

Developing a Cultural Districts Program

Date: October 6, 2021

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture Division, and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Cultural districts are municipally significant areas that have a historical legacy of clustering cultural resources, businesses, not-for-profits and residents which, combined, uplifts the cultural identity and cultural heritage of the neighbourhood. Cultural districts are also unique and complex in terms of their character and community resources available. They occur in cities whether governments recognize them or not through formal designations or programs.

Formal government programs to protect cultural districts are a proven strategic approach to safeguard the living history of diverse communities and advance inclusive economic prosperity through community arts and cultural industries. They provide a combination of tools to support small businesses, and cultural and heritage spaces within areas that are community hubs. They may also support cultural districts as a regional draw for residents, newcomers and tourists to safely gather and feel a sense of belonging while shopping and participating in cultural activities.

At this time, Toronto does not have a formal cultural districts program. This report outlines why Toronto needs to develop a cultural districts program, and the potential benefits it may bring for diverse communities, the city's culture sector, and for Toronto as a whole. The report presents findings from a review of current municipal tools, preliminary findings from meetings with local stakeholders in Church-Wellesley, Little Jamaica, Downtown Chinatown and Geary Avenue, and best practices from cultural district programs around the world.

The purpose of developing a cultural districts program in Toronto is to offer a clear process for local cultural planning, a combination of supports, and a new methodology for communities to advance their priorities. It does not aim to limit benefits to specific neighbourhoods or communities, rather to create an additional and coordinated program for creative place-keeping and place-making in partnership with communities. The recommended next steps are broader engagement and a detailed proposal for a cultural districts program and implementation plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture Division, and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to undertake public engagement on the development of a cultural districts program that strengthens local culture and communities, supports small businesses and retail, and promotes community-owned spaces, and to bring forward a final program design and implementation plan in 2022 that includes the following considerations:
 - a) Eligibility criteria
 - b) Program components
 - c) Community role and ongoing engagement
 - d) Estimated costs and financial impact
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to work with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to identify planning policies that would support cultural districts and be of benefit to communities and neighbourhoods, in particular Church-Wellesley, Little Jamaica, Downtown Chinatown and Geary Avenue.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office to work with Indigenous communities in Toronto to ensure that a cultural districts program reflects communities' priorities regarding place-making and place-keeping, self-determination and is aligned with the upcoming City of Toronto Reconciliation Action Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial impacts arising from the actions contained in this report. There may be financial implications associated with the implementation of the "Cultural District" program in future years and staff should identify these costs as part of the report back in 2022, subject to the outcomes of the public engagement and implementation plan.

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

RECONCILIATION AND EQUITY IMPACT

It is anticipated that, once developed, the cultural districts program's overall reconciliation and equity impact will be highly positive. Indigenous self-determination and priorities will be considered throughout the development of the program and Indigenous communities will be engaged and consulted to ensure that the program design reflects those principles. The program will help address unaffordability of cultural spaces, which may positively impact

access to economic development and cultural opportunities and City services for low-income artists.

Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ and racialized communities' sense of identity and belonging, access to City services, access to City spaces, civic engagement through culture, and access to economic development opportunities may be positively impacted. The development of the cultural districts program will address shared challenges that regard businesses and residents. There will be continued attention to those communities that reflect the local cultural character of neighbourhoods and low-income artists. Throughout early engagement, over 60 community members were consulted, and included 2SLGBTQ+, Black and Chinatown organizations and associations. The program will offer tangible benefits, to be determined through broader engagement that will protect communities' cultural identity and cultural heritage while supporting small businesses and retail.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on January 29, 2020, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to develop long-term recommendations to support the retention and growth of independently owned and operated 2SLGBTQ+ small businesses and cultural space in Church-Wellesley and across the city.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM14.8>

At its meeting on September 30, 2020, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to collaborate with an inter-divisional team to develop a Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan, using an equity lens.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM24.36>

At its meeting on September 30, 2020, City Council directed the City Manager in consultation with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, along with Anti-Black Racism Unit (CABR) to establish the Eglinton West area as a Little Jamaica Heritage and Innovation Hub that recognizes and promotes the local Black history and culture of the area.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM24.17>

At its meeting on December 16, 2020, City Council adopted the Building Back Stronger report, prepared by the City of Toronto COVID-19 Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group. The four key focus areas of the report are Economic Recovery, Anti-Racism and Inclusion, Workforce and Talent, and Arts and Culture.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EC18.15>

At its meeting on December 15, 2020, the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee received a presentation on Indigenous Place-Making.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.AA8.3>

At its meeting on June 8, 2021, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to identify policy and program options to protect Downtown Chinatown's cultural identity, affordable cultural spaces and local retail through a Cultural District Plan or other mechanisms.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.22>

At its meeting on July 14, 2021, City Council recommended a number of measures directed to the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Chief Planner to support local cultural and economic development along Geary Avenue.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH24.1>

COMMENTS

Current Context

Amidst a global pandemic, Toronto is a growing city experiencing rapid urban change. According to Statistics Canada, investment in building construction across the Toronto CMA reached a record \$3.962 billion in July 2021, with expenditures year-to-date tracking 23 percent above last year's pace. Residential projects are fuelling the construction boom, and industrial, commercial and institutional activity are solid but steady. While this growth puts Toronto in an enviable position, there is a concern that long-standing Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities are not equitably engaged or benefiting from the changes at the neighbourhood level. Moreover, Indigenous, Black and racialized communities, local retail and the culture sector are the hardest hit from COVID-19, as noted in the Building Back Stronger report prepared by the City of Toronto Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group in 2020.

Over the past year and half, communities such as Church-Wellesley Village, Little Jamaica, Downtown Chinatown and Geary Avenue have identified common challenges. Specifically there is a call from residents and businesses for the City to create more tools to safeguard the cultural identity and cultural heritage of their areas. People working and living in these communities are struggling to safeguard the ongoing sustainability of their cultural heritage that is at the foundation of creating safe spaces and promoting a sense of belonging. In particular, Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities such as 2SLGBTQ+ and racialized communities, and low-income residents including artists, face long-standing barriers to accessing capital due to systemic racism and discrimination that has had intergenerational impacts.

For example, a study by RBC Thought Leadership called *Building Bandwidth: Preparing Indigenous Youth for a Digital Future* found that while Indigenous high school graduation rates are improving, only 45% of Indigenous Canadians aged 24-35 have a post-secondary education compared to 71% of non-Indigenous Canadians. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of jobs held by Indigenous workers are at risk of a skills overhaul, as data, robotics and advanced technologies drive transformational change in sectors that many Indigenous communities depend on, like the skilled trades. In the case of Black residents, for instance, a recent survey of 300 Black entrepreneurs across Canada by Abacus Data found that 76 percent of Black entrepreneurs surveyed said their race makes it harder to succeed as an entrepreneur, and that access to capital, funding and financing is the greatest barrier for

Black entrepreneurs (Abacus Data, May 2021). Community stakeholders are also calling on the City to develop new tools that protect the rich history of Toronto's multi-cultural and diverse communities, and proactively encourage community ownership of spaces, new cultural employment hubs and local retail.

A review of existing municipal programs in Economic Development and Culture, and legislative tools through City Planning has revealed a gap in City services. Currently, no municipal service specifically addresses ways to protect and advance a community's cultural identity and cultural heritage through a coordinated and ongoing local cultural planning process. This service gap crosses several programming areas including support for arts and culture, main streets, heritage, community planning and tourism. Attachment 1 provides a summary of existing City tools and programs.

Early Engagement Findings

Between February 2020 and October 2021, City staff consulted with hundreds of stakeholders on the long-term sustainability of the Church-Wellesley Village, Little Jamaica, Downtown Chinatown and Geary Avenue. See Attachment 2 for a complete listing of meetings. These consultations took place by phone and virtually. COVID-19 had an impact on the early engagement platforms and timelines. There was a seven-month pause starting on March 18, 2020 due to the City's focus on COVID-19 emergency operations and front-line service delivery. Divisions such as Economic Development and Culture allocated staff to assist other City divisions, and pivoted daily operations to crisis management, and COVID-19 mitigation and recovery efforts for businesses and culture.

In March 2021, the City of Toronto hosted a public meeting about Little Jamaica and over 300 people attended. At that meeting, the community called on the City to develop a clear definition of cultural districts. Between July 2021 and October 2021, the Economic Development and Culture Division met with over 60 people with the goal of understanding their initial ideas and reactions to drafting a new citywide "Cultural Districts" program specifically and how that could result in meaningful benefits for communities. Information was gathered through consultations with individuals, local community associations, businesses and Business Improvement Areas, community leaders and artists, and City advisory bodies and program advisory committees.

The first key finding of the early engagement is that the City recognize the history of oppressed communities clustering into spaces that were not ideal, yet were meaningful for peoples' sense of safety and identity, and supported their economic and social needs. A related theme that emerged is that cultural districts in Toronto are complex places that are a reflection of global and local migration patterns. Many partners and stakeholders mentioned that Toronto's cultural districts embrace the diversity of a multi-cultural and multi-lingual city, and should embody the values of being safe, welcoming, and inclusive places. There was a call, in multiple engagement sessions, for the City to bring forward a combination of policy tools to ensure that an intersectional lens is applied at all times to cultural districts. Intersectionality is a conceptual framework for understanding how an individual has multiple factors of identity, and how society responds with different modes of discrimination and privilege. These identity factors include gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, etc. Applying an intersectional lens to

the development of cultural districts acknowledges the different lived experiences and identities of people in the neighbourhood. The consultations also revealed that there are many significant geographic spaces in Toronto that are now lost, and need recognition and storytelling as part of a cultural districts program.

Another key finding of engagement sessions is that it is important for the City to acknowledge and target root causes of displacement and gentrification, such as affordability and community ownership of spaces. In particular, there is a general agreement that the local main street retail that uplifts the cultural identity of the neighbourhood is one of the defining characteristics of cultural districts and at risk of displacement. These businesses often do not own their spaces, limiting possibilities to create wealth within the community and to maintain the character of the neighbourhood. Preserving existing and creating new, affordable spaces for culture and businesses across the city through a cultural districts program is an important outcome.

Community members consulted during engagement sessions also emphasized that, in addition to supports to cultural districts, the City should ensure municipal government programs for protecting the cultural identity and cultural heritage of Indigenous, Black, equity-deserving communities and low-income artists continues across Toronto. It is of extreme importance to acknowledge that specific geographic areas are meaningful places that serve as community anchors, but that they do not and should not concentrate all of a community's businesses and cultural spaces.

Finally, an important finding from the early engagement with communities is that the cultural district "designation" or "program" be created as a new municipally supported place-making methodology for communities to lead and advance their own priorities and solutions. For Indigenous communities, it is important that the City recognize that all of Toronto is Indigenous and that any efforts to design a cultural districts program should support Indigenous self-determination and increase the visibility of Indigenous cultures and languages. Cultural districts may also offer a unique opportunity to ensure that local cultural heritage resources in neighbourhoods are a launching point for new possibilities to ensure strong, liveable, and healthy futures. For instance, local cultural planning through a cultural districts program may help foster an environment of innovation, and support local businesses and creative scenes in the city – which, in their turn, may lead to sustainable community hubs across Toronto.

International Research Findings

An international jurisdictional review of cultural district programs (Attachment 3) revealed that formal programs to create and support cultural districts have been developed worldwide as a response to similar challenges. In the United States, there are over 343 cultural districts, and countries like Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore have also developed formal programs for cultural districts. In Ontario, Mississauga has recently launched its cultural district implementation plan.

Based on their relevance for the context of Toronto – presence of a formal program, population density and diversity, similar urban development, etc. – in-depth research was conducted for nine cities: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Minneapolis, Sydney,

Singapore, Mississauga, Boston and Houston. The districts analyzed share the interest towards culture-based economic development and celebrating community and history. Combatting unaffordability, increasing tourism, and uplifting communities have also been intended goals.

Findings from the international review of cultural district programs revealed that:

- Most cities require an inventory of local cultural assets and proposed geographic bounds for the designation to be awarded.
- Being a meaningful area in terms of historical and cultural significance is usually an eligibility factor.
- Some cities have cultural districts with a focus on specific communities. Examples are San Francisco's American Indian Cultural District and Castro LGBTQ Cultural District.
- Several cities are proactive in ensuring that Indigenous history is centred in the local cultural plan and reflected in cultural districts.
- A "renewal" process whereby cultural districts report on their activities and demonstrate that they continue to be meaningful for the neighbourhood has been used to ensure their ongoing cultural impact and community engagement. For example in San Francisco, Cultural Districts are required to prepare a Cultural History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategy (CHHESS) report every three years.
- Involving the public, especially local residents and businesses, at several points while creating and drafting their designation process has been a key factor in numerous cities.
- Cultural districts are a tool for communities to develop their own solutions to issues faced by local neighbourhoods, and a way to formalize a partnership between residents, businesses and governments.

Most cities provide a "package" combining multiple supports. For instance, California provides funding, assistance from a consulting team to help the cultural district develop, and partnerships with for-profit organizations. The following are some of the best practices in terms of specific supports provided to communities as part of cultural district programs:

- A cultural fund to financially support cultural districts throughout their development.
- Rent discounts for local businesses, and building residences with flexible design for artists so that their living space can double as a studio space, thereby increasing affordability.
- Supports for small business formation and retention, which includes hiring businesses from the district and supporting them through marketing on travel sites and platforms.

As legislative powers may differ when compared to other cities analyzed in the jurisdictional review, best practices identified above may serve as reference and inspiration to create a cultural districts program in Toronto. It is also important to note that the findings relate to protecting the historical aspects of communities and enabling the development of creative employment areas, cultural clusters, and future community hubs.

Finally, since Toronto is home to businesses that have anchored communities for decades – such as GladDay Bookshop, the oldest LGBTQIA bookstore worldwide – research identified

the legacy business program in San Francisco as a best practice to be considered. The program provides grants to businesses that have operated for over 30 years and that have contributed to the neighbourhood's identity. The legacy business program supports and protects businesses that provide a sense of belonging for communities.

Preliminary Analysis

A cultural districts program will bring several benefits for communities and for Toronto. It is aligned with the City's strategic priority to invest in people and neighbourhoods, and is an opportunity to create an innovative approach to protecting communities' local culture and to advancing inclusive economic development. It is also aligned with recommendations in the City's Building Back Stronger report, namely by: promoting local resilience, expanding opportunities for small businesses, preserving affordable spaces for culture, and advancing opportunities for cultural engagement.

The proposed cultural districts program, once developed, will also ensure the efficient use of City resources, creating a transparent and clear process, and establishing new tools to address ongoing and emerging challenges for communities and neighbourhoods. The complex issues faced by communities as identified in the Council directives and in early engagement require a coordinated approach that is not yet offered by the City. The cultural districts program will be a new strategic place-keeping and place-making methodology to address local cultural planning in a coordinated way and in partnership with communities.

As a guiding principle, and based on early engagement, the program will acknowledge that communities are complex, made of different generations, political views and mindsets that need to be considered. It will also recognize that diversity is inherently valuable, and that culture is often not bounded by a single ethnicity, race, and or by linguistic affinities. In a multicultural city like Toronto, cultural districts may need further attention because of the existence of multiple communities that form and foster a collective, rich, and unique sense of belonging and neighbourhood character.

The cultural districts program will be in addition to the many City of Toronto suite of tools that help protect and promote communities' sense of identity and belonging – partially outlined in Attachment 1. The Ontario Heritage Act, as an example, allows municipalities to identify and conserve heritage properties, including cultural heritage landscapes. Whereas tools under the Ontario Heritage Act protect real physical property for communities, the cultural districts program will provide a set of tools to protect cultural activities and small businesses that occupy all types of buildings and landscapes within a geographic area. The cultural districts program will be a new and a complementary set of tools for communities to advance their own place-making and place-keeping solutions.

Continued action is needed on property tax relief for the creative sector, unlocking City-owned spaces for cultural uses, and funding support for capital projects and improvements. A cultural districts program may enhance existing efforts by the City to protect and create affordable cultural spaces and housing to ensure that Toronto's cultural scene can continue to flourish. The focus of the cultural districts program will be on communities, small businesses and cultural spaces – and not on individual property owners. It will be developed with consideration to existing municipal programs, such as the ones led by the

Business Improvement Area (BIA) Office and others, in order to identify and develop tools to achieve the goals of cultural districts.

The proposed development of a program for cultural districts will follow best practices identified in the international jurisdictional review. Broader engagement, as a next step, will help ensure that adequate tools are part of the program, and that the program's design and implementation are built in a way that addresses the considerations identified in early engagement. Finally, the program will maintain and promote Toronto's identity and reputation as a multicultural, diverse city that welcomes all communities.

Next Steps

As next steps, the Economic Development and Culture division will work with City Planning and the Indigenous Affairs Office to determine considerations for the creation of a "Cultural Districts" program, including meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities. Broad public engagement will follow through the winter, and will inform a staff report with the implementation plan, timelines, resources, governance, financial, and community benefits.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Summary of Existing City Tools and Programs
2. Early Engagement List of Meetings
3. International Review of Cultural District Programs

ATTACHMENT 1. Summary of Existing City Tools and Programs

The following lists ten existing and relevant City of Toronto and Government of Ontario policy tools and programs to support local communities in developing their cultural resources.

1. Cultural Corridors and Trails

ERA Architects Inc. and Jeff Evenson originally introduced the concept of "Cultural Corridors" to Toronto in 2001 through the Waterfront Heritage and Cultural Infrastructure Plan. The study identified corridors that connected the waterfront to the cultural resources of the city on John Street, Yonge Street, and Jarvis Street. A cultural corridor can be defined and interpreted in different ways, but it is a term often used for a district or route featuring or connecting multiple cultural attractions, regarded as a centre of tourism or urban revitalization.

In 2016, the City responded to a request from a consortium called the Bloor Street Cultural Partnership to officially recognize Bloor Street between Bay Street and Bathurst Street as a Cultural Corridor. The purpose of the recognition was to promote and develop the area as a cultural tourism destination. More than a dozen permanent world-class arts organizations presenting professional arts and culture events activate the route. These include:

- Alliance Française de Toronto
- Bata Shoe Museum
- A Different Booklist Cultural Centre
- Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema
- Gardiner Museum
- Istituto Italiano di Cultura
- Japan Foundation Toronto
- Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre
- Museum of Estonians Abroad (VEMU)
- The Music Gallery
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Randolph Centre for the Arts
- The Royal Conservatory / Koerner Hall
- Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)
- Soundstreams
- Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir
- Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
- The Toronto Consort
- Toronto Reference Library
- The University of Toronto Faculty of Music
- Women's Art Association of Canada
- 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media + Education

The City is currently studying a proposed Northwest Cultural Trail that focuses on promoting Indigenous and Black heritage landscapes and cultural attractions, improving access to Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and encouraging active transportation. The goal is to connect several multiuse paths in ravines, parks, POPS (privately owned public spaces), active transportation bridges, greenways and streets into a 28 km active transportation and cultural route.

2. Citywide Neighbourhood Arts Network

Following the release of a study regarding the challenges experienced by artists attempting to engage their local communities, the Toronto Arts Foundation created the Neighbourhood Arts Network in 2010. It is a citywide network of over 1,900 members including artists, arts organizations, cultural workers and community agencies working throughout the City of Toronto, from North York to the downtown core, and from Etobicoke to Scarborough. The Network aims to catalyze new relationships, share information, and help artists and community organizations transform Toronto into a more vibrant, beautiful, livable city.

3. Cultural Hotspots - Celebrating Community Arts

Cultural Hotspot is an annual celebration of arts, culture and community led by the City to connect and invest in Toronto's diverse outside-the-core neighbourhoods. From May to December, the program shines a spotlight on communities on a rotating basis in East York/East End, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough and York. By supporting community art projects that highlight art in public places and that provides opportunities for youth mentorship and employment, the program inspires a new vision about where culture thrives in the city.

4. Affordable Cultural Space

Artscape is the city's largest not-for-profit real estate developer of affordable cultural live and work spaces for artists and arts organizations. Artscape has worked in Toronto for over thirty years, and in 2006 coined the term "creative place-making" as the practice of leveraging the power of art, culture and creativity to catalyze change, growth and transformation of place.

5. Investment in Cultural Activity and Organizations

In 2020, the City of Toronto invested \$35 million into Toronto's \$9 billion cultural sector primarily through Toronto Arts Council or TAC. TAC funds individuals, not-for-profit organizations, and collectives. This funding supports the City's priority of serving Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities; and uses public procurement to encourage supply chain innovation to deliver positive outcomes, also co-funding culture sector activity by pooling funds with other orders of government and the private sector.

6. Property Tax Relief

Charities

Federally registered [charities](#) that are located in commercial or industrial property may qualify for a 40% rebate of the property taxes payable under the City's rebate program for registered charities. On average, approximately 700 charitable organizations receive property tax rebates annually under this program. Charities that occupy space within the residential tax class pay property taxes at residential tax rates.

Ethno-cultural Centres

Additionally, a small number of charities receive a 100% rebate of property taxes under the City's rebate programs for veteran's clubhouses or [ethno-cultural centres](#), while others may operate as charities in name only, without staff and without dedicated office space staff that would require a tax exemption.

Live Theatres

All live theatre venues in Ontario under 1000 seats pay no property taxes.
[Assessment Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. A.31 \(ontario.ca\)](#)

Small theatres

Section 26 of the Assessment Act: Land used as a theatre that contains fewer than 1,000 seats and that, when it is used in the taxation year, is used predominantly to present live performances of drama, comedy, music or dance. This paragraph does not apply to land used as a dinner theatre, nightclub, tavern, cocktail lounge, bar, striptease club or similar establishment. This paragraph does not apply to a building that was converted to a theatre unless the conversion involved modifications to the building.

Large non-profit theatres

Section 27 of the Assessment Act: Land owned by a non-profit corporation without share capital, other than any portion of the land occupied for more than 90 consecutive days by an entity other than a non-profit corporation without share capital, on which is situated a theatre containing at least 1,000 seats that is used for a total of at least 183 days in the taxation year for the rehearsal or presentation of live performances of drama, comedy, music or dance, including opera or ballet, if the live performances are not presented with the intention of generating profit, including land on which such a theatre is being constructed, but not if,

- i. the theatre is operated or will be operated after it is constructed by an entity other than a non-profit corporation without share capital,
- ii. the land is used as a dinner theatre, nightclub, tavern, cocktail lounge, bar, striptease club or similar establishment, or
- iii. an establishment described in subparagraph ii is being constructed on the land.

Creative Space and Music Venues

The [Creative Co-Location Facilities](#) Property Tax Subclass supports sustainability and growth of creative enterprises and live music venues in Toronto. By incentivizing creative collaboration, arts accessibility and local live music, the Tax Subclass allows hubs of creative activity to thrive in the city. Properties must be designated as a Creative Co-Location Facility by the City of Toronto to be included under the property tax subclass. A property may apply for inclusion in the Creative Co-Location Facilities Property Tax Subclass in one of the following categories:

- Tenant-Based Operating Model
- Membership-Based Co-Working Model
- Live Music Venues

7. *Culture Sector Strategic Planning*

The City acts as a convenor and champion to set the agenda and to coordinate government action in partnership with the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors. In the past ten years, City Council adopted several culture sector strategies including *the Toronto Public Art Strategy* (2020), *Toronto Nightlife Action Plan* (2019), *Spotlight on Toronto Film Strategy* (2017) and *Toronto Music Strategy* (2016). City advisory committees such as the Toronto Music Advisory Council, the Film Board, and the Night Economy Working Group chaired by Toronto's first Ambassador for the Night Economy, ensures the strategic plans are living documents. Sector-based strategies can facilitate collaboration with different actors across the sector to identify common goals, deliver outcomes, create platforms for stakeholders to share ideas, and build awareness and confidence in new opportunities for municipal program delivery.

[The Ontario Culture Strategy](#): Telling our stories, growing our economy (2015) Strengthen culture in communities - Focus on strengthening community-based arts, culture and heritage "This goal also recognizes that sharing and celebrating our diverse cultures enrich our lives, build cross-cultural understanding, and encourage us to take pride in where we live and what we have accomplished together."

8. *BIA Physical Improvements and Branding of Main Streets*

The concept of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) first originated in 1970 with a group of business owners in the Bloor-Jane area of west Toronto. Business owners were concerned about the decline of their main street caused by the growing popularity of shopping malls, and an extended subway system, both of which were drawing shoppers away from their traditional retail area. Business owners created their own self-help program to pool their own money to promote their main street and to make several physical improvements to the area such as banners, flowers, etc. in order to bring customers back. This not only benefited the local businesses, but also the entire neighbourhood. Today, there are over 80 BIAs in the city of Toronto.

9. *Conserving Cultural Heritage Resources*

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. Cultural heritage resources are considered irreplaceable and valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

The Ontario Heritage Act is the key provincial legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources within municipal boundaries. Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the Act as well as properties that have not been designated but City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest."

To be designated under section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, a property must meet one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest. Provincial criteria include consideration of design or physical value, historical or associative value, and contextual value. Under historical or associative value, the criteria allow a property to be valued for a past use related to a person, organization or event that is important to a community. If a property is identified for its association with a significant person or event, but the physical evidence from that period has disappeared, the property's cultural heritage value is diminished.

While research of a property is undertaken to understand the evolution of a property and is considered in heritage evaluation, the Ontario Heritage Act does not control the use of a property. The Ontario Heritage Act permits the conservation of real property, including archaeology, buildings, structures, monuments, and geographic areas that have cultural heritage value or interest to a community, including an Indigenous community. Properties can be identified for potential inclusion on the Heritage Register in a number of ways, including through a formal nomination process, through a review of a development application, or through a heritage study. Heritage studies include Cultural Heritage Resource Assessments (CHRAs), Cultural Heritage Landscape studies, and Heritage Conservation District studies. CHRAs provide an opportunity to identify heritage resources and inform the development of area-specific policies and guidelines. CHRA recommendations may include adding individual properties to the Heritage Register, or that further study be done to determine if the area merits conservation as a Cultural Heritage Landscape or Heritage Conservation District.

The City of Toronto offers two heritage incentive programs to assist owners of eligible properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act with the cost of conservation: the Heritage Grant Program and the Heritage Tax Rebate Program.

10. Land Use Planning Policy Context

Land use planning in the Province of Ontario is a policy-led system. Any decision of Council related to land use planning is required to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) ("PPS"), and to conform with applicable provincial plans which, in the case of the City of Toronto, include: A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) ("Growth Plan") and, where applicable, the Greenbelt Plan (2017). The PPS and all provincial plans may be found on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website.

The Cultural Districts Program will be informed by municipal and provincial policy documents. This section provides an overview of those documents.

The Planning Act

The Planning Act governs land use planning in Ontario and establishes the means by which a municipality must implement land use planning decisions.

In particular, Section 2 of the Planning Act requires that municipalities, when carrying out their responsibility under this Act, have regard for matters of provincial interest including:

- (d) the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;
- (h) the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- (i) the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;
- (j) the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;
- (k) the adequate provision of employment opportunities;
- (n) the resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private interests;
- (o) the protection of public health and safety;
- (p) the appropriate location of growth and development;
- (q) the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians;
- (r) the promotion of built form that,
 - (i) is well-designed,
 - (ii) encourages a sense of place, and
 - (iii) provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant; and
- (s) the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate.

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) (the "PPS") provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- The efficient and wise use and management of land and infrastructure over the long term in order to minimize impacts on air, water and other resources;
- Protection of the natural and built environment;
- Building strong, sustainable and resilient communities that enhance health and social well-being by ensuring opportunities exist locally for employment;
- Residential development promoting a mix of housing; recreation, parks and open space; and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit; and
- Encouraging a sense of place, by promoting well designed built form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

Growth Plan

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) ("Growth Plan") came into effect on August 28, 2020. The Growth Plan (2020) continues to provide a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region, of which the City forms an integral part.

The Growth Plan builds on the PPS to establish a unique land use planning framework for the GGH that supports the achievement of complete communities, a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment, and social equity. There are relevant policies in the Growth Plan that refer to the identification and conservation of cultural heritage resources in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities.

Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan is a comprehensive policy document that guides development in the City, providing direction for managing the size, location, and built form compatibility of different land uses and the provision of municipal services and facilities. Authority for the Official Plan derives from the *Planning Act*. The PPS recognizes the Official Plan as the most important document for its implementation.

The Official Plan contains policies related to building complete communities, heritage conservation, community services, transportation, and environmental stewardship. The

Official Plan also provides for the use of Section 37 of the *Planning Act* to pass by-laws for increases in height and/or density not otherwise permitted by the Zoning By-law in return for the provision of community benefits in the form of capital facilities and local improvements.

The Official Plan, Chapter 3, Building a Successful City includes section 3.5.2, on "Creating a Cultural Capital". It makes the case that a great city offers and promotes a vibrant cultural life and recognizes the contribution the arts make to the quality of life of its residents. For example, a flourishing cultural life is a magnet attracting new residents to the city and convincing existing residents to stay. Policies in the Official Plan include supporting a full range of arts and cultural activities that express the cultural diversity of communities, and access to City owned facilities and properties for community arts, arts education, rehearsal, storage, studio and administrative spaces. There are also policies in the Official Plan that state new not-for-profit arts and cultural facilities in development will be promoted through development incentives and public initiatives. Finally, policy 3.5.2.5 directly states, "concentration of cultural activities will be promoted to create arts districts and corridors that can collectively draw visitors and revitalize communities."

ATTACHMENT 2. Early Engagement List of Meetings

Date	Title	Attendance (not including City staff)
February 26, 2020	Pride Toronto	3
March 5, 2020	The 519	2
March 5, 2020	Church-Wellesley Business Improvement Area	1
March 10, 2020	Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO) Toronto Branch	2
March 16, 2020	Director and Cinematographer	1
	ERA Architects Inc.	2
	Business owner on Church - Wellesley	1
March 17, 2020	Toronto Queer Culture Now	1
	Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC)	1
March 4, 2021	Little Jamaica Launch Event	300
March 31, 2021	City of Mississauga	1
April 9, 2021	Minneapolis	1
April 28, 2021	San Francisco	2
July 20, 2021	Friends of Chinatown	2
August 10, 2021	Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee	7
August 17, 2021	Black Urbanism TO	4
	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit Partnership and Accountability Circle	9
August 26, 2021	Economic Development and Culture, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Program Advisory Committee	7
August 31, 2021	Chinatown Business Improvement Area	3
September 1, 2021	Friends of Kensington Market	1

Date	Title	Attendance (not including City staff)
September 8, 2021	Church-Wellesley Business Improvement Area	2
	ERA Architects Inc.	2
	The 519	2
September 13, 2021	Local Historian in Downtown Chinatown	1
	Cecil Community Centre	1
	Pride Toronto	1
September 24, 2021	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee	10
September 27, 2021	2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee	12
	Geary Avenue Working Group	10