

A blurred background image showing a group of people in a meeting or consultation. One person in the foreground is holding a green marker, ready to write on a whiteboard. The scene is dimly lit, with a blue tint.

**EAST END ARTS
COMMUNITY
CONSULTATIONS
SUMMARY**

EAST END ARTS COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

SUMMARY

East End Arts held a series of four community consultations in east Toronto Wards 29, 30, 31, and 32, in November and December of 2017. These community consultations were arranged to share and gather information and ideas, and to encourage community engagement and feedback on how East End Arts can continue to support east Toronto's arts and cultural community. The information collected will help East End Arts to **grow forward**, and will contribute to shaping the future of arts and culture within Toronto's east end.

East End Arts listened to the specific, unique, and diverse feedback, needs, and suggestions provided by over **100** community members, including **artists, arts administrators, gallery and creative space owners, youth and youth workers, social service organizations, local politicians, and many more valued community voices.**

East End Arts has committed to integrating – to the best of our organizational capacity – the responses we've received into our programming and operational activities in the short-term and in the long-term. This includes identifying which initiatives we can incorporate into our Strategic Plan for 2018-2022, and which initiatives and projects would be better stewarded by other artists, organizations, and community groups in our community.

We've summarized the information provided to us during our consultation process into this **Community Consultation Summary**, to serve as a support document for artists, arts groups, and community members living and working within east Toronto. This summary is a tool which East End Arts hopes will continue to **unite, inspire, and enhance** those doing important work within east Toronto's vibrant arts and cultural community.

EAST END ARTS' CONSULTATION PROCESS

Community Consultations were scheduled at four separate locations within Wards 29, 30, 31, and 32, to allow East End Arts to engage with community members and receive feedback throughout our entire catchment area. The dates, times, and locations of the consultations were:

November 14, 2017, 7-9pm

Crescent Town Club,
2A The Marketplace

November 27, 2017, 6-8pm

Royal Canadian Legion
Todmorden, 1083 Pape Avenue

November 22, 2017, 6-8pm

Community Centre 55,
97 Main Street

December 5, 2017, 6-8pm

Matty Eckler Community
Centre, 953 Gerrard Street East

Community consultations were held within spaces that were easy to access via public transit, and that are physically accessible for individuals with special accessibility needs.

Volunteer roles including Note-taker and Greeter positions allowed community members the opportunity to take part more fully in the consultation process, while giving back to their immediate communities. Greeters welcomed individuals at the door and walked them through the registration process, and invited participants to create artful name tags at a nametag-making station before getting refreshments.

Participants were also encouraged to answer a series of questions on sticky notes, and place them on a wall to enhance the consultation process and encourage discussion. Note-takers carefully transcribed all points of discussion within the consultation breakout groups, using a note-taking template developed by East End Arts.

East End Arts thanks all of the volunteers who supported the Community Consultation process!

A children's activity area was set up at each consultation with books and colouring sheets by local artist *Daniel Rotsztein*, to allow children the opportunity to take part in creative activities while parents participated in the consultations.

Each Community Consultation began with a brief presentation about East End Arts, followed by break-out group sessions, during which participants answered and discussed a series of five questions formulated by East End Arts.

The questions developed by East End Arts were meant to focus attention on our intentions to **unite, inspire, and enhance** east Toronto's arts and cultural community. The five questions we asked our community members during the Community Consultations are:

1. What are some creative ways to unite the east end arts and cultural community with the arts and cultural communities that surround us, such as the downtown core, the west end, and outer regions such as Scarborough, North York, and others?
2. If you could help program for East End Arts, what arts and cultural activities would you develop to inspire your community?
3. What types of events or specific skills development opportunities would you like to see East End Arts implement to help enhance the potential of artists and arts organizations living and working within the east end?
4. An increase in accessible and affordable space for artists to work and share their art has been expressed by the community as a need in the east end. Please offer suggestions regarding your specific space needs and how East End Arts might enhance access and availability or aid in the creation of inspiring spaces.
5. Let's dream a little. It's 2022 - where do you see East End Arts and the east end community as a whole? Think big!

For individuals who were unable to attend a Community Consultation, or wanted to share their ideas through alternative means, East End Arts provided the following options to encourage people to send their feedback:

- o One-on-one meetings
- o Via e-mail & creative expression: ideas@eastendarts.ca
- o Via social media using the hashtag **#GrowForward**
- o Via an online survey
- o Writing a letter to East End Arts



For questions or comments regarding East End Arts' Community Consultation process, or to receive guidance and support in your own arts-based community consultations in east Toronto, please email info@eastendarts.ca.

UNITING OUR ARTS AND CULTURAL COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT SURROUND US

Arts and culture are powerful tools for community building, social change, and growth. Understanding that the borders that divide Toronto are porous and intangible, it is important to recognize that people flow in and out of these very borders, and have strong, personal connections to the many communities and neighbourhoods that make up our creative city.

The following are responsive and creative ways that have been suggested by community members to support and **unite** our arts and cultural community with the communities that surround us.

- o Creating and developing communities on social media and online to support community building within digital spaces
- o Encouraging art-creation within digital spaces, including blogging, video, and digital arts
- o Offering local discovery walks
- o Connecting with local schools at all levels (elementary, middle school, high-school, and post-secondary institutions)
- o Creating repeated and/or longer-duration events and programs to help build audiences and community
- o Working together with the other Local Art Service Organizations throughout the city (North York Arts, Scarborough Arts, Arts Etobicoke, Lakeshore Arts, Urban Arts)
- o Initiating friendly neighbourhood competition
- o Working with local and surrounding BIAs, residents associations, and community groups
- o Utilizing shuttle busses to help community members access hard-to-reach spaces to allow individuals to engage further in arts and cultural activities



“Create spaces
where people feel
safe and comfortable to
enjoy artistic activities with
their friends and family.”
–Survey Respondent

INSPIRING OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts and culture have incredible benefits within Toronto's east end, including the ability to **inspire** community members to think big, work collaboratively, and seek out and participate in art and culture in our neighbourhoods.

Being bold and innovative in arts and cultural programming can help lead to sparks of inspiration in an organic, grassroots way, that can serve as a catalyst for stronger and more beautiful communities.

Following are ideas shared by community members to **inspire** our communities through arts and culture.

- o Creating culturally diverse and inclusive arts and cultural festivals
- o Focusing on history and heritage-based arts and cultural programming, including a stronger emphasis on Indigenous arts heritage education
- o Including regular musical performances within local parks and Farmer's Markets
- o Utilizing underused parks (such as Monarch Park) as a space for arts and cultural programming – specifically outdoor festivals and community events
- o Utilizing public buildings as a space to showcase art; make them more accessible to artists and arts organizations; allow art to happen in “unexpected places”
- o Offering more free, or heavily subsidized opportunities for community members to create art in their neighbourhoods
- o Utilizing unused storefronts for pop-up/art installation opportunities



“Inspiring people to see themselves reflected in arts and cultural programming & activities.”

-Community Consultation Participant

ENHANCING THE SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF LOCAL ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Toronto's east end is full of incredible artists, arts organizations, and community members. **Enhancing** and supporting these groups to help them grow and succeed is paramount to the collective success of the arts and cultural community and their audiences.

There are a wide variety of programs, events, and activities that help sustain, support, and encourage creative growth for artists, arts organizations, and community members living and/or working within Toronto's east end. It is key that these initiatives are not only informative, inclusive, and supportive, but responsive, engaging, and with limited barriers to access and participation.

The following feedback from community members offers suggestions on how to **enhance** the skills and capacities of local artists.

- o Offering workshops & information sessions about grants and funding opportunities
- o Providing cross-disciplinary mentorship opportunities to allow for skills exchange and professional development
- o Providing support in becoming more skilled with digital media; adapting to new and changing technologies
- o Sharing resources for artists to help support themselves as individuals
- o Supporting artists with public speaking skills development opportunities – i.e. how to “pitch” yourself as an artist
- o Presenting accessible and engaging networking opportunities
- o Supporting artists through ongoing shared promotions, features, and interviews
- o Supporting the artistic pursuits of community members at all life stages, and creating programs and opportunities that address their unique, generational needs
- o Educating and creating awareness of the various professional and creative avenues within the arts

ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY OF CREATIVE SPACES

An increase in accessible and affordable space for artists and arts organizations to work, create, and share has been expressed repeatedly by the community as a specific need within Toronto's east end. Accessible spaces include buildings and spaces that meet Ontario's AODA requirements for entry and ease of use (including, but not limited to, accessible washrooms, and elevator access to all floors). Many creative spaces within east Toronto have various physical barriers, high rental fees, and limited availability, making it challenging for many community members to make use of these buildings for arts and cultural programming.

Below is a series of community recommendations to **enhance** the accessibility and availability of creative spaces within Toronto's east end.

- o Creating permanent infrastructure within public parks to support arts and cultural activities outdoors, such as staging, overhead covers, and access to electricity
- o Making use of public spaces such as Toronto Public Library branches, the East York Civic Centre, and community centres and hubs
- o Providing creative and innovative pop-up opportunities for artists and arts organizations
- o Increasing availability of short-term studio rental spaces
- o Developing opportunities to help creative space owners access resources to reach future accessibility requirements
- o Providing information in advance to prospective audience members and participants of building features where programs and events are being held – i.e. notes on elevator access, washrooms, water fountains, etc., as well as information regarding accessibility concerns such as loud noises, flashing lights, content trigger warnings, etc.

LET'S **DREAM** A LITTLE!

Part of our Community Consultation process included asking community members to engage in positive, aspirational thinking about east Toronto's future arts and cultural community. Thinking five years ahead, here are some big, bold, and exciting ideas that our community members shared with us.

We invite all of our readers and fellow arts and cultural community members to **dream big!**

- o Seeing storefronts brought to life by artists with activations and installations
- o Developing cross-organizational mentorship opportunities – larger arts organizations mentoring and supporting smaller arts organizations and collectives
- o Creating more colourful streets
- o Having music in all local parks
- o Having mentorship and volunteer opportunities embedded into all arts and cultural programming to encourage growth and leadership
- o Increasing the number of murals throughout east Toronto
- o Pushing the boundaries of, and creating more opportunities for, public art in Toronto's east end
- o Creating an accessible arts and cultural hub located in Toronto's east end
- o Seeing artists and arts organizations present during urban planning discussions

East End Arts is thankful for each and every community member who has provided us with their feedback throughout our Community Consultation process. We are committed to supporting and advocating for artists, arts organizations, and east Toronto's arts and cultural community.

East End Arts hopes that this Community Consultation Summary will help others working within east Toronto's arts & cultural community in their efforts to better understand some of our community's needs, suggestions, and big ideas.

For questions and/or comments about this Community Consultation Summary, email info@eastendarts.ca

www.eastendarts.ca