



Establishing Strategic Priorities for Cultural Investment (2020-2024)

Date: October 2, 2019

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto's cultural sector - including the arts, film and entertainment industries, and museums and heritage - is a major economic driver and fosters healthy, vibrant communities across the city. In May 2011, City Council adopted *Creative Capital Gains*, which included 33 recommendations to position Toronto as an international creative capital. With the support of partners across the cultural sector, the City has now implemented the vast majority of the recommendations included in *Creative Capital Gains*. As well, the City achieved its longstanding goal of investing \$25 per capita in arts and culture in 2018.

Having achieved many of the objectives of *Creative Capital Gains*, the time is right for the City to consider a new framework to inform its investment in culture. This report builds on significant consultation across the culture sector and recommends that City Council adopt three strategic priorities for cultural investment over the next five years (2020-2024), including:

- 1) **Culture for all**, to increase opportunities for all Torontonians, no matter where they live in the city, to participate in local, relevant cultural activities throughout the year that reflect Toronto's diversity and creativity.
- 2) **Space for culture**, to maintain and create new accessible, sustainable spaces for Toronto's creative sector in a growing city.
- 3) **Developing creative talent** to strengthen Toronto's cultural workforce, and increase diversity and representation within the sector.

The proposed priorities are outlined in detail in this report. If adopted, they will be used to guide the City's cultural programs and services, and shape investments related to the arts, film and entertainment industries, and museums and heritage. The proposed priorities have been developed based on feedback from a robust, inclusive city-wide

community consultation process undertaken to build the [Economic Development and Culture Divisional Strategy \(2018-22\)](#); ongoing discussions with stakeholders and partners in the culture sector; and policy directions from City Council. They also advance the objectives of the Division's Equity Plan, a guiding framework to foster inclusion and equity in all of EDC's activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the following strategic priorities to guide the City's investment in culture over the next five years (2020-2024):

- a. Culture for all, to increase opportunities for all Torontonians, no matter where they live in the city, to participate in local, relevant cultural activities throughout the year that reflect Toronto's diversity and creativity.
- b. Space for culture, to maintain and create new accessible, sustainable spaces for Toronto's creative sector in a growing city.
- c. Developing creative talent to strengthen Toronto's cultural workforce, and increase diversity and representation within the sector.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The financial implications resulting from this policy recommendation cannot be determined at this time. The strategic priorities for cultural investment, if adopted, will be used to inform the development of future budget submissions relating to cultural programs and services. The funding sources if necessary will need to be determined.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

In May 2011, City Council adopted *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*. *Creative Capital Gains* included 33 recommendations to enhance Toronto's place as a leading international cultural centre and increase the role of creativity in the economic and social development of the city.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.ED3.3>

In March 2019, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to consult with the community on priorities for further investment in the arts, heritage and creative industries outside the core, and to report back through the 2020 Budget Process.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX2.5>

COMMENTS

Supporting Toronto's Culture Sector

Toronto's cultural sector - including the arts, film and entertainment industries, and museums and heritage - is fundamental to making the city a great place to live, work and visit. Based on data from the Department of Canadian Heritage (2016), the sector contributes approximately \$11 billion to Toronto's gross domestic product, and supports over 111,000 jobs.

The City delivers a range of cultural programs and services that strengthen Toronto's creative economy, and create opportunities for Torontonians to experience culture in their communities. In 2018, over 1.5 million people attended cultural events delivered by the City, highlighting the reach and engagement of the City's cultural services. The City's cultural programs and services include:

- **Arts and Culture Services** contributes to the development of arts and culture in Toronto by consulting with and advocating for the city's arts sector; providing financial support to cultural institutions and individual artists, in partnership with the Toronto Arts Council; and producing major cultural events and inclusive community arts programs;
- **Film and Entertainment Industries** supports all aspects of the city's film, music, tourism and entertainment industries. This includes providing one-stop service for film, television and digital media projects produced in Toronto, supporting the infrastructure critical to our creative industries, including visitors services and offering support for external producers of large festivals and events;
- **Museums and Heritage Services** operates 10 historic sites that collectively tell the story of Toronto; preserves and cares for the City's collection of more than 150,000 artifacts, 1.1 million archaeological specimens and over 3,000 fine arts works; and leads the management, maintenance, and restoration of 100 City-owned cultural and heritage sites.

Toronto Arts Council (TAC) supports opportunities for cultural engagement city-wide as the City's funding body for artists and arts organizations. Through its strategic plan, *Arts-Making 2025*, TAC has set out a vision for grant investment that realizes the potential of Toronto's artists and arts organizations; strong partnerships that extend the reach and profile of Toronto artists; urban leadership that speaks with a compelling

voice for a creative, equitable and thriving city; and responsive granting that reflects the city, embraces technology and builds on success.

Setting New Strategic Priorities for Cultural Investment

Since 2011, the City's support for the cultural sector has been guided by *Creative Capital Gains*, the City's culture plan. The plan set out 33 ambitious recommendations to enhance Toronto's place as a leading international cultural centre and increase the role of creativity in the economic and social development of the city. The plan's primary focus was on supporting the non-profit arts in Toronto. Changes in technology and how people participate in culture are creating stronger links across all elements of Toronto's vibrant creative sector. Looking ahead, the City's cultural policy framework must be inclusive of the entirety of the cultural sector supported by the City, including museums and heritage, and film and entertainment industries, along with the non-profit arts sector.

Today, Toronto's cultural sector is faced with challenges and opportunities - some new, and some persisting - that require bold, decisive action. Growing inequalities have resulted in barriers for city-wide cultural access and participation. Rising property costs threaten to displace Toronto's cultural venues and artist work spaces. Global peer cities compete with Toronto to attract lucrative creative enterprises and the highly mobile creative workforce. And, there remains a pressing need for both cultural programming and the cultural workforce to become more inclusive of Toronto's diversity.

The City has taken a number of concrete measures to address these growing issues, but there is still significant work to be done. City Council has adopted some recent, actionable strategies to bolster Toronto's creative industries, including a new music strategy for Toronto in 2016, *Spotlight on Toronto: A Strategic Action Plan for the Film, Television and Digital Media Industry* in 2017, and the new *Nighttime Economy Action Plan* in 2019. To create meaningful opportunities for cultural programming across Toronto, the City is unlocking the potential of its 10 historic museums as catalysts for community participation and engagement. Further, in response to the escalating costs of maintaining cultural space, City Council established the Creative Co-Location Facilities Property Tax Subclass in 2018, supporting properties that house multiple creative enterprises and deliver free public programming.

With new priorities emerging for the sector, and with the City having now implemented the large majority of the recommendations in *Creative Capital Gains*, a new framework is needed to guide the City's future support for culture. This report proposes three strategic priorities for cultural investment, reflecting the feedback received from over 400 Torontonians during the city-wide community consultation process to develop [EDC's Divisional Strategy \(2018-22\)](#). Under the leadership of an expert panel of community and cultural champions, chaired by Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson, EDC sought input on future directions for business and culture through a series of town halls across the city, along with stakeholder focus groups. Ongoing discussions with partners and stakeholders in the cultural sector over the past year have validated the Divisional Strategy's vision and goals, and reinforced the pressing need for action. The Division has begun to implement the Strategy's recommendations with the development of a new EDC Equity Plan - a roadmap to foster equity and inclusion in all of EDC's activities

to ensure that all residents can benefit from Toronto's economic and cultural opportunities.

The three strategic priorities, detailed below, include shared opportunities for growth in the arts, film and entertainment industries, and museums and heritage.

1) Culture for All

"Culture for all" affirms the City's commitment to increase opportunities for all Torontonians, no matter where they live in the city, to participate in local, relevant cultural activities throughout the year that reflect Toronto's diversity and creativity. It is rooted in the guiding vision of EDC's Equity Plan, which seeks to combat disparities across Toronto through impactful cultural programs and services for equity-deserving communities and underserved areas of the city, and TAC's strategic plan, with its strong focus on inclusive granting and programming.

"Culture for all" prioritizes the need for increased cultural access and investment outside the downtown core. Existing cultural programs, including Cultural Hotspot, TAC's Arts in the Parks, and programming at City museums have created important opportunities for cultural engagement beyond the city centre, but further action is needed to achieve greater access to and a more equitable distribution of cultural resources.

With a sustained focus on creating cultural opportunities for all Torontonians, EDC will help to further the objectives and aims of other Council-approved strategies and plans related to equity and inclusion, including the City's efforts towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Youth Equity Strategy, the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, and others. Examples of potential actions include:

- Establishing a new festivals program to strengthen major community events across Toronto, and address cost pressures arising from new public safety requirements
- Continuing efforts to support equity-seeking groups through initiatives such as the City's Indigenous Arts and Culture Partnerships Fund, and TAC's prioritization of equity in its granting
- Improving the distribution of Toronto's public art collection city-wide
- Strengthening the network of Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) to build capacity for cultural engagement outside the downtown core
- Developing winter cultural tourism initiatives to engage new visitor audiences and residents in cultural performances

2) Space for Culture

Access to affordable, sustainable space for culture and creative work has been a longstanding issue for the sector. As Toronto has grown, so too has the cost of living and doing business in the city. Today, faced with ongoing, escalating property costs, Toronto is seeing a trend towards the loss of music and other performance venues, and a potential exodus of artists and creative professionals to more affordable neighbouring cities. Artists and creative organizations need to have reliable access to spaces in which to create, perform, teach, exhibit, and operate their business - and action is required to ensure that these spaces can be protected and flourish.

There also remains an ongoing need to create new cultural spaces to realize the sector's full economic and social potential. The continued growth of Toronto's screen industry, for instance, is limited by the amount of available studio space for projects. The City must continue its efforts to attract new investments in film studios to grow the industry's production investment to \$3 billion, from its current level of \$2 billion. As well, work is ongoing to establish a new Museum of Toronto to celebrate the city's rich heritage and diversity. Opening the doors of this significant new community hub will create meaningful opportunities for residents and visitors to experience culture in Toronto.

A strategic focus on space for culture will protect and optimize existing venues and facilities, and create new creative work spaces and community cultural facilities. Examples of potential actions include:

- Establishing a virtual Office for Creative Space to better serve cultural organizations facing challenges in preserving cultural space
- Concrete action to mitigate loss of music venues, including exploration of property tax assessment capping for landlords leasing to music venues
- Supporting artists and performers to activate DIY event spaces for culture, including working with partners in other City divisions to create greater flexibility within current zoning and licensing guidelines, and creating a financial and operational framework to allow DIY music organizations access to City-owned space
- Unlocking potential of museums, institutional and other cultural spaces
- Work with interdivisional partners to design a film-friendly city

3) Developing Creative Talent

Toronto's creative talent is a driving force behind the city's economic success and global reputation. With a strong and growing presence on the global stage, Toronto now competes with international peer cities to attract and retain creative and cultural leaders. The expansion of Toronto's creative workforce presents a significant opportunity to develop career pathways for Toronto youth, which will in turn help to improve diversity and representation of equity-deserving groups within the cultural workforce.

A strategic focus on developing Toronto's creative talent will position the city for success by fostering the next generation of creative workers. EDC has seen considerable success to date as a convening power within the cultural sector to bridge employment programs with industry partners. Recent examples include new partnerships with Toronto Employment and Social Services and the United Way for employment opportunities in the film sector, as well as ongoing efforts to build the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. There is an opportunity to build on these foundations to create employment in other segments of the cultural sector, including the arts, heritage, and entertainment industries.

Examples of potential actions include:

- Expanded strategic workforce development initiatives for Toronto's creative and cultural industries, including apprenticeships, retraining of mid-career workers, mentorship for newcomers, and capacity-building for arts and cultural organizations
- Programs to empower diverse future leaders in culture and heritage, such as TAC's Leadership Lab and EDC's Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Fund
- Activating museums and heritage sites to feed into the creative industries in an effort to attract talent and investment
- Begin to address artist income precarity through changes and enhancements to TAC individual artists' grants
- Collaborating with colleges, universities, training organizations and industry partners to develop programs that respond to future workforce demands
- Ensuring that EDC advisory bodies are reflective of the diversity of the cultural sector, and of the population of the City of Toronto as a whole
- Expanding music programming to build opportunities for emerging artists

Setting Targeted Outcomes

In 2018, the City achieved its longstanding goal of investing \$25 per capita in culture, a target first set as part of the 2003 *Culture Plan for a Creative City* to bring Toronto's investment to a level relative to other major Canadian cities including Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa and Calgary. This target was reached following a series of sustained new investments in culture beginning in 2012. A report by Nordicity cited many positive outcomes of this increased funding, including new opportunities for young and emerging artists, increases in partnerships and collaboration within the sector, and new programs for cultural engagement outside the downtown core.

Looking ahead, the City will continue to assess its per capita investment in culture relative to other Canadian municipalities through the Municipal Benchmarking Network (MBN) Canada, which publishes its findings as part of an annual performance report. While per capita investment will remain an important indicator of the City's support for the culture sector, staff will also consider outcome-based measures when assessing the success of the new strategic priorities. Examples of targeted outcomes are included below.

Proposed Strategic Priority	Examples of Targeted Outcomes
Culture for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More equitable distribution of cultural grants and programs city-wide • Enabling more festivals, events and performances by and for diverse artists and audiences, in all corners of Toronto
Space for Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of affordable performance and preparation spaces, including unlocking City spaces • Reversal of current trend towards venue losses • Enable heritage spaces to become centres for public creativity and local enterprise
Developing Creative Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the film sector to increase production investment to \$3 billion annually • New employment opportunities in arts, heritage, film and entertainment created through skills development programs

Next Steps

If adopted, these strategic priorities will be used to inform the direction of the City's cultural programs and services over the next five years (2020-2024). In addition, budget submissions for investments in culture will be linked to developing new programs and services that address these strategic priorities. Investments in cultural grants, including increases to the Toronto Arts Council, Local Arts Service Organizations, and institutions

currently funded through the Major Cultural Organizations program, will also be targeted to support each of these strategic objectives.

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