



GO FISH by Scott Smith & Nettie Wild. Photo by Andrew Williamson.

Action Plan for Toronto's Culture Sector

City of Toronto in collaboration with Toronto Arts Council & Foundation

Community Conversations Toolkit



Toronto's next culture plan is about you, me and all of us!

This toolkit is one of many ways community members can voice their feedback and ideas to help shape the future of culture in Toronto.

This toolkit invites you to host your own “Community Conversation” and share what you learned with the City of Toronto and Toronto Arts Council (TAC).

For more information on the culture plan including other ways to get involved, please visit:

www.toronto.ca/cultureplan



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Hello! 

And a **HUGE** thank you for hosting your own community conversation to inform Toronto's next [culture plan!](#)

Your willingness to support the City of Toronto, Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation in this work is vital to ensuring that this Plan tells the story of what we need most for our city right now and into the future.

We recognize that you hold deep connections, trust, and lived experiences within your community, and we want multiple voices represented in the process. We know that the space you facilitate will enrich the outcomes in engaging and meaningful ways.

Deadline to share learnings from community conversations is March 3, 2024.

So, let's get started! 

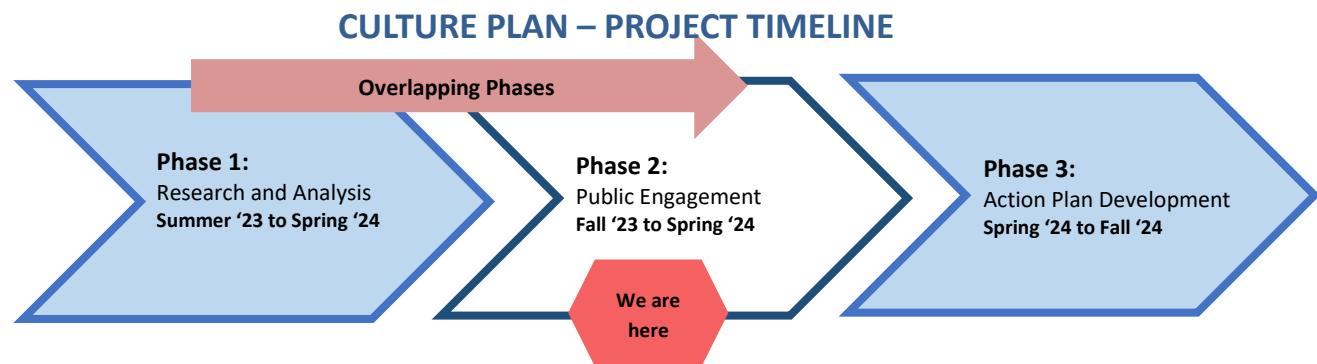
What is the Action Plan for Toronto's Culture Sector?

The City of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture Division in collaboration with the [Toronto Arts Council](#) (TAC) / [Toronto Arts Foundation](#) (TAF), is developing the next Action Plan for Toronto's Culture Sector (also referred to as simply the [culture plan](#)), which is intended to guide cultural services, policy and programming for the next ten years. This plan will help the City and TAC think ambitiously about how to collectively recover and rebuild following the COVID-19 pandemic and address pressing challenges faced by the sector, while also ensuring that residents in all corners of the city have opportunities to engage with culture.

Specifically the plan will help to:

- Identify the City's priorities for arts, culture, cultural heritage and creative industries;
- Determine how and where resources should be allocated; and
- Establish new opportunities for how the City and TAC can collaborate with partners to support the culture sector over the next 10 years.

Ultimately, the main goals for the culture plan are to inspire and act as a call to action - to present a vision of what's possible in Toronto, while outlining specific directions, for a wide range of partners and collaborators, on how to get there.



What is the process that the City of Toronto is undertaking?

The community conversation you host is one of many ways that the planning team is seeking input into the culture plan. This toolkit is an opportunity to get more in-depth feedback from communities at a time, pace, and format that works best for you. More information about the engagement activities are below:

Activity	Description
8 Community Conversations	<p><i>From October to December 2023:</i> Five deep-dive conversations were held with a diverse intersectional group of core contributors on the key issues facing the sector. Participants represented a range of backgrounds, in terms of disciplines, geography, identities, sectors and stages of career.</p> <p>In addition, three separate conversations were held specifically for artists, creatives and cultural workers from Indigenous, Black and Disability communities, to ensure these voices are heard and prioritized.</p>
Creative Facilitator Engagements	<p><i>From October 2023 to January 2024:</i> Five creative facilitators across Toronto are leading conversations within their own communities using creative approaches.</p>
Online Survey	<p><i>From January to March 3, 2024:</i> This online survey is open to all, with questions seeking to understand the experiences of artists, creatives, arts workers, and audiences across the city. The survey includes questions asking about challenges, potential solutions, and the future of arts and culture in Toronto.</p>
Community Toolkit (what you're helping with 🎧)	<p><i>From January to March 3, 2024:</i> For those who are interested in more in-depth intimate conversations, this toolkit includes simplified questions so that you can host your own discussions, over dinner, a guided walk, after a show, or meeting a friend for coffee!</p>
2 Virtual Townhalls	<p><i>February 2024:</i> There will be two virtual (Zoom) townhalls open to the general public. There will be opportunities for participants to share feedback, consider solutions together and build new connections.</p>

The feedback from all of these activities will be shared with the City and TAC to inform their work as they shape the culture plan.

How to host your own community conversation

There are lots of ways to get involved in the process (the upcoming virtual events, the survey, attending the creative facilitator events) but if you're really keen, we'd love you to host your own community conversation!

What is a community conversation?

A community conversation is a way to connect with friends, family, and/or neighbours to discuss the culture plan. It can be at home, in your workplace, or even with a group that you're a part of. We'll leave the exact approach to you (maybe it's a walk with a friend, a potluck in your living room, an agenda item at your next staff meeting, etc.). This is an opportunity for you to lead a discussion in a context that's comfortable for you and your community, and have the feedback integrated into the engagement process for the culture plan.

Follow the step-by-step guide below to help you host your conversation. 

Step 1: Prepare and get ready!

The following questions will help frame your conversation. Feel free to take the conversation where the people want to go while ideally answering the following questions/prompts.

1) How do you experience culture in Toronto today?

(ie. Where are your favourite places to engage with culture in the city? What communities are you a part of? How do these communities express culture in the city? What gets in the way of you participating in and enjoying culture?)

2) How would you like to experience culture in Toronto in the future?

(ie. In 10 years, what should Toronto's cultural sector and scene be like? What is one big hope, idea or dream you'd like to share? Share your top three ideas for how the City can support culture in Toronto. How do we get there?)

*Note: there may be other questions you want to ask in your discussion. The above two questions are meant as a guide and we would encourage you to start from a place you find most relevant for you and your community. Feel free to get creative too: you can draw, collage, paint, or anything that helps get the conversation going. 

Step 2: Have the conversation!

The *Who*, *Where*, *When*, and *How* components of your conversation is up to you! It can be a 30-minute conversation or a whole evening of discussion. While there is no “right” way to host a conversation, here are some general principles and values to consider:

- **EVERY VOICE IS VALUED:** Give everyone a chance to speak and share the space
- **ASSUMPTIONS:** Don’t make assumptions about people’s pronouns, identities, experiences or backgrounds
- **“I” STATEMENTS:** Speak on behalf of only yourself and not of others
- **RESPECT:** Each other’s opinions, differences, and ideas
- **PARTICIPATE:** Take ownership of this space and enjoy the dialogue!

Step 3: Share your learnings

Once your conversation is done, take some time to reflect on what was discussed and create some key takeaways.

When ready, we invite you to submit what was shared and what you learned using the following methods:

- **Jotform (preferred method):** We have created a simple jotform outlining the information we’d like to collect. The form takes about 5-7 minutes to complete. Access the jotform here: <https://form.jotform.com/233435864206255>
- **E-mail:** You can also share what you learned via e-mail to opportunities@monumentalprojects.ca. If possible, please follow the template below:
 - **Date:** When did your conversation take place?
 - **Describe the event:** How did you host the conversation? Was it at work? Over food? During a walk? A one or two-sentence description is welcome.
 - **Number of people engaged:** How many people participated in your conversation? Estimates are welcome.
 - **Note we’re not requiring you to gather huge numbers of people - a discussion among three people is great and so is fifteen. Anything goes!*
 - **Key takeaways for Question 1:** What did you learn about how people experience culture in Toronto today?

- **Key takeaways for Question 2:** What did you learn about how people want to experience culture in Toronto in the future?
- **Anything else you learned:** Feel free to share anything else that doesn't fit squarely in questions 1 or 2.
 - *Note: We will read every response for this additional prompt. However, not every takeaway may be reflected in the final report.
- **Voicenote:** Sometimes it can be daunting to fill in a form or write up all of the content. You are also welcome to submit a voicenote of your reflections via e-mail or [we-transfer](https://wetransfer.com) (if the file size is too big) to opportunities@monumentalprojects.ca. Like the Jotform or the e-mail format, feel free to follow the above structure if useful.

What will happen with the participants' feedback?

All the feedback from submissions received will be reported anonymously by default. That being said, we're happy to acknowledge your contributions! If you would like to be acknowledged as a contributor, please indicate that in your submission and feel free to include your name and all the names of the people you engaged with who would like to be acknowledged.

Monumental Projects, the consultants leading the engagement process, will summarize all feedback received and provide it in a report to the City and TAC to develop recommendations for the culture plan. The culture plan will be presented to City Council in early Fall 2024.

Deadline to share learnings from community conversations is March 3, 2024.

That's it!  We're looking forward to hearing what you learned through your conversations!

Thank you for taking time to contribute to Toronto's next culture plan.

Please reach out if you have any questions opportunities@monumentalprojects.ca.