

ATTACHMENT 3

TORONTO'S CREATIVE CAPITAL GAINS

2011-2023

In May 2011, City Council adopted the last culture plan, ***Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto***.¹ This plan centred on six recommendations to support the growth of Toronto's cultural sector and to position Toronto as an international creative capital. This document includes an overview of the plan's achievements.

Recommendation 1: We recommend that the City ensure a supply of affordable, sustainable space.

To advance this, the City:

- Integrated cultural and heritage resources into the City's wayfinding initiatives.
- Completed a community **cultural space inventory** of City-owned and non-City locations in 2014.
- Established the **Office for Cultural Space** in 2022 to advocate for preserving existing spaces and develop new spaces.
- Brought together three iconic City-owned venues into the single umbrella agency **TO Live** in 2015: Meridian Hall (formerly the Sony Centre), St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and Meridian Arts Centre (formerly the Toronto Centre for the Arts); and renovated North York's **Meridian Centre** in 2016 in response to changing theatre productions and community needs.
- Distributed cultural facility capital repair funds to 39 arts, culture, and heritage organizations as part of the **Culture Build Program**.
- Introduced the **Creative Co-Location Facilities Property Subclass** in 2018, an annual tax reduction program supporting the sustainability and growth of creative enterprises, including live music venues, in Toronto.
- Opened the **Clark Centre for the Arts** in Scarborough in 2022, offering exhibitions, art studios, art courses, workshops and more.
- From 2011 to 2023, invested \$97 million in maintaining, repairing, and restoring heritage sites across **Toronto History Museums as well as 100 other City-owned heritage properties**; and funded over \$18 million in the maintenance and repair of theatres and halls across the City.

¹ <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/9655-Creative-Capital-Gains-Report-Action-Plan-for-Toronto2011.pdf>

- Through the dedication of Section 37 funds levied on property developments, contributed to the development of dozens of **cultural infrastructure projects** including the Wildseed Centre for Art & Activism, the Blackhurst Cultural Centre, Massey Hall, MABELLEpark with MABELLEarts, the Neilson Park Creative Centre, Tapestry Opera, and Nightwood Theatre at 877 Yonge and many more.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the City ensure access and opportunity for cultural participation to all citizens regardless of age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, geography, or socioeconomic status.

To expand cultural participation throughout Toronto, the City:

- Invested in new programs led by the Toronto Arts Council (TAC) to host projects in parks and public spaces outside the downtown core – for example, **Animating Toronto Parks, Animating Historic Sites, Artists in the Library**.
- Launched dedicated new programs through the Toronto Arts Council to support Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving artists, organizations and communities, including the **Indigenous Arts Program, Black Arts Program and Newcomer and Refugee Arts programs**.
- Created **North York Arts (2011) and East End Arts (2013)**, incubated by the Toronto Arts Foundation, for a total of six Local Art Service Organizations (LASOs) focussed on delivering community arts outside the downtown.
- Developed the **Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative** in 2019 focussed on enhancing the growth, capacity, and long-term sustainability of small and mid-sized youth-serving or youth-led arts organizations.
- Launched the **Cultural Hotspot** in 2014 – an annual arts and culture program celebrating communities across Toronto, particularly outside of the downtown core, offering opportunities for youth employment and mentorship.
- Launched the **Indigenous Arts Festival** in 2012 with founding partner the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, with anchor partner **Na-Me-Res** joining in 2015 with its renowned **Na-Me-Res Pow Wow**.
- Offered everyday encounters with art and vibrant public spaces by installing **over 2,600 new works of public art** since 2013.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that the City support the development of creative clusters and emerging cultural scenes to capitalize on their potential as generators of jobs and economic growth.

To encourage this, the City:

- Completed cultural cluster studies and mapping projects, such as the King-Spadina cultural spaces retention study (2017).

- Opened the **Weston Cultural Common Hub** in 2019, establishing a community gathering place to support Weston Mount Dennis community's rich arts, culture, and heritage.
- Supported more than **1,500 film, television, digital and commercial productions** each year, representing 35,000 jobs in an industry that has today grown to over \$2 billion annually in economic investment.
- Opened the **Music Office** in 2014 and released two **Toronto Music Strategies** (2016 and 2022) to promote and foster growth of this important sector and created a dedicated **Creative Technology Office** in 2021 focused on supporting video games, immersive and e-sports industries.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that the City promote its cultural institutions, festivals and other assets to enhance its position as a Creative City regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Creative Cultural Gains encouraged the growth of Toronto's cultural tourism and further developed Toronto's status as a Creative Capital. To achieve this, the City:

- Promoted Toronto's vast arts and cultural talents with major events such as the **World Pride (2014)**, **North American Indigenous Games (2017)**, and the **Invictus Games (2017)**.
- Collaborated with the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games organizing committee to produce **Panamania Live**, 23 days of dazzling, free arts and cultural activities in Nathan Phillips Square.
- Invested in the launch of the **Toronto Biennial of Art** in 2019 to showcase new horizons in contemporary art through free and accessible contemporary arts programming.
- Opened the **Fort York Visitor Centre** in 2014 as a hub where Toronto's past and present meet to spark discussions of shared futures, including the exhibition *Ntambaadziwin: Maadzing wenjiskwak (First Nations: Surviving Injustice)* developed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.
- Received designation from **UNESCO as a Creative City for Media Arts** in 2017.
- Shifted to a digital-first approach to marketing with strong web and social media presence at the centre of the City's event marketing strategies.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that the City keep pace with international competitors by making a firm commitment to sustain Toronto's cultural sector and position Toronto as a leading, globally competitive Creative Capital.

Creative Capital Gains recognized the importance of both private and public funding to support a flourishing culture sector. The City advanced the following investments:

- Increased **investment in cultural grants** by almost 50% since 2013, from approximately \$25.3 million to over \$37.6 million in 2018, and surpassed goal of investing \$25 per capita in culture in 2018.

- Challenged the private sector to match increased municipal cultural funding with the **artsvest program**, developed in partnership with Business for the Arts, Canadian Heritage, and the Toronto Arts Council, offering skill development for small to mid-sized arts organizations.
- Launched the **Indigenous Arts and Culture Partnerships Fund** in 2018 to support new opportunities and visibility for Indigenous-led arts and culture. From 2018-2023, there were 52 successful grant applicants with over \$1.2 million distributed.

Recommendation 6: We recommend that the mayor take a leadership role in Toronto's creative capital strategy.

Creative Capital Gains acknowledged the significance of strong leadership in promoting Toronto's cultural sector. The City has since:

- Supported Mayor-led initiatives to support the arts, such as the annual **Mayor's Evening for the Arts** in support of the Toronto Arts Foundation.
- Promoted Toronto's expansive film industry abroad and locally through the Mayor's annual **Los Angeles Mission** (beginning in 2016), the **xoTO House at the Toronto International Film Festival** (launched in 2018), and the **xoTO Toronto Loves Film** campaign (launched in 2017).