



# **Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto 2025-2035**

**Presentation to the  
Economic and Community Development Committee  
October 23, 2024**

# Why – Rationale for a new Culture Plan

- Culture makes a critical contribution to Toronto, including \$8.4 billion to the city's GDP and 146,000 jobs, and it makes Toronto one of the best places to live, work and visit.
- The City's previous culture plan – [Creative Capital Gains](#) – was adopted in 2011, and its actions have largely been achieved.
- Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto's culture sector is facing a crisis of instability, marked by challenges including loss of venues, access to space, affordability, sustainability, and equity.
- A new Action Plan is needed to address these critical challenges, while seizing the opportunity to better connect residents with culture to foster a more vibrant, inclusive city. The cost of inaction is a threat to the liveability and prosperity of Toronto.

# What – An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto

- The Action Plan for Culture in Toronto sets an ambitious ten-year vision for culture in Toronto, driven by community and enabled by the City.
  - Definition of culture includes the arts, creative industries, and museums and heritage.
- The Plan outlines 4 priority areas encompassing 28 actions.
  - **Culture Everywhere**
  - **Culture for the Future**
  - **Culture for All**
  - **Culture Beyond Our Borders**
- Actions include:
  - **Urgent actions** to address the immediate needs of the sector; and
  - **Longer-term, transformational actions** to achieve systemic change.
- Progress will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reported publicly through an online dashboard, and as part of the new Mayor's Culture Summit.

# Plan Development Process

## Community Engagement

- Facilitated by Monumental Projects
- Over **4,000 residents** engaged through:
  - Virtual town halls
  - Artist-led in-person engagement
  - Focus groups and sector outreach
  - Online surveys

## Research and Data Analysis

- Partnership with University of Toronto's School of Cities to map sector trends, analyze economic indicators, and develop an outcomes framework
- Research on global best practices to support cultural industries

## External Advisory Panel

- Panel of 20 community and sector leaders providing advice and expertise to guide process and validate direction for plan
- Co-Chairs: Councillor Shelley Carroll and maxine bailey, Executive Director, Canadian Film Centre

# Vision and Priorities

**Toronto will be a city where everyone can discover, create, and experience culture.**

**Culture  
Everywhere**

**Culture for  
All**

**Culture for  
the Future**

**Culture  
Beyond Our  
Borders**

# Targets for the Action Plan

## Culture Everywhere

- Over the next ten years, the City will support the development of **one million square feet of new cultural space** in Toronto.

## Culture For All

- Every resident will have access to at least **one free cultural experience in their neighbourhood** supported by the City each month.

## Culture For the Future

- The City will increase its investment in culture by **\$35 million over the next ten years** to retain, rebuild, and reimagine culture in Toronto.

## Culture Beyond Our Borders

- The City will support **1,000 new creative export and artist exchange projects** over the next ten years.

# Urgent Actions

Culture Everywhere	Culture for All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify cultural space needs across the city</li><li>• Protect and expand existing spaces to prevent the displacement of creatives and businesses</li><li>• Open City- and privately-owned spaces for short- and long-term cultural use</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve the distribution of City's cultural funding and other resources</li><li>• Deepen support for Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities</li><li>• Grow audiences through marketing, promotion and discoverability</li><li>• Enable more cultural experiences city-wide</li></ul>
Culture for the Future	Culture Beyond Our Borders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve and expand grant programs</li><li>• Invest in transformative sector-wide initiatives</li><li>• Collect and share robust data and research</li><li>• Advocate for sector needs to other orders of government</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enable new international exchanges, residencies and exhibition opportunities</li><li>• Increase foreign direct investment through trade missions and outreach</li><li>• Leverage large-scale events to boost cultural tourism</li></ul>

# Urgent Actions Year 1 – Invest and Connect

To achieve the change we want to see in ten years' time, we must first address instability facing the culture sector, and connect people to culture, and creatives to opportunities.

Invest in Culture	Connect with Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New funding directly to artists and organizations through Toronto Arts Council</li><li>• Indexing all cultural grants to inflation beginning in 2025</li><li>• Improve funding and support for festivals</li><li>• Invest in sector capacity-building initiatives for non-profit organizations and creative industries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Launch inaugural Mayor's Culture Summit</li><li>• Engage with culture locally through new Cultural Districts Program</li><li>• Boost programming outside the core through investments in Local Arts Service Organizations</li><li>• Improve promotion and discoverability of culture</li></ul>



# Longer Term Transformational Actions

To achieve the change we want to see in ten years' time, we must also address the structural issues currently challenging the sustainability of the culture sector

- Alternative models of cultural space ownership and operation
- Audience development initiatives, including demand-side incentives
- Unlocking greater value through new partnerships including corporate and philanthropic sources
- Closer links alignment of artists and cultural workers in the not-for-profit arts sector with career opportunities in the creative industries
- Support for changes in cultural organizations that lead to greater sustainability, including shared resources

# Sample Success Indicators

<p><b>Culture Everywhere</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-over-year change in square footage of cultural and creative space (measured against 2024 baseline).</li> <li>• Increase # of spaces and supports provided to Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving creatives throughout the city.</li> <li>• Increase in # of properties supported through Creative Co-Location Property Tax Subclass.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture For All</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect experiences and feedback on programming to monitor relevance, increased access and impact on audiences.</li> <li>• Increase # of participants and attendance at City cultural sites and experiences.</li> <li>• Increase # of Indigenous-led initiatives supported.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Culture for the Future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase # of organizations supported.</li> <li>• Increase in \$ for funding and grant programs.</li> <li>• Track cultural industry employment and income rates and work with all orders of government to ensure growing employment rate, successful workforce and increased workforce investment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture Beyond our Borders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase # of national and international cultural exchange programs to share knowledge, skill and showcase Toronto talent.</li> <li>• Track # of creative industries, cultural and non-cultural businesses location and growth in Toronto.</li> <li>• Increase in % of visitors coming to Toronto for cultural experiences.</li> </ul>

# Financial Impact

- Culture Connects includes 28 actions, with many to be implemented within existing divisional resources. For 2025, EDC is asking Council to approve \$5.247 million gross and net in new funding (including 5.5 FTEs) to support immediate work on 9 unfunded urgent actions.
  - This includes \$4.775 million that will be directly invested in cultural organizations and creative industries through new funding and development opportunities, \$125K in new funding to connect communities to cultural experiences through outreach and promotion, and \$346.6K in staffing resources including new cultural outreach staff across the city.
  - Additional resources required to deliver upon this Action Plan will be proposed through future reporting and annual budget processes.



**Thank You**

**Questions?**