

**CITY OF TORONTO &  
THE COMMUNITY-BASED, NON-PROFIT SECTOR:  
MODERNIZING OUR RELATIONSHIP  
March 1, 2017**

**Across Canada and internationally there is a trend to establish more deliberate, strategic relationships between governments and the non-profit sector.** For example, the Government of Canada and 9 out of 10 Provinces have set up formal policy agendas with the non-profit sector.

**In Toronto**, municipal government and the community-based non-profit sector have had a long history of working interdependently to reach important social, cultural, environmental, and economic goals for Torontonians. Yet the City does not have an overarching policy statement on the importance of this relationship. The size and scope of City/non-profit interactions warrant the effort to develop a more deliberate and strategic relationship to achieve shared objectives. See page 2 for examples of what could be achieved through a modernized relationship between the City and the sector.

**Multiple and Complex City-Sector Relationships:** Depending on the type of relationship, City of Toronto divisions may relate with non-profit organizations as: vendors, grant recipients, tenants, partners, advisors, advocates, lobbyists and/or as the voice of the community. In Fall 2016, City Council reviewed the growing complexity and magnitude of the City government's interactions with the community-based non-profit sector<sup>1</sup>.<sup>i</sup> The total financial value of City transactions with the sector is about \$900M or close to 10% of the total municipal operating budget.

**Project Purpose and Timeline:** City Council has directed City staff to work with a Community Sector Advisory Table to conduct stakeholder consultations and develop a strategic policy framework to guide the City's relationship with the non-profit sector. This strategic policy framework should be completed by the end of 2017 and may include:

- a clear vision for the relationship between the City government and the non-profit sector;
- desired outcomes from a more deliberate relationship;
- guiding principles; and
- practical actions and best practices for the City and the Sector to implement in the short, medium, and longer term.

**Have Your Say:** City Council has called for stakeholder consultations during 2017 to generate ideas and information for this initiative. A Community Advisory Table has been set up and the City has contracted Social Planning Toronto, working with the new Toronto Non-Profit Network, to carry out consultations with community-based non-profit organizations during Spring 2017. For more information on how to get involved, contact Kelly Murphy at the City of Toronto [kmurphy@toronto.ca](mailto:kmurphy@toronto.ca) or Ajay Ram at Social Planning Toronto [aram@socialplanningtoronto.org](mailto:aram@socialplanningtoronto.org).

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<sup>1</sup> See the City of Toronto report, including references and resources, at [www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-96018.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-96018.pdf)

**There are many reasons to Modernize the Relationship between the City of Toronto and the Community-Based Non-Profit Sector, including:**

- To strengthen democratic processes and promote direct dialogue between City Council and the organizations that represent local communities and equity-seeking groups.
  - To harmonize policies and operating procedures involving non-profits and resolve contradictory or incompatible policies.
  - To foster coordination across City divisions that work with the non-profit sector.
  - To position non-profits to approach and work with City government proactively, and support them to navigate across the City's complex structure.
  - To reform outdated or inefficient administrative structures and "red tape".
  - To acknowledge and foster the role of the sector in advancing Toronto's social, cultural, economic vitality, alongside governments and the private sector.
  - To identify measures of the social, environmental, cultural, and financial value created by the sector and returns on investments in the sector.
  - To clarify the value and impact of a mixed service delivery system (including services directly provided by the City and services provided by the non-profit sector).
  - To encourage and support non-profits to further innovate and cooperate to address multiple or complex community needs and to use community space efficiently.
  - To ensure that City investments in the non-profit sector support quality jobs and contribute to reducing non-profit workforce precarity.
  - To effectively collaborate with the non-profit sector to support Torontonians during emergency responses.
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## Modernizing City-Nonprofit Sector Relationships – Consultation Process

We invite you to contribute your ideas and expertise to help shape:

- A clear vision statement/policy direction for the City's relationship with the community-based nonprofit sector.
- Desired outcomes to be achieved through a more deliberate relationship.
- Principles to guide the City and the sector toward achieving their shared vision and outcomes.
- Key actions, best practices, and policy structures we can implement to amplify our respective capacities to achieve our shared objectives.

To start off the conversation, **six discussion papers** have been drafted to raise issues and provide context. These papers will look at the positive impact of the sector in regards to the City, as well as five specific relationships between the City and nonprofit sector. The topics of each paper are:

1. **The scope and impact of the nonprofit sector** – how do the City and Toronto benefit from the nonprofit sector?
2. **Democratic and civic discourse** - the sector facilitates the inclusion of community voices and perspectives by engaging with the City to carry out policy development, research, community engagement projects and advocacy.
3. **Contributions to community well-being on which the City relies on but does not fund**, including volunteer supports. Examples include faith groups and community groups that are not funded by the City.
4. **The City's investments in the sector** to help the sector achieve our shared mandate through grants, below-market-rent tenancies, and other supports.
5. **The City's purchase-of service contracts** to meet the needs of Torontonians including services such as child care, youth employment, public health services, seniors programs, housing and shelters.
6. **The City as the legislated regulator** of some human services provided by the sector (e.g. child care, housing and long term care).

The papers have been created through interviews with sector leaders. These papers will guide numerous focus group discussions with sector participants and organizations, including ethno-specific organizations and grassroots community groups. As well, an online survey will be available to capture the perspectives of sector members who are unable to attend these discussions.

We will bring forward the papers in the next few weeks and hope to meet with people across the sector to generate ideas in open forums, focus groups and interviews. We hope your organization will be able to participate over the coming months in these discussions and help shape exciting and actionable proposals for enhancing our City/Sector relationships and impact.

If you have any questions, please contact Ajay Ram at [aram@socialplanningtoronto.org](mailto:aram@socialplanningtoronto.org).