



To: TO Live Planning and Priorities Committee

From: AMS Planning & Research

Date: August 26, 2021

Re: Pre-read for September 3, 2021 P&P meeting

MEMO

The attached materials provide background information for our meeting on September 3rd. We have completed all Phase I (Situation Analysis) and most of Phase 2 (Assets and Opportunities) tasks. The upcoming meeting is to set the "Statement of Target State," or Purpose Statement for TO Live.

At our last meeting we presented the definition of future success for TO Live to be:

- Community awareness and engagement
- Wide-ranging recognition
- Broad, inclusive program offerings
- Continued nurturing of current, and developing new partnerships
- Robust activity and attendance
- Diverse staff and Board
- Board alignment
- Straightforward fiscal model with revenue diversification

Success can be measured in multiple ways, depending upon the agreed 'purpose' of TO Live. Clarity and alignment on "why" TO Live exists also drives decision-making around organizational and financial structure as well as programming and citizen engagement.

Purpose	Why you do it and for whom
Vision	The impacts you aspire to make
Mission	What you do
Values	How you do it



TO Live mandate

TO Live was formed in 2015 with the mandate to *“provide quality performance and event facilities and to promote its contribution to the artistic, cultural and social vitality of Toronto and its communities.”*

The attached memo, which summarizes the results of our recent internal (staff and board) survey, suggests that this mandate, appropriate to amalgamation, may no longer sufficiently represent TO Live’s aspirational purpose for the future.

- While offering quality technical and production facilities rated as a high priority, over 90% of survey respondents also rated the following two statements as ‘important’ or ‘essential’ (and were the highest ranked statements overall):
 - o Form deeper relationships with the culturally diverse communities in and around Toronto
 - o Be a significant resource for Toronto’s artists and arts organizations

Further, interviews with external constituents highlighted TO Live’s opportunity to enhance collaborations and become a “community gathering place.” In our parlance to become an ‘anchor arts institution’¹ for Greater Toronto.

- External interviewees stressed the importance of community relationship building with such statements as *“TO Live could have a significant impact on the GTA if it would further engage the community;”* and *“Success for TO Live would include participation that reflected the diversity of Toronto.”*

In a recent workshop with TO Live staff to review research findings, the discussion focused on a more proactive role for TO LIVE as a community catalyst. This is consistent with the emerging brand proposition that will be presented to the board in September.

¹ <https://mellon.org/shared-experiences-blog/anchor-arts-institutions-what-are-they-and-how-can-they-enrich-communities/>



The state of the art

The second attachment, a white paper on the evolution of the modern-day performing arts center, suggests that there are multiple pathways to success, each associated with different degrees of activation and risk determined largely by their overarching purpose.

Activate the assets. This “Landlord” centre prioritizes efficiency, driving utilization of building assets through a diverse slate of users. The resulting impact can be documented through direct and indirect economic benefit to users, neighbours, and regional partners. Programming is typically driven by commercial partners and resident companies with minimal financial risk. The “Landlord” PAC can be exemplified by TO Live immediately following amalgamation and by the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga, which runs a multi-purpose venue which offers 210,000 square feet of technically advanced theatres, meeting rooms and exhibit space with effectively all performance programming by others.

Enable local artists and arts organizations. The “Host” PAC looks to its arts ecosystem to drive success. Creative industries collaboration is key to animating building assets. Community activation through arts and cultural participation is just as important, with success measured through the positive impacts on arts organizations, artists, and communities. Calgary’s ArtsCommons, which programs over 800 events across its nine venues annually with a bit over 10% at-risk and nearly 50% produced by resident companies, is an example of a successful “Host” performing arts centre. The venue operator fills gaps in available programming rather than driving toward outcomes of meeting community interest and demand.

Engage communities. This ‘Presenter’ centre drives activation by complementing community programming with significantly expanded content delivered under its own control. Resource investment across programming, marketing, operations, capital development, and innovation is directly tied to access to content. Success is realized by effective economic operations and by advancing social justice and enabling the inclusion of historically marginalized voices in culture-making. Ottawa’s National Arts Centre which has, most recently, invested in the creation, dissemination, and celebration of Indigenous Peoples performance arts through the NAC Indigenous Theatre represents a “Presenter” PAC.



None of these are mutually exclusive, and all engage in similar lines of business. But with clarity of purpose, they prioritize different outcomes and structure themselves operationally and financially accordingly.

Thinking about 'purpose'

As we begin our next stage of work and address how TO Live can most effectively deploy its assets and meet the opportunities for cultural expression in greater Toronto, and based upon the research and conversations to date, The following proposed Purpose Statement has been drafted for consideration by the committee:

TO Live's purpose is to leverage our assets and expertise to reshape our cultural landscape in order to make space for the diverse voices of the City of Toronto.

This memo and the accompanying documents will lay a sound foundation for our upcoming discussion on September 3rd. We look forward to your input and feedback.