

Executive Summary

STLC NEXT Survey Findings

From April to May 2021, Create TO and TO Live opened a city-wide survey to gauge public perceptions for the reimagining of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts. Participants from both communities and from a wide representation of the arts sector were asked to provide information about their current use of the space, their perceptions of available facilities in the city, the need for spaces to be utilized in the public realm, and their desired future ambitions for STLC.

Overview of major themes distilled from the survey

Respondents noted a lack of affordable and suitable spaces available in the city and hoped that STLC Next could provide them with access to both flexible, and updated, technologically specialized, multi-use spaces suited to performance and presentation, at rates not-for-profit organizations can also afford.

People felt strongly that the new venue should be ecologically sustainable, both in its construction and operations. Materials and processes should be considered with care.

Many also hope to see the building become a centerpiece of a cultural destination area within the city, connected with the surrounding neighbourhood's businesses, residents and landmarks. Acknowledgement of existing architectural history was noted as a preference.

Respondents felt it was vital that STLC Next be fully accessible, and welcoming to all creators, performers, workers and audiences spending time there. To ensure this, they noted how important it will be to consult broadly with communities beyond traditional stakeholders.

While the pandemic has brought negative impacts such as lost audiences, revenues and jobs, the push to go online has resulted in expanded audience

reach, beyond Toronto and Canada. While looking forward to a return to in-person presentations and gatherings, respondents imagined embracing online and in-person engagement as part of the spectrum of approaches going forward, as well as continuing the new collaborations that were sparked by the extra time and cognitive space resulting from the pause in usual activities.

Major concerns regarding the STLC Next redevelopment focused on temporary closure of performance and rehearsal spaces during any reworking of the space and the impacts of a major construction project on noise levels, dust, parking and traffic congestion for the local community.

Participants of the survey were asked whether they were interested in being part of the next stage of public engagement. A group of 18 diversely representative people (age, gender, race, from community or a variety of arts, non-profit, for-profit) were selected from the self-identified and interested respondents to engage in a deeper conversation about what is needed and wanted in the space.

Who Participated?

Torontonians responded to the survey from multiple disciplines in the arts sector and communities at large. Of the surveys completed by the arts community, there were responses from creators, performers, technicians, producers, presenters, educators, funders, administrators, executives and creative leaders.

- 14% of all completed surveys came from people who self-identified as a member of a racialized group
- 2% came from Indigenous people
- More than half of all survey respondents (53%) self-identified as women.
- The respondent age mix was fairly balanced between individuals aged 25 to 44, those aged 45 to 64, and those aged 65 and older.