

Toronto Cultural Policy and Plans 1974-2008: Examining the Legacy

The Mavor Moore Cultural Policy Symposium

Hosted by the MBA Program in Arts and Media Administration at the Schulich School of Business, the Robarts Centre, and the City of Toronto.

Friday, October 24, 2008

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The list of background questions below is cast fairly widely, seeking answers about both the general development and implementation of cultural policy in Toronto over the last 35 years, and specific information about the development and implementation of particular culture plans. The questions were posed for consideration by the speakers as they prepared their presentations. There are, of course, far too many questions to completely cover in a one-day symposium. They were intended to stimulate recollections of the myriad issues at play in the development of the plans and to prepare all symposium participants to engage in discussion and debate.

1) Context

- What were the prevailing artistic, social, cultural, political, administrative conditions that gave rise to and informed the document's creation?
- How did federal and provincial policies play into municipal thinking?
- Who was the audience for the plan? Elected officials, the bureaucracy, the general public, the arts community?
- Who and what drove the creation of the plan at this particular moment?
- What was the state of cultural/arts infrastructure at the time?
- How does the process of developing municipal cultural plans differ from developing cultural policy at the provincial or federal level?
- Who were your allies in the policy and planning process? How important is support from the mayor in this process?

2) Culture

- What was the conception of culture that underpinned policy at the time? (How has it changed over time?)
- What rationales underlay your plan?
- What were the tools available to implement policy? How did these affect the plan?
- How has the understanding of the economic dimension of culture changed over time?
- How important were specific cultural policy questions and issues in your development of the plan?
 - diversity
 - community arts
 - youth engagement
 - public/private (PPP)
 - tourism
 - cultural industries
 - creative cities
 - arm's length
 - international promotion of artists and city
 - cultural districts
 - creative clusters
- How were they dealt with?
- Were there any particular controversies or events at the time that influenced public or political ideas about art or culture?
- From a practitioner's perspective, what is the difference between a cultural plan and cultural policy?
- Did you look to policies and/or plans in other cities as models when you were framing this?
- Were there particular arguments that you employed to make the case for the importance of culture?
 - art for art's sake
 - social cohesion
 - economic impact studies
 - creative cities
 - competitiveness

Did the writings of Jane Jacobs, Charles Landry, Franco Bianchini, Richard Florida or UNESCO documents influence your work?

3) Process

- What was the particular mandate pertaining to the culture plan you developed.?
- What were the prevailing administrative and political conditions at the time?
- Where was responsibility for culture administratively?
- Who were the key stakeholders?

- What were the important supports and/or obstacles?
- What type of consultation process was used in developing the plan?
- What cultural inventories were in place or developed for your work?
- Over the years, changes to the voice and design of plans seem to go hand in hand. Early reports, primarily textual and written by a particular author give way to documents that had no single voice. How is this reflected in the various plans we are considering?

4) Issues/Questions Specific to Each Decade/Plan

i) 1970s

- What was the influence of the work of the Canada Council?
- What impact did such federal initiatives as Opportunities for Youth (1971) and the Local Initiatives Program (1972) have on your work?

ii) 1980s

- Why the flurry of cultural plan activity across Metro in the mid-1980s? Every municipality was developing some sort of plan. What was the impetus for this work?
- Re: Hendry Plan
 - commissioned by TAC
 - How did this come about?
 - Did its arm's length status have a bearing on its recommendations? Did this affect the ability of the City to implement these recommendations?
 - e.g., The Hendry plan recommends that the outlying municipalities contribute directly to the TAC budget. What was the relationship between the municipalities? How did this impact the role of

Metro?

- What of the increase in the importance of economic impact studies?

iii) 1990s

- How did the 1994 Metro plan build upon the activity of the 1980s and the planning activities of the municipalities? Were there particular local issue/proposals that were introduced into the Metro plan?
- Did Metro and the former municipalities work well together? Did they at all operate at cross-purposes?
- The 1990s saw an increasing awareness of the importance of public art. How was public art integrated into broader processes of city building?
- How effective was the Metro cultural plan for the city of Toronto and for the municipalities?
- What were the particular challenges of the Metro plan and how were they managed?

iv) 2000s

- How has amalgamation affected the management of cultural policy in Toronto?
- The 2003 Culture Plan seems to employ a very different and far broader notion of culture than previous plans. How did this come to be? What, if any, are the key continuities?
- Who are the key players in the municipality in the development of cultural policy?

5) Results

- How did each plan go about making a persuasive argument in support of the arts and culture?
- What are the most important rationales for municipal commitment to cultural development and planning in each plan.
- What are the most important issues to be addressed in each plan?
- What are the key continuities between plans? How do they differ?
- What needs went unmet? unaddressed?

6) Reflection

- What do you see as the role of the city in funding and administering the arts and culture vis a vis the role of the federal and provincial governments?
- Where should the responsibility for culture be located in the municipal government? Has this changed over the years?
- What were the most significant outcomes of each plan?
- What would/could/should have been done differently?
- Is there significance to the change in ownership and voice in the plans?
- Does the focus change from plan to plan? If so, how?
- What are the elements of a good culture plan?
- What was your strategy for developing a good culture plan?



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