

From: [Miriam Kramer](#)
To: [Economic and Community Development](#)
Subject: [External Sender] My comments for 2024.EC16.1 on October 23, 2024 Economic and Community Development Committee
Date: October 21, 2024 1:22:13 PM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the October 23, 2024 Economic and Community Development Committee meeting on item 2024.EC16.1, Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto (2025-2035)

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

On behalf of OCAD University, I am pleased to provide these comments to **request that the Economic Community Development Committee support the recommendations and financial plan outlined in Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto (2025-2035).**

The plan lays out an ambitious but attainable agenda that envisions a Toronto where culture is accessible to all, addressing the challenges facing artists, venues, and audiences, and outlines a bold vision for a more inclusive and thriving cultural scene.

This is a vision that we share at OCAD University, Canada's oldest and largest art, design and media university. OCAD U is located in downtown Toronto, in the heart of city's cultural district. Nearly 5,000 students are currently enrolled in our 18 undergraduate and 7 graduate programs in study areas ranging from Indigenous Visual Culture to Digital Futures, to Design for Health and Strategic Foresight and Innovation. Our 800 faculty and staff and more than 25,000 alumni contribute to the city's creative industries and beyond, but they struggle with finding affordable work and living spaces and with earning enough to meet Toronto's high cost of living.

As an urban institution, OCAD U has been a leader and partner in city-building initiatives like BigArtTO, Nuit Blanche and ArtHubs, collaborating on new programming and innovative projects that meet the city and community's needs during different times. For example, BigArtTO was a creative way for the public to engage in art and design during the pandemic. ArtHubs is a new initiative that will maintain affordable living and working spaces for creatives in the City of Toronto.

OCAD U is continuing its city-building work in part through the Cultural Policy Hub, a national, bilingual platform that builds communities of practice among researchers, policymakers, artists, and creators from across Canada's academic, government, non-profit and private spheres. It supports cultural policy decision-making from the local to the national levels and is a partner in public policy issues to which the cultural sector contributes—and those by which the sector is affected.

The Hub's work is focused on a few policy areas that very much align with the City of

Toronto's Culture Plan:

1. Precarity/sustainability of not-for-profit arts and heritage organizations;
2. Digital transformation in the cultural industries;
3. Equity, democracy and polarization, examining and re-building the foundations of cultural policy in Canada.

The City of Toronto and the Cultural Policy Hub are already close partners, and we will continue to collaborate to achieve our mutual goals, especially conducting research on the future of the arts, culture and creative industries and building a base of evidence and data for smart policymaking and sustainability. This work will support the success of the Culture Plan.

We urge you to support the plan and provide the funding necessary to realize it, which will ensure the sustainability of Toronto's arts and culture and creative industries as they continue to transform and evolve.

Thank you,

Miriam Kramer
Executive Director, Government & Community Relations and Public Policy
OCAD University
416-399-5344
mkramer@ocadu.ca

MIRIAM KRAMER

**Executive Director, Government &
Community Relations and Public Policy**

OCAD UNIVERSITY

100 McCaul St.
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1W1

Tel: 416 977 6000
Mobile: 416 399 5344
ocadu.ca