** Music venues were often fined for illegal posting by Municipal Licensing & Standards (MLS), often with no evidence of the venue's culpability. Following efforts by Councillor John Filion and Music staff, MLS altered their policies to halt this practice in September 2015. Music staff have remained engaged with MLS leadership to request that bylaw officers be reminded of the revised posting enforcement guidelines.
- **Chapter 591, Noise By-Law Review (2016 to present):** Various ongoing noise by-law-related initiatives are still under review by relevant city departments. It is important to note the influence of TMAC in these developments, particularly in light of the Music Strategy's recommendation that

"noise regulations must balance the interests of residents and other businesses with those of venues and concert promoters, ensuring the well-being of the music industry as well as the wider public interest without unnecessary restrictions and fines."

- **Formal Submission (2016):** TMAC members provided music-industry expert opinion on the January 2016 proposed revisions of the Noise By-law, which was documented as a formal submission, and TMAC has remained involved in monitoring the progress.
- **Terms of Reference for Noise Impact Studies (upcoming):** arising from a recent City Council [decision](#) on PG29.4 TO Core: Downtown Plan Official Plan Amendment. Staff at City Planning and Economic Development and Culture (EDC) will develop a terms of reference for Noise Impact Studies for new developments within 120 metres of existing live music venues.
- **Noise Mitigation Program (upcoming):** arising from a PG29.4 Council decision. Staff and City planning and EDC will investigate the feasibility of the creation of a noise mitigation program to support live music venues city-wide.

3) Measures to Protect Music Venues

TMAC has advocated for the development of policies that protect existing music venues.

In particular, TMAC has actively endorsed adopting a version of the "Agent of Change" principle in Toronto. This principle has now been adopted and is a culmination of several recent decisions at City Hall, a shift that was influenced by TMAC's ongoing recommendations on this issue and its citing of relevant best practices from other jurisdictions.

Related City Council decisions include:

- **"Agent of Change" Principle for the Downtown Core:** Arising from a recent City Council [decision](#) on PG29.4 TO Core: Downtown Plan Official Plan Amendment. The proposed measures are intended to encourage the retention of live music venues, by:
 - Ensuring that live music venues can continue to function without noise-related impact on new residential development
 - New live music venues located within Mixed Use Areas 1, 2, 3, 4 and Regeneration Areas will be designed and constructed to minimize noise from the premises and provide acoustic attenuation measures that would protect residential uses; and
 - New mixed-use developments located within Mixed Use Areas 1, 2, 3, 4 and Regeneration Areas will be designed and constructed to include acoustic attenuation

measures on-site, or within the building design, to mitigate noise levels from adjacent indoor live music venues and from outdoor live music venues.

- **Advisory for Residential Units within 120 Meters of a Live Music Venue for the Downtown Core:** Arising from a recent City Council [decision](#) on PG29.4 TO Core: Downtown Plan Official Plan Amendment. The proposed measure will require any development containing residential units that are located within 120 metres of a live music venue to include an advisory within the Site Plan Agreement and/or Condominium Declaration that notifies purchasers, lessees and tenants of possible noise that may arise from its proximity to a live music venue.

TMAC has also advocated for other measures to provide better protection and support for music venues. Some of TMAC's proposed initiatives include:

- **Live Music Venue Certification program:** The Venue Protection & Sustainability Working Group is currently collaborating with Music staff to develop the concept of this program. Proposed features accompanying "certification" may include: an opportunity to participate in City-supported programs, occasional 4am extensions, and recognition by MLS and Planning divisions of the importance of music venues' business operations.
- **Toronto Music Passport series:** The development of the program is ongoing, with industry-led versions being run in 2017 and 2018.
- **Creation of tax benefits for local live music venues:** A key recommendation of TMAC, modeled after the Creative Co-Location Facilities Property Tax Subclasses.

4) Supporting the Development of a Robust Night-Time Economy

Cities around the globe are examining various policies to best support their night-time economies. TMAC has advocated for the City of Toronto to take steps towards establishing measures designed to support live venues and other night-time operators.

Key accomplishments include:

- **Night-time Economy Study:** The City of Toronto will participate in the **Responsible Hospitality Institute's** (RHI) study on nightlife, participating in the logistical planning, and data collection for multiple Hospitality Zone Assessments. The project began in early 2018 and will run for 18 months.
- **Night-time Action Plan:** A Night-Time Economy report was presented at Economic Development Committee in April 2018. Concluding that "Time of day is the new competitive edge for global cities", the report recommendations include EDC leading the development of an action plan for the

night-time economy, measuring economic data on businesses operating at night, clarifying protocols around extended alcohol service hours, and reporting back in the next term of Council.

- ***International Delegates:*** In cooperation with RHI, Toronto has hosted internationally acclaimed delegates including Mirik Milan and Jocelyn Kane during CMW 2018, who presented before EDC and we were welcomed with a reception by Mayor Tory as part of the Music Cities Summit. Additional visits by other delegates such as Paul Seres from the NYC Hospitality Alliance are being planned.

5) Promoting Toronto Internationally and Fostering Alliances with Global Music Cities

TMAC has continued to advocate for policy and program development that works to build audiences for local musicians and artists, enhance Toronto's national and international standing as a music destination, and foster relationships with international music cities.

Notable accomplishments in this arena include:

- **A Tale of Two Cities (2016):** Music staff planned and executed a concert performance and industry networking exchange between sister cities Toronto and Chicago, led by the Remix Project.
- **Austin-Toronto Music Business Summit (2016):** Music staff and Toronto members of the Austin Alliance (sub-group of TMAC's "International Alliances" working group) worked with Alliance partners in Austin to plan and execute this inaugural 2-day B2B event, held in Toronto with support from the cities of Toronto and Austin. Music staff are working with the Austin Music Office to develop a follow-up event, proposed for October 2018 in Austin.
- **SXSW activations (2015 - 2018):** City Music staff have initiated and overseen SXSW activations with advice and assistance from TMAC's City Partnerships group, industry partners, and City of Austin contacts to curate & program a total of 20 artist showcase opportunities along with additional industry networking events.

LOOKING FORWARD

TMAC looks forward eagerly to continuing its productive working relationship with City staff in Economic Development & Culture and other divisions. TMAC is also excited to build on the achievements of the past three years in helping Toronto's musicians and music community continue the tremendous recent growth of music as a driver of employment and direct economic activity, as a powerful catalyst for cultural inclusivity and youth engagement, and as a powerful contributor to civic identity.