Hamilton

ARTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The BIG PICTURE 2017

arts forum

A Report of the April 2017 Arts Community Consultation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE BIG PICTURE 2017 REPORT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

THE ARTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The purpose of the Arts Advisory Commission (AAC) is to advise Hamilton Council regarding the arts community in the City and how to facilitate and ensure its growth and development. To that end, the AAC conducted a
forum and conference for the arts and culture community in April this year -
The Big Picture 2017.

There have been other Big Picture conferences, the last one in 2009. Since the previous conference, Hamilton had developed a cultural plan and added new granting programs, in response to recommendations coming out of that forum. An enrichment fund was created whereby previous funding programs were overhauled and infused with an additional $1 million for four new Arts funding streams.

Big Picture 2017 participants were asked to respond to four questions:

1. What is working well in Hamilton?
2. What is not working well in Hamilton?
3. How can we improve on the current situation?
4. How can the City and our arts community work together to make it happen?

The conference kicked off with a general information session in the morning to welcome participants and review purpose, goals and organization. This was followed by in-depth break-out sessions, which were repeated later in the day to enhance participation. The conference concluded with a review of what had been recorded during the sessions.

Eight topics were chosen for the individual break-out sessions:

1. Arts Funding
2. Sustainable Living
3. Creative Space
4. Audience Outreach
5. Art Events
6. Art in Public Spaces
7. Cultural Diversity
8. Geographic Challenges

To complement the findings and results of the Big Picture event, an on-line survey was conducted to invite commentary from other members of Hamilton's arts and culture community who had been unable to attend the Big Picture.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is much that is working well for the arts community in the city but there were suggestions for some issues which need consideration. While the break-out groups tried to stay on the topic to which they had been charged, there were a number of common and cross cutting themes. These are listed below:

1. **Communication, Education and Training** - Improve communication on arts related matters at City Hall as well as within the arts community. Make the funding application process easier and simpler. Support initiatives to hold cultural events throughout the city. Make sure that other aspects of city management are brought on-board for major events, for example parking staff. Generally provide more opportunity to showcase the city's culture and arts.
2. **Space** - Consider leveraging unused space in the city. Explore de-centralizing aspects of the arts to other locations than the core. Make city owned facilities more readily available for arts and cultural events. Permit extended free parking at city events where possible.
3. **Diversity** - Support and promote the diversity of talent across the City in the arts and culture industries. As a starting point ensure the make-up of the AAC reflects the cultural background of the arts community.

A full report by the Hamilton Arts Council engaged by the AAC to assist in managing the Big Picture process is attached.

Ray Rivers, Member, Arts Advisory Commission

INTRODUCTION

THE BIG PICTURE 2017 REPORT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

THE ARTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Arts Advisory Commission of the City of Hamilton (AAC) contracted the Hamilton Arts Council to facilitate a day-long artist forum, The Big Picture Revisited, which took place on Saturday April 8, 2017. This forum provided artists and cultural workers in Hamilton the opportunity, similar to previous AAC Big Picture forums, to share experiences and challenges that will be used to guide the on-going efforts of the AAC.

This forum was timely, in that the Hamilton's arts community continues to be a strong contributor to city's growth and advancement, which has resulted in a heightened appreciation for the arts. The Hamilton arts community has offered new hope for the city's economic future, and has been validated by a new municipal Cultural Plan and new granting programs for arts and cultural groups as spearheaded by the AAC's Arts Funding Task Force.

While The Big Picture 2017 embraces the support demonstrated by the City of Hamilton, this forum advanced the conversations to include the challenges of the arts community as well as its successes. Throughout a morning panel discussion and a day filled with roundtable discussions on eight topics, many challenges and solutions were offered by a broad spectrum of artists to ensure that Hamilton's arts community remains sustainable and will be a further generator of growth and advancement for the greater City of Hamilton for years to come.

This report provides an overview of the discussions held and the on-line survey that followed. Each section provides its share of recommended actions as defined by the forum participants. Based on all of the information gathered from theBig Picture 2017 forum initiative, the ACC has included list of key recommendations that have been identified as feasible actions that will positively impact Hamilton's arts sector going forward.

These actions begin with the composition of the AAC itself, and extend to include a review of the City Enrichment Fund process, as well as improvements in communications and transparency that would better serve the City's relationship with its arts and cultural workers.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Ensure cultural diversity is reflected in the membership of the Arts Advisory Commission.
2. Create and broadly communicate a timeline and map of upcoming public art opportunities to allow more lead time for artists to conceive proposals.
3. Coordinate promotional efforts of Tourism Hamilton and the Hamilton Arts Council to centralize and jointly promote a single online destination for arts and cultural listings.
4. Undertake a communications review of City processes impacting the arts, particularly in the areas of adaptive reuse of buildings and festivals and events, with the goal of creating more transparency and understanding of these processes.
5. Engage arts community in a review of City Enrichment Fund processes, particularly in the areas of application language, equity, adjudication, and the 30% cap on individual artist grants
6. Advocate for fair compensation for artists based on professional standards through public communications and the practice of fair payment for all arts and cultural needs within the City of Hamilton.
7. Advocate for transit improvements and equitable ward boundaries as policy issues with strong implications for access to arts and culture.

Members of the Arts Advisory Commission 2016-2018

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BACKGROUND

The Arts Advisory Commission of the City of Hamilton (AAC) hosted a day-long event convening members of Hamilton's diverse arts and cultural community to discuss the current state of Hamilton's cultural revival and identify the next steps required to ensure the ongoing success of local artists and their organizations. This event was structured in the tradition of 2009's The Big Picture and 2010's The Big Picture Revisited as an opportunity for the local artists and arts leaders to share impressions and ideas that will help the AAC shape the direction of its work and priorities in the coming years.

In 2009, the prevailing dialogue at The Big Picture revolved around arts funding, with the stagnation in organizational grants and lack of opportunities for new groups and artists emerging as key concerns. As a result of these conversations, the AAC convened an Arts Funding Task Force that spearheaded the creation of the City Enrichment Fund, a new funding program that has overhauled municipal funding for Arts recipients as well as wider community organizations and initiatives. The infusion of an additional $1 million in increased spending on four new Arts funding streams over the past three years has created valuable new supports for the arts in Hamilton, from increased funding to organizations of all sizes to new granting opportunities to individual artists and arts collectives.

Against the backdrop of these recent accomplishments, The Big Picture 2017 presented an opportunity for the arts community to collectively reflect upon these new developments as well as the larger climate of heightened culture activity and awareness in Hamilton. While this city has seen significant growth in its artistic offerings, these successes also present challenges in terms of cultural capacities, resources and affordability.

CONSULTATION DESIGN

Participants in The Big Picture 2017 were presented with six possible roundtable discussion topics: Arts Funding, Sustainable Living, Creative Space, Arts Events, Audience Development, and Art in Public Space. During morning registration, participants were invited to post questions and comments relevant to these topics, as well as suggest additional topics for discussion. As a result of this input, two additional roundtable opportunities were presented to discuss Cultural Diversity and Geographic Challenges as they pertain to Hamilton's arts and cultural community.

Participants were given opportunity to contribute to a maximum of four roundtable discussions throughout the day, allowing them to address multiple topics of interest. Each topic was assigned to a facilitator from the AAC with support from City staff as notetakers and co-facilitators. In the 40 minutes allocated to each round of discussion, participants were asked to address the following questions in relation to their given topic:

1. What is working well in Hamilton?
2. What is not working well in Hamilton?
3. How can we improve on the current situation?
4. How can the City and our arts community work together to make it happen?

Each group was also asked to identify three priority action items emerging from their conversations. Facilitators were also responsible for reviewing the outcomes of all discussions on their topic and providing an overview of recurring themes and priorities during a shared convening session at the end of the day's program.

ROUND TABLES

ARTS FUNDING

With an additional $1 million invested in arts funding since 2015 through the City Enrichment Fund, and new granting opportunities available to individual artists and collectives, participants acknowledged that much positive change had come to Hamilton's arts funding landscape in recent years. The application has been simplified compared to that administered through the previous Community Partnership Program, though concerns were raised around the relevance of the application questions being posed to artists and organizations respectively. Not all questions appeared to be relevant to the specific applicant type, the language being used was seen to lack clarity, and some perceived the criteria to be geared more heavily towards economic impacts rather than artistic quality.

Further elements of the City Enrichment Fund process were identified as overwhelmingly problematic. The 30% cap on the City's contribution to a project's budget, particularly as newly implemented for Creation and Presentation grants in 2016, presents a significant barrier to artists seeking meaningful support for their work, and effectively limits eligibility to artists with the capacity to raise the additional 70% through either provincial and federal grants or private financial means - in short, well established professional artists and those with ready access to other funds. The eight month wait time between the application deadline and notification of results is exceptionally long relative to other arts funders, and was seen to limit the effectiveness of these grants.

Additional concerns were raised about awareness and perceptions surrounding with City Enrichment Fund. The role of peer adjudicators, City staff and elected Councillors in the granting process is not

clearly understood by the community at large, resulting in worries about the role of bias and censorship in the decision making process. Multiple commentators proposed that the Hamilton Arts Council should serve as an arms-length administrator of the Arts granting stream, following similar models found in other Canadian municipalities; this would place decision-making with the expertise of the arts community and remove the process from both real and perceived political bias.

More effective and widespread communications and clarity on the City Enrichment Fund were identified as an essential first step to addressing these concerns, with a more substantive review of the funding process being seen as a further essential measure. While the original work of conceiving the City Enrichment Fund was undertaken with extensive public consultation, the lack of arts community input in the implementation of these grants risks undermining the arts community's support for this program.

1. Improve communications on the City Enrichment Fund to increase understanding of the process and awareness of funding opportunities available.
2. Engage arts community in a review of City Enrichment Fund processes, particularly in the areas of application language, adjudication, and the 30% cap on individual artist grants
3. Study best practices in other arts funders with consideration towards engaging the Hamilton Arts Council as an arms-length adjudicator and recommender removed from the political process

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

The ability of artists to live sustainably in Hamilton is critical to the ongoing success of our cultural community. In recent years, Hamilton has offered a welcoming environment for artists with relatively affordable real estate and a high vacancy rate, which has been complemented by a growing public interest and excitement about local arts and culture as demonstrated through events such as Art Crawl. With this growing community has come more opportunities than were present ten years ago, as well as more structured sharing of space and resources within the arts community.

While Hamilton artists demonstrate great resourceful in creating art with a scarcity of resources, the resulting dependency on volunteerism and funding project expenses out of pocket creates fatigue in the sector that can often result in burn-out. The lack of market support at the local level is equally discouraging as many artists lack a viable consumer base for their creative products, whether these be works of art or tickets for performances. Many participants in this conversation remarked on a default expectation of free labour from artists, and an overwhelming reluctance to buy art, both of which

inhibit even a commercially viable artist from making a living.
At the same time, Hamilton artists are increasingly the victims of their own success through the market impacts of gentrification. James Street North is no longer an affordable port of entry for artists seeking affordable housing or studio space, and while some early organizations are able to maintain a foothold through ownership of their properties, the risk of untenable tax assessments remains a deep concern, as evidenced by current conditions at 401 Richmond in Toronto.

Local artists widely recognize the challenges of gentrification, informed in no small part by Toronto's cautionary example, and want to sustain meaningful conversations around creating a more inclusive economy for the arts. The continued sharing of resources through more organized channels such as the Hamilton Tool Library was seen as a promising solution, while others point to more sweeping changes required around living wages, the provision of affordable space through municipal policy and education on the value of the arts. While no simple solutions emerged from this discussion, participants identified several key areas worthy of further investigation:

1. Leverage municipal assets such as underutilized buildings and development charges to provide live/work space for artists.
2. Advocate for fair compensation for artists based on professional standards through public communications and the practice of fair payment for all arts and cultural needs within the City of Hamilton.
3. Support widespread and accessible arts education to cultivate awareness of the arts among a broader segment of the population over time.

CREATIVE SPACE

A separate series of roundtable discussions focused on the more specific sustainability challenge of accessing creative space for both creation and presentation. Once again, local willingness and opportunity to share multidisciplinary space was seen as an asset, within specific mention made of The Cotton Factory's present operating model and emerging uses of the AGH Annex. Artist-run centres and new creative facilities at the Hamilton Public LIbrary were also identified as valuable supports for cultural producers. Long-term Hamilton artists noted that more spaces are available today for the performing arts than what previously existed upwards of 20 years ago, driven in significant part by an increased demand for these spaces - which is now beginning to impact affordability of these spaces.

Hamilton's aforementioned stock of underutilized and outdated commercial buildings has been a preferred starting point for cultural development, but these heritage properties often lack the accessibility features required to accommodate all users, and resources to renovate these buildings are lacking. In cases where resources and willpower exist to improve properties for accessible cultural

uses, municipal permitting processes and zoning restrictions are seen as significant and incomprehensible barriers that hinder the repurposing of underutilized properties. This lack of meaningful support prohibits the development of cultural assets necessary to support Hamilton's artistic growth, from purpose-built performance spaces to music rehearsal spaces that would be appropriately situated to prevent noise bylaw complaints.

Considerable support was given to the concept of a multidisciplinary arts hub that would pool artists and resources under professional leadership that would prioritize and safeguard creative freedom and experimentation. This space would ideally address local capacity needs for assets such as affordable rehearsal space and a flexible black-box performance space, while also provided centralized administrative services for a variety of tenants. Sir John A. MacDonald Secondary School was frequently cited as a potential future arts hub given the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's intention to divest the property, which currently boasts a 750-seat theatre.

The mountain was proposed as an alternate location for such a hub that could activate a part of the city presently lacking in visible artistic resources. Additional concerns were raised in favour of a diversified range of creative spaces, including the identification of public pitches for street performance and affordable storefront locations for small-scale activity. There is a prevailing interest in making the best use of spaces that are already available, but also in ensuring that these spaces benefit from improved investment and public visibility.

The City is perceived to have an active stake in advancing the growth of creative spaces in Hamilton through a variety of mechanisms, from making its own spaces more accessible to the cultural sector to providing subsidies and grants to support renovations and repurposing existing infrastructure towards improved accessibility and safety. Many participants noted that Section 37 of the Planning Act has enabled Ontario municipalities such as Toronto to leverage charges to developers of higher density projects in exchange for cultural community investment,
with many strongly in favour of seeing as similar approach adopted in Hamilton. The lack of clarity and transparency around building permits and zoning bylaws provides yet another opportunity for the City to intervene with improved communications; for example, a City staff liaison was proposed as an accessible entry point for members of the arts community to readily ask questions and receive advice on developing cultural properties.

1. Implement financial tools to support the development and improvement of cultural spaces in Hamilton through Section 37 or other mechanisms.
2. Identify or hire an arts liaison officer to serve as a primary point of contact for the arts community on building permits, zoning bylaws and other municipal policy considerations.
3. Partner with arts community stakeholders to make City-owned properties more readily accessible as sites of artistic activity.

AUDIENCE OUTREACH

The ability to engage audiences in creative activity in Hamilton is a significant factor in the sustainability of our arts sector. Participants in roundtable discussions on this topic note that many avenues exist for promoting the arts at the local level, with social media, print advertising and partnered outreach between community groups identified as especially effective methods. Arts events themselves were also identified as key opportunities to promote upcoming events through the concentration of arts-friendly attendees congregating in gatherings such as Art Crawl and the Hamilton Fringe Festival.

Multiple online registries and websites were also mentioned as effective tools for cross-promoting multiple arts events in a central location, with specific mention given to Hamilton Arts Council initiatives such as their website and annual print Culture Guide. However, a lack of widespread community awareness of these resources hinders their ability to reach a wider audience. The same criticism was leveled in turn at other established advertising channels, whose audiences tend to be self-selecting in their engagement with local arts organizations. Relying on a limited number of low-cost marketing techniques limits participation to a limited number of recurring attendees rather than attracting new audiences.

Solutions for reaching uninitiated audiences focused predominantly on the role of the public realm. Billboards and advertising through public transit were both identified as opportunities to place cultural promotions in more visible locations throughout the region, as would a more coordinated approach to postering. Closer collaboration between the City and the Hamilton Arts Council in their respective use of online event listings was also seen as a viable way to create greater awareness around a single shared source for promoting local arts and culture. On the whole, both the City and the larger private sector were called upon by participants to actively promote local arts activities - especially those who invoke the arts community in their own marketing campaigns.

1. Make City-owned advertising assets such as bus and transit shelter advertising more readily available to arts and cultural groups at reduced cost.
2. Coordinate promotional efforts of Tourism Hamilton and the Hamilton Arts Council to centralize and jointly promote a single online destination for arts and cultural listings.
3. Support a coordinated approach to postering for arts and cultural events in approved postering areas and City-owned facilities.

ART EVENTS

Festivals and events are an increasingly vital element in Hamilton's arts and cultural scene, with much of our current visibility at a national level linked to major recurring events such as the monthly James North Art Crawl and annual Supercrawl. These two signature events, as well as the work of the Hamilton Fringe Festival, Matapa World Music Festival, and other stakeholders of various scales, have developed more diverse audiences for the arts at a local level, attracting people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Hamilton's post-secondary institutions were also praised for their support and engagement in this activity, particularly as a means to engage their student populations in the local arts community.

While arts events are seen as integral to Hamilton's cultural success, more support is needed to ensure the sustainability of a diverse range of festival options, particularly given growing perception that Supercrawl has divested focus on the arts in favour of food trucks and other open-street festival elements. Concerns were also raised about the availability of public transit for Supercrawl and many other events; street closures in particular raised calls for a more coordinated approach to parking and public transit to better serve attendees while reducing impacts on surrounding neighbourhoods. Providing free transit to festival-goers, in much the same manner as the service currently provided to Hamilton Tiger-Cats ticket holders, was seen as an effective strategy to reduce parking requirements for special events while attracting audiences for whom transportation may present a barrier to participation.

Municipal support for arts and cultural events is intrinsically linked to the Special Events Advisory Team (SEAT) process, which many in the arts community struggle to navigate. The permissions required to present artistic programming in public space are not clearly understood, and there is one SEAT application to secure approval to hold an event or activity on outdoor City property; even though the event or activity in question can encompass anything from a spontaneous performance in a park to a full-scale street festival with significant road closures. As with the concerns raised around developing creative space, a City staff liaison to the arts community was seen as a desirable approach to clarifying the events process for applicants. More broad-based dialogue between the City and its arts community on this issue in particular was also presented as a necessary step to ensuring municipal decision-makers fully comprehend artists' challenges in this emerging area of importance.

1. Provide more effective public transit, parking and sustainable transportation solutions for festival and event attendees.
2. Identify or hire an arts liaison officer to serve as a primary point of contact for the arts community on S.E.A.T. for events taking place on outdoor City property, use of public space for artistic purposes, and other municipal policy considerations.
3. Conduct meaningful consultation with the arts community on issues impacting the delivery of arts festivals and events in Hamilton.

ART IN PUBLIC SPACES

Public Art was identified as an area of growing strength in terms of municipal support for local artists. An increasing number of significant public art commissions by professional artists including Simon Frank, David General and Laura Marotta has served to reinforce the City's support of local and regional artists in their Public Art program, and improved the capacity of these artists to secure more prestigious commissions in other communities. The City's approach to Public Art, as revised in the recent Public Art Master Plan, takes an effective placemaking approach where works are required to respond to a specific site and its cultural context; this has facilitated the creation of new public art that has deeper resonance with its community rather than perpetuating monuments of art without tangible meaning for residents.

While local artists do enjoy successful commissions as mentioned above, a far greater number lack the experience and knowledge to successfully bid for major commissions. Sitting on juries is a valuable educational tool for artists interested in proposing public art, and some support is currently provided to artists in the form of information sessions and the advice of the City's Public Art Manager. A number of recent small-scale public art calls have reduced artist workload and provided mentoring in the fabrication and installation process to encourage submissions from less experienced artists, such as the three works commissioned for James Street North in 2012. While all these measures have improved the accessibility of the City's Public Art process, professional development in the form of workshops or other supports was seen as a necessary step to elevate local artists seeking to create work for the public realm.

Perhaps as a result of this success, there is a growing appetite among the arts community for a more dynamic approach to public art. This would include increased support for temporary public art, a more nuanced approach to the role of graffiti and street art in the public realm, and embracing an expanded definition of what constitutes a public art work to include disciplines beyond sculptural visual art. Creating artist in residence opportunities for artists to develop a work in response to a given community provides an avenue for artist-led solutions that would expand the possible outcomes of a work of art by integrating a collaborative approach to creative problem-solving.

The notion of artists in residence has linkage to questions of authority in the public art process, which is largely seen to be shaped by a select few gatekeepers responsible for determining sites, themes and outcomes. Rather than responding to calls and concepts handed down by the City, there is a growing interest in having artists take the lead earlier in the decision-making process. Creating a voluntary roster of community members willing to serve on these committees was also proposed as a means of cultivating greater diversity among decision-makers in the public art process.

Mapping out additional public art opportunities in the areas of integrated and functional art, and making these upcoming calls more widely available, would increase the number of opportunities available to artists and afford more time for the creation of responsive art works. Particular opportunity exists in the realm of parks, which are seen to take a cookie-cutter approach to their design. Positioning artists within the design of parks and other public spaces such as upcoming waterfront development is seen as an integral way to create stronger sense of local identity and belonging in our public realm. Additional opportunity was identified in the private sector, where the City could play a proactive role in identifying partner institutions to host public art works.

1. Create and broadly communicate a timeline and map of upcoming public art opportunities to allow more lead-time for artists to conceive proposals.
2. Build local artists' capacity to respond to RFP processes through entry-level opportunities, support and training.
3. Establish artist-in-residence program with opportunities for artists and community members to take a leadership role in decision-making processes.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

One of two topics proposed by participants in The Big Picture 2017, cultural diversity is a broad conversation that calls for understanding of the various diversities being discussed, whether this is of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or the visibility of specific artistic works produced via those experiences.

The perception of Hamilton as a site of potential and opportunity has helped attract diverse newcomers to our community, supported in large part by the important work of local immigrant organizations and City support for refugees. This welcoming ethos has cultivated diverse artistic voices at the grassroots level which is manifesting today in new organizations and festivals dedicated to promoting those voices.

However, these new artists and activities struggle to emerge from these promising beginnings within a larger cultural framework that overwhelmingly privileges established organizations representative of European settler artforms. This fixed perspective permeates the processes through which funders and other gatekeepers determine cultural value and lend support through funding and presentation opportunities.

The academic language and challenging budgetary process required of the City Enrichment Fund in particular was identified as a significant barrier to culturally diverse artists who may not enjoy the same educational privileges as the predominantly white artists who receive funding and other recognitions. Just as a review of the City Enrichment Fund for overall fairness of process was called for in Arts Funding discussion groups, the need for significant revisions in granting was identified as a major equity issue for which a more conversational use of language would provide a more even footing for all applicants.

Deeper commitment to inviting and involving diverse artists in all cultural activities in which the City plays a role was also seen as a necessary action, and one that needs to start at the decision-making table. The lack of diversity among the current members of the Arts Advisory Commission is a significant manifestation of the problem, and should be remedied as a first step towards ensuring effective representation on all other cultural decisions. Communicating opportunities more broadly and actively involving those not currently represented are equally necessary to cultivating greater cultural diversity in our arts community.

1. Review and revise the City Enrichment Fund process to reduce academic language barriers and ensure conversational clarity in questions and requirements.
2. Ensure cultural diversity is reflected in the membership of the Arts Advisory Commission.
3. Establish and sustain open communication with members of culturally diverse and underrepresented groups.

GEOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

The physical and sociological divide between various parts of the City of Hamilton were considered pressing enough to demand dedicated conversation during The Big Picture. While geographical in nature due to the physical fact of the Niagara escarpment and an urban core surrounded by suburban and rural communities, these divisions are politicized through lingering resistance to amalgamation since 2001 which many participants in this roundtable often see manifest in the “us vs. them” views and actions of City Councillors.

Transit and access are implicated in these concerns. While safety fears of downtown have receded somewhat with the broadening appeal of Art Crawl and Supercrawl, the lack of reliable and affordable transit options between downtown and other parts of Hamilton diminishes access to downtown cultural activity, particularly those taking place in the evening or on weekends. Conversely, the lack of creative spaces and events in communities outside the downtown inhibit the discovery and growth of cultural interest among those living in these parts of the city.

While the duality of mountain and downtown is the most common site of discord, participants were eager to advance a plurality of identities as lived by Hamilton's many communities, each of which would be equally celebrated for what it brings to the city as a whole. The arts community has both a strong interest and exceptional capacity to redefine the stories we tell about Hamilton - one that can find common root in our origins and first peoples, and offer up many equal voices in place of a polarizing debate of two sides.

1. Create and sustain creative spaces on the mountain and in underserved rural areas.
2. Advocate for transit improvements and equitable ward boundaries as policy issues with strong implications for access to arts and culture.
3. Identify and advance new ways of promoting Hamilton's many and multiple communities as equal contributors to our unique identity.