

Hear and Now: Impact of Live Music in Mississauga

Prepared for: City of Mississauga

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Photo by Adam Pulicichio

Executive Summary

Mississauga's live music sector delivers substantial economic benefits, contributing to the city's economy through both direct operations and associated tourism. The city's diverse talent pool and strategic growth efforts position it as an emerging leader in Ontario's live music landscape, poised for further economic growth. Mississauga's live music sector:

- Supports an estimated **290 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs** and generates **\$14.7 million in labour income**.
- Adds an estimated **\$28 million to Mississauga's gross domestic product (GDP)**.
- Contributes **\$10.9 million in total tax revenue** and **\$1 million in property tax**.
- Is dynamic and diverse, reflecting the city's rich multicultural identities, and is home to over **111 live-music related assets** concentrated in three key hotspots: Port Credit, City Centre, and Streetsville.
- Punches above its weight, with a higher-than-average share of musicians among its professional artists compared to provincial averages, and a burgeoning ecosystem of festivals, venues, and community-driven initiatives.
- Serves as a strong incubator for artists and live music workers, strengthened by institutions such as Metalworks and a track record of producing internationally recognized artists.
- Is building a reputation as a music hub with recent accolades such as being named 2023 Music City of the Year, and hosting the CMAOntario Festival and Folk Music Ontario.



Photo by Adam Pulicichio

1. Introduction

This report serves as a companion to the Canadian Live Music Association’s **Hear and Now** National Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) report for the Canadian live music industry, offering a hyper-localized analysis that is specific to Mississauga. While the national report explores broader trends – such as industry-wide financial pressures, environmental impacts and sustainability, and emerging digital tools – this local study focuses on the unique impacts, needs, and opportunities associated with Mississauga’s live music ecosystem. This report details the local economic contributions of live music, including its direct, indirect, and induced impacts on Mississauga’s economy. It also highlights the tourism and fiscal ripple effects of live music activities within the city, and the broader sociocultural outcomes that a vibrant live music sector in Mississauga helps to support. Actionable insights are tailored to Mississauga’s context, ensuring that the city’s live music sector is positioned to thrive within the evolving regional and national landscape.

This work follows from the Mississauga Music Strategy, in part fulfilling Recommendation 10: “Measure and understand the value of Mississauga’s music economy,”¹ for which conducting an economic impact analysis was a supporting action. Moreover, many of the insights explored in this report help to quantify the degree to which the strategy’s objectives are being met.

¹ City of Mississauga. 2022. [Mississauga Music Strategy](#). Page 37.

Although this report focuses on Mississauga, the city's live music industry is shaped by many of the same trends driving rapid changes in the national live music landscape. Live music faces a complex future marked by such trends as rising environmental challenges, a growing imperative to advance equity and inclusion, and the unpredictable influence of artificial intelligence. These issues emerge as the sector continues to navigate the uncertainties of post-pandemic recovery, which have skewed the real potential for live music to support economic and social objectives.

Despite these challenges, live music remains a powerful industry that contributes substantial value to both the overall Canadian economy and the local economy in Mississauga. However, until now those economic contributions have largely gone unmeasured. With increased support and strategic focus, the live music sector in Mississauga has the potential to generate even greater benefits for the local economy.

Why is this data useful?

The data will enable Mississauga's live music industry to measure its economic contributions and communicate its broader value to the city, including social and cultural impacts. Additionally, the findings will support the local industry in identifying and addressing existing challenges and opportunities. The primary objectives of **Hear and Now**, as they pertain to Mississauga, are to:

- Provide a baseline against which to measure future growth of the Mississauga live music sector.
- Support future provincial and federal funding applications from the City of Mississauga, local event organizers, and businesses.
- Enable companies and organizations to make data-driven decisions.
- Showcase areas of opportunity and need in the local live music industry.

Armed with the data in this report, live music professionals and advocates in Mississauga will be better positioned to realize the desired 'result' of Recommendation 10 of the Mississauga Music Strategy: ensuring that "the City, its citizens, stakeholders, and other levels of government appreciate the power of music as a driver of employment, economic impact and cultural growth, and believe it is worthy of investment."²

How is live music defined?

"Live music" is defined as music played by an individual or group in front of a live audience.³ Although the industry also encompasses many types of performances in many different settings and forms – whether intimate shows at cafés, bars and parks, performances in concert halls and underground spaces, or massive stadium concerts – at its core, the emphasis on in-person settings is what makes the industry unique, distinguishing it from its recorded music counterpart.

For the purposes of this report, the various aspects of the live music industry were categorized as follows:

² City of Mississauga. 2022. [Mississauga Music Strategy](#). Page 37.

³ Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) and Nordicity. 2024. [Hear and Now: Impacts of the Live Music Industry in Canada](#).

Table 1: Live Music Industry Categorization Framework

Category	Sub-Category	Description/Examples
Venues	Core Live Music Venues	Dedicated live music venues such as concert halls, theatres, performing arts centres, and amphitheaters.
	Occasional Live Music Venues	Occasional live music venues such as bars, pubs, cafés, restaurants, clubs, convention centres, sports arenas, and banquet halls.
Professional Services	Live Music Promoters	
	Live Music Recording or Rehearsal Spaces	
	Live Music Managers/Agents	
	Live Music Production	
	Live Music Equipment Rentals and Supplies	
	Live Music Support Organizations	Such as industry associations or societies.
Professional Organizations	Artist Entrepreneurs	Those who run a business as an artist, musician, DJ, band, or related.
	Choirs	
	Orchestras	
Showcase and Celebration	Music Festivals and Events	
	Indigenous Live Music	Such as powwows.
	Cultural Festivals with Live Music	
	Award Shows	

Source: This categorization was developed by Nordicity, informed through engagements with industry leaders across Canada.

While there are several secondary industries that support live music, they are not included in the scope of this study. For instance, the transportation and hospitality industries play significant roles in facilitating live music events. Additionally, fields like music education and music therapy make use of components of live music. However, these secondary industries fall outside the focus of this study.

1.1. Summary of Methodology

Several research methods were employed to collect and analyze data for this report. These tools and techniques are explained below.

National Survey

The *Hear and Now* Survey was launched to the public on April 30, 2024, and closed on July 12, 2024, as the primary financial data collection tool for this project. In addition, the survey also gathered non-financial information to help inform analysis on the strengths and needs of the industry, as well as non-economic impacts (including social impacts). At a national level, a total of 387 completed responses were received, plus an additional 264 partial responses with usable data. Of those completed responses, 22 came from Mississauga-based professionals, of which over half (59%) were self-managed artists, musician performers, bands, DJs, choirs, or related; 23% answered on behalf of a music business or performing arts organization; and 18% were freelancers in the music industry.

Engagements

Supplementary to the national survey, a roundtable discussion with music industry professionals in Mississauga was held in May 2024 to gather qualitative findings about the industry. This industry roundtable was supplemented by a selection of key informant interviews with Mississauga-based music professionals and other relevant parties.

Secondary Research

Primary research findings were cross-referenced with existing literature and secondary sources for validation. The Mississauga Music Strategy served as a guiding document throughout the process, and this report identifies areas of alignment between its research findings and the strategy's objectives.⁴ Other sources were reviewed and cited throughout this report, such as local resources from the City of Mississauga and Mississauga Arts Council, and national data from Statistics Canada and the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI).

Economic Impact Assessments

The economic impacts of live music companies' operations as well as tourism spending associated with live music were estimated using primary data collected via the national *Hear and Now* Survey, select secondary research sources, and two economic impact modeling tools (including Nordicity's proprietary MyEIA™ model, and a customized tourism model informed by MyEIA™ and the Government of Ontario's Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model). A summary of the data sources and analytical tools used are provided in the table below.

⁴ City of Mississauga. 2022. [Mississauga Music Strategy](#).

Table 2: EIA Data Sources and Analytical Tools

Impact Area	Data Sources and Analytical Tools Used
Live music company operations	National <i>Hear and Now</i> Survey MyEIA™
Tourism spending and impacts	National <i>Hear and Now</i> Survey Ontario Arts and Culture Tourism Profile (as informed by the National Travel Survey, Visitor Tourism Survey, and National Tourism Indicators) Customized tourism EIA™ model



Photo by Adam Pulicichio

2. Profile of Live Music in Mississauga

Mississauga is home to a highly diverse and varied live music scene.

Mississauga has a vibrant live music scene that reflects the city's multicultural identity.^{5,6} Live music in Mississauga is shaped by a wide array of genres, with numerous festivals – such as Mississauga World Music Festival, Japan Festival Canada, Bollywood Monster Mashup, South Asian Festival of Mississauga, Philippines Festival, and Carassauga to name a few – attracting audiences and showcasing the city's diversity. Moreover, festivals like Southside Shuffle and Paint the Town Red are annual events that attract renowned musicians to perform in Mississauga.

The genres present in Mississauga continue to grow as the community evolves. At present, industry roundtable participants note that the city is home to strong jazz and classical scenes, especially with the presence of the Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble and the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Moreover, there are burgeoning pockets of new musical activity taking place – especially in hip-hop, afrobeats, and reggaeton – but this activity tends to be less known and promoted within the community. Industry roundtable participants note that genres tend to be siloed, though there is much opportunity for greater

⁵ City of Mississauga. N.d. “[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#).”

⁶ Data from Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population illustrates that Mississauga is home to a sizeable South Asian community, comprising 25% of its total population. The ten most frequent ethnicities or cultures in Mississauga include Indian, Chinese, English, Canadian, Pakistani, Irish, Filipino, Scottish, and Polish.

cross-pollination to boost audiences and to widely celebrate all that Mississauga's live music scene has to offer.

Mississauga punches above its weight when it comes to live music activity.

Overall, there are approximately 2,800 professional artists in Mississauga, representing about 0.7% of the city's labour force. Of these artists, 24% are musicians (about 660 total), which is higher than the provincial benchmark of 18%.⁷

Additionally, Mississauga's live music scene is comprised of **111 identified industry assets** including venues, professional services (e.g., production, managers), professional organizations (e.g., artist entrepreneurs, choirs, orchestras), festivals, events, and cultural festivals. This figure is not exhaustive and will continue to change as the sector evolves. (For a breakdown of these assets, please see Table 9: Number of Live Music Assets in Mississauga in the Appendix. An interactive map of these assets is also [available on Tableau.](#))

Beyond its plethora of festivals, the local live music scene is buttressed by 29 venues, particularly bars and restaurants dotted along Port Credit (such as Shore Grill and Grotto, and Roc'n Doc's), music-first spaces including The Rec Room, and purpose-built City-owned spaces like the Living Arts Centre, Paramount Fine Foods Centre, and Celebration Square.

Mississauga is a strong incubator for artists and live music workers.

Mississauga has proven to be fertile ground for musical talent. The city has helped produce a number of successful artists – many of which have gone on to achieve national and international recognition. These artists include the likes of Billy Talent, PARTYNEXTDOOR, i!Scarlett, Jill Barber, Rick Emmett, Rich Kidd, Suzie McNeil, Triumph, and Mississauga-born Alessia Cara. While industry roundtable participants noted that artists do not always flaunt or maintain their "Mississauga-born" identity especially as they gain prominence, this trend is beginning to shift.

Moreover, several music programs, such as those at Cawthra Park Secondary School, and private institutions like Metalworks, provide young musicians and music workers with the training and resources needed to pursue careers in live music. Metalworks, in particular, is unique in providing programs for live music engineers – training that otherwise tends to be viewed as a gap across the province.⁸ Additionally, Mississauga benefits from its proximity to Toronto. Humber College sits near the city's border, with many Mississauga students attending programs and Mississauga musicians enlisted as instructors. These educational institutions feed a local talent pool that can help grow a thriving sector.

Mississauga is in a growth phase, building a reputation as a music hub.

Mississauga was recognized as Music City of the Year in 2023, highlighting its growing influence and commitment to a strengthened live music industry. Local awards shows, such as the MARTYs and the Mississauga Music Awards continue to celebrate local talent and accomplishments across the music

⁷ Statistics Canada. Census 2021 data.

⁸ CLMA and Nordicity. 2023. "[Reflections on Labour Challenges in the Live Music Industry.](#)"

industry – including live music. In recent years, Mississauga has also been selected to host Ontario’s premier country music festival, the CMAOntario Festival & Awards Weekend, as well as Folk Music Ontario, Canada’s largest gathering of the folk music industry.

Industry roundtable participants note that the city’s live music infrastructure is still developing. Much of the city’s infrastructure, like music venues and various initiatives launched to date, has been driven by grassroots efforts. That said, increased attention and support from the City of Mississauga – through initiatives like the creation of a Music Strategy – along with backing from organizations like the Mississauga Arts Council and Mississauga Music are helping to grow the city’s live music industry.

Mississauga’s live music scene is concentrated in three main hotspots.

Mississauga is a sprawling city, covering a sizeable geography with low-density. This expanse poses a challenge for building a cohesive music community, as audiences and artists are often spread out across the vast urban landscape. Nonetheless, the city’s live music scene continues to evolve, with a solid foundation of talent, venues, and cultural festivals contributing to its growing reputation as a dynamic epicentre for live music.

Industry roundtable participants note that the city’s sprawling nature has led to the emergence of key hotspots of live music activity, each with its own character and identity:

- **City Centre:** Mississauga’s downtown core is a central spot for live music, housing major retailer Square One and outdoor amphitheatre Celebration Square. Mississauga’s City Centre is also poised for significant population growth with new condominium developments that are attracting families, pointing to increased potential for live music audiences.
- **Port Credit:** Located on the waterfront, industry roundtable participants describe Port Credit as a major centre for live music activity in Mississauga. Several restaurants and bars dotting Port Credit put on live music, and a number of festivals including Buskerfest call the neighbourhood home. Given higher costs in the area, industry roundtable participants note that audiences tend to skew older compared to City Centre.
- **Streetsville:** Located north of Mississauga’s city centre, Streetsville was also noted as another major hotspot for live music in the city, though not as significant as City Centre and Port Credit.

Industry roundtable participants express that the Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) play a large role in supporting and growing live music in neighbourhoods, which has largely helped shape City Centre and in particular, Port Credit, into live music hubs within the city. There are signs of growth in other areas like Meadowvale, where new business meetups and venues such as the Meadowvale Theatre host shows. Additionally, the proximity of Pearson International Airport helps further boost live music in Mississauga. Nearly 45 million passengers passed through Pearson in 2023, suggesting significant opportunity to attract and showcase local talent to national and international audiences alike.⁹

⁹ Toronto Pearson. 2024. [“GTAA Reports 2023 Annual Results.”](#)

2.1. Financial Profile: Industry Revenue, Expenses and Labour

Mississauga's live music industry generates revenue, expenditures, and supports the labour force. The following high-level financial profile of the live music industry in Mississauga illustrates the financial and workforce environment that informs the local industry's broader economic impacts.

Revenue

Conservatively, Nordicity estimates that live music companies in Mississauga earned a total of \$3.88 million in revenue in 2023. The majority (87%) of Mississauga-based respondents to the *Hear and Now* Survey report their 2023 revenue to have grown from the previous year, with 69% of those who experienced an increase reporting more than 10% growth. Furthermore, more than half (53%) of respondents predict their final 2024 revenue will be higher than 2023 levels, with one-quarter of those predicting growth of more than 10%.

The charts below show the proportion of Mississauga live music companies that experienced growth, no change, or decreases in revenue between 2022 and 2023, as well as the proportion of live music companies that predict growth, no change, and decreases in revenue between 2023 and 2024.

Figure 1: Change to 2023 Revenue over 2022

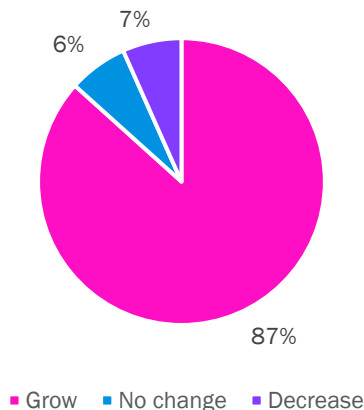
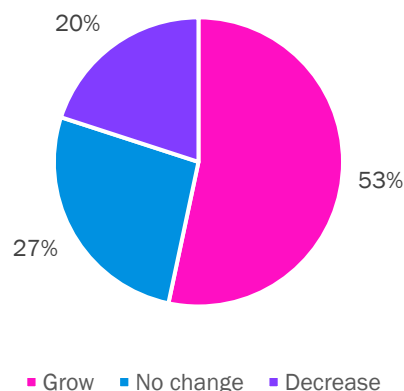


Figure 2: Predicted Change to 2024 Revenue over 2023



n=15

Source: Nordicity, *Hear and Now* Survey

The above statistics reflect a robust year of growth for most live music companies in Mississauga, and the prevalence of over 10% revenue growth cited between 2022 and 2023 suggests strong performance. The

widespread growth suggests that live music companies likely benefited from favourable market conditions associated with post-pandemic recovery (including increased demand for live music activity).¹⁰

However, while over half predict continued growth in 2024, the expected scale is smaller, and 47% predict no change or a decrease in revenue (as seen above in Figure 2). These tempered expectations for the future may reflect more cautious or realistic planning considering potential market challenges, likely a result of a maturing recovery phase. The moderation in expected revenue growth may also indicate uncertainties associated with economic headwinds, like inflation or interest rate pressures,¹¹ and industry-specific challenges like increased competition as other proximate live music markets (including Toronto and Hamilton) also recovered.

Expenses

Nordicity estimates that live music companies in Mississauga spent \$1.40 million in 2023. The largest share of live music company expenses in 2023 went to employee labour and programming costs, followed by marketing, professional services, and rent. The table below provides a breakdown of the estimated distribution of expenses.

Table 3: Breakdown of Expenses, 2023

Category	Expense
Canada-based labour (including full time, part time, and freelance/contract)	\$370,367
Rent	\$108,650
Utilities	\$8,200
Marketing	\$196,117
Travel	\$73,868
Accommodation	\$42,708
Insurance	\$31,365
Tech rental (e.g. lighting, sound equipment)	\$27,948
Licensing (e.g. SOCAN)	\$10,250
Ticketing	\$10,933
Bar and restaurant costs	\$14,008
Artist development	\$20,500

¹⁰ CTV News. 2024. [“A swift rebound and unprecedented tickets sales for live music after pandemic shut venues down.”](#)

¹¹ StatCan. 2024. [“Nearly half of Canadians report that rising prices are greatly impacting their ability to meet day-to-day expenses.”](#)

Programming costs (e.g., artistic fees)	\$235,750
Event costs	\$35,533
Professional services	\$116,987
Other expenses	\$97,648

Source: Nordicity, Hear and Now survey

This distribution of expenses, with significant concentration in labour and artist fees, highlights the importance of the labour force in Mississauga's live music industry. Such significant investment in labour indicates that skilled and knowledgeable live music workers are central to sustaining the industry, and this trend is consistent with the broader national live music industry.¹² Skilled personnel are essential in the execution of live music offerings, and for sustaining the availability of services in the local industry. Without sufficient human resources, Mississauga's live music industry would struggle to maintain the standards that audiences and customers expect.

The high proportion of expenses dedicated to marketing is likely reflective of the industry's reliance on audiences (i.e., more advertising = more ticket sales). It also highlights an opportunity for affordable Mississauga-centric live music-friendly marketing options.

Labour

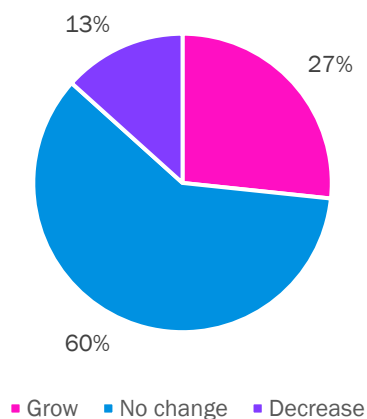
As discussed above, labour and programming combined represent the largest item in Mississauga's live music business expenditures (as is the standard in Canada's live music sector). The average salary for a live music worker in Mississauga in 2023 is approximately \$25,000, which is lower than the estimated national average for live music workers (\$31,000). The average Canadian income in 2022 was \$57,100 with a median income of \$43,100,¹³ both of which are higher than the estimated average salary for a worker in Mississauga's live music industry.

Well over one-half (60%) of Mississauga live music companies indicate no expected change in headcount from 2023 levels, and just over one-quarter (27%) expect their headcount to increase. The chart below provides a visual representation of how companies expect final 2024 headcount to differ from 2023.

¹² Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) and Nordicity. 2024. "Hear and Now: Impacts of the Live Music Industry in Canada."

¹³ Statistics Canada. 2024. ["Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces and selected census metropolitan areas."](#)

Figure 3: Predicted Change to 2024 Headcount over 2023



n=15

Source: Nordicity, Hear and Now survey

Compared to the national live music industry's labour forecasts (which indicate 54% expect no headcount change and 35% expect headcount to increase),¹⁴ the above figures indicate that Mississauga's live music labour force might be growing at a slower rate than Canada's as a whole. As discussed above, labour and human resources are the heartbeat of the live music industry, and stagnating labour force growth may lead to stagnating industry growth more generally. This finding, in turn, signals the need for targeted, strategic live music supports to ensure that companies are able to continue hiring skilled workers and paying performing artists, thereby driving local live music activity and its related economic, tourism, and social impacts.

¹⁴ Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) and Nordicity. 2024. "Hear and Now: Impacts of the Live Music Industry in Canada."



Photo by Adam Pulicichio

3. Impacts of Live Music in Mississauga

The live music industry offers Mississauga far more than entertainment; it serves as a key driver of economic and social activity. It creates employment opportunities across a diverse range of roles, including musicians, venue staff, event organizers, technicians, crews, and hospitality workers such as food and bar staff. Beyond primary employment, live music attracts tourists who contribute to the local economy by staying in hotels, dining at restaurants, and purchasing goods and services. Additionally, live music is a cornerstone of Mississauga's nighttime economy, drawing residents out of their homes and fostering a lively, vibrant community atmosphere fueled by the presence of artists and venues.

Live music activity in Mississauga generates economic impacts that can be expressed in terms of gross domestic product, labour income, employment, and fiscal impacts (e.g., taxes). These impacts come from expenditures related to live music company operations and tourism, and they are composed of direct, indirect and induced impacts.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is a key economic indicator that represents the total monetary value of all goods and services produced within a country, and the activities of industries and organizations to produce goods and services contribute to a jurisdiction's GDP. **Labour** income is defined as total earnings or income received by workers as a result of a specific economic activity. **Employment** is expressed in terms of full-time equivalent jobs (FTEs), where an FTE is defined as someone who works a 40-hour work week, approximately 52 weeks per year. Importantly, employment impact is not a measure of the number of people employed – therefore, the number of FTEs is not necessarily a measure of headcount. **Fiscal impact** is the sum of estimated personal income taxes, corporation income taxes, consumption taxes,

property taxes, and other fees; fiscal impacts are expressed at the federal and provincial, levels, and total fiscal impact is the sum of the above.

The main source of **direct economic impact** in any economy is money paid to or generated by individuals. As such, the direct impact contributed by any entity comes from salaries and wages paid to employees, as well as any profits it earns from its operations. In addition to the direct impact, economic activity also has two key types of **ripple effects** on the broader economy. These include **indirect impacts**, which are generated within the supply chain as businesses purchase goods and services to support their operations; and **induced impacts**, which are generated by workers (i.e., those who have earned income at the direct and indirect impact stages) spending their wages on everyday goods and services. The sum of the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts is the **total economic impact**.

Live music company operations and tourism spending related to live music contributed the following economic and fiscal impacts in Mississauga in 2023:

Table 4: Summary of Economic Impacts in Mississauga in 2023

Category	Live Music Operations	Tourism	Total Impact (Operations + Tourism)
Employment (FTEs)	40	250	290
Labour Income	\$1,032,000	\$13,662,000	\$14,694,000
Gross Domestic Product	\$3,958,000	\$24,026,000	\$27,984,000
Fiscal	\$1,001,000	\$9,855,000	\$10,856,000

Source: Nordicity, Hear and Now survey

Note: figures may not sum exactly due to rounding.

The subsections below detail the economic and fiscal impacts of live music company operations and tourism.

3.1. Economic Impacts – Live Music Operations

The operation of live music companies plays a pivotal role in driving economic activity in Mississauga. Live music companies in the city generate impacts at direct, indirect, and induced levels. These economic impacts are summarized in the table below.

Table 5: Economic Impacts of Mississauga Live Music Company Operations, 2023

Category	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Induced Impact	Total Impact
Employment (FTEs)	20	10	10	40
Labour Income	370,000	404,000	310,000	1,084,000

Gross Domestic Product	2,851,000	663,000	647,000	4,161,000
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Source: MyEIA™

Live music operations also contribute fiscal impacts, as detailed in the table below.

Table 6: Fiscal Impacts of Mississauga Live Music Company Operations, 2023

Tax	Federal (\$)	Provincial (\$)	Total (\$)
Personal Income Taxes	158,000	99,000	257,000
Corporation Income Taxes	178,000	205,000	383,000
Consumption Taxes	96,000	168,000	264,000
Local Property Taxes and Other Fees	0	149,000	149,000
Total	432,000	621,000	1,053,000

Source: MyEIA™

These figures set an important benchmark for live music in Mississauga, one that the City can use to gauge future growth in the local industry. The sector's existing presence serves as a foundation upon which to build greater economic and cultural vibrancy, and there is much opportunity for growth and development. By aligning local live music initiatives to the goals set forth in the Mississauga Music Strategy, the City can amplify the industry's impact and position Mississauga as an emerging hub within the broader Ontario live music ecosystem.

3.2. Economic Impacts – Tourism

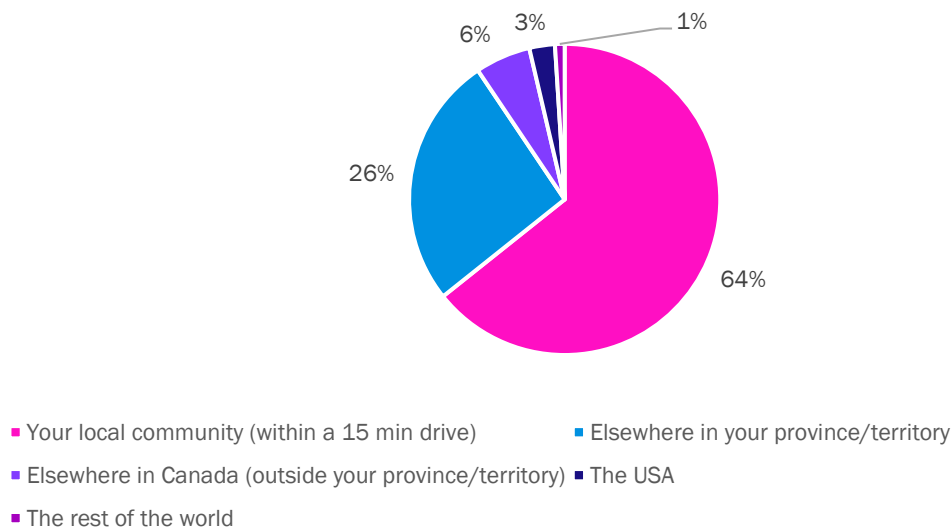
Live music as an industry is significantly linked with tourism. Indeed, live music tourism involves travel motivated by the desire to experience music-related activities, and this form of tourism drives significant economic impacts by attracting visitors who spend money on admission, food and beverage, transportation, and other local attractions. The direct and ripple effects of this spending contribute to the cultural vitality of the Mississauga community while also helping to enhance its cultural profile.

At the national level, the majority (64%) of people who attend live music events do so within their local community, and 36% travel from outside of their local community. Of the 36% who travel to live music events, the majority travel within their own province or territory. Overall, an estimated 4% of attendees at live music events in Canada travelled internationally to do so, and 6% travel interprovincially.¹⁵

¹⁵ "Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) and Nordicity. 2024. Hear and Now: Impacts of the Live Music Industry in Canada."

The chart below provides a summary of where live music event attendees travel from.

Figure 4: Origin of Attendees for Canadian Live Music Events



n=182

Source: Nordicity, *Hear and Now* Survey

In 2023, it is estimated that live music events in Mississauga saw more than 50,000 non-local visitors. Using statistics from the Ontario Arts and Culture Tourism Profile (which is informed by the National Travel Survey, the Visitor Tourism Survey, and the National Tourism Indicators), visitor spending associated with live music in Mississauga in 2023 is an estimated \$32.8 million, or approximately 0.9% of Ontario's total arts and culture tourism expenditures for the year. The economic impacts of this tourism spending are significant, and are detailed in the table below.

Table 7: Economic Impacts of Tourism Spending in Mississauga Associated with Live Music, 2023

Category	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Induced Impact	Total Impact
Employment (FTEs)	150	60	40	250
Labour Income	\$6,824,000	\$4,211,000	\$2,627,000	\$13,662,000
Gross Domestic Product	\$10,425,000	\$8,123,000	\$5,478,000	\$24,026,000

Source: Customized Tourism MyEIA™ Model

Live music related tourism spending in Mississauga also contributed fiscal impacts in the form of various taxes and fees, as summarized in the table below.

Table 8: Fiscal Impacts of Tourism Spending in Mississauga Associated with Live Music, 2023

Tax	Federal (\$)	Provincial (\$)	Total (\$)
Personal Income Taxes	\$1,994,000	\$1,245,000	\$3,239,000



Corporation Income Taxes	\$600,000	\$690,000	\$1,290,000
Consumption Taxes	\$2,367,000	\$2,101,000	\$4,468,000
Local Property Taxes and Other Fees	0	\$858,000	\$858,000
Total	\$4,961,000	\$4,894,000	\$9,855,000

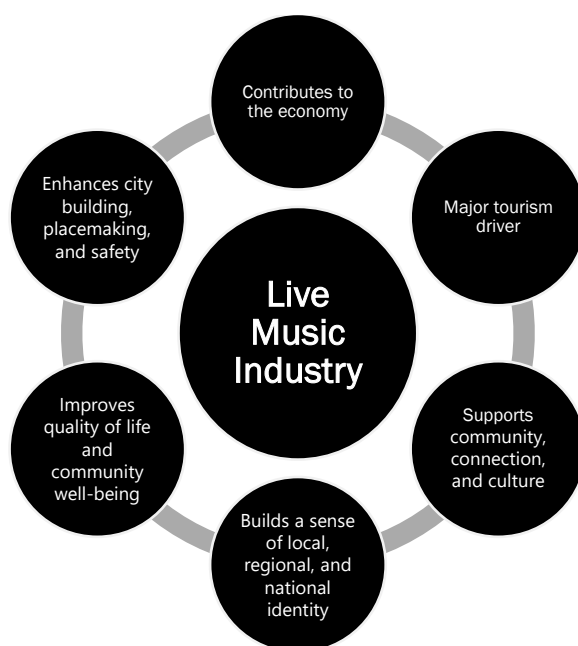
Source: Customized Tourism MyEIA™ Model

The World Travel and Tourism Council is forecasting historically high tourism industry activity for 2024.¹⁶ Given that Mississauga live music companies expect their 2024 to be higher than 2023, this finding suggests that 2024 tourism spending related to live music may also be higher. As a result, the economic impacts from tourism related to live music is also expected to be higher in 2024.

3.3. Social Benefits

The benefits of live music reach well beyond its economic impact. A vibrant live music sector offers several additional social benefits, which are effectively illustrated in the Mississauga Music Strategy through local analysis and case studies of other prominent live music markets – such as Nashville, Austin, and Toronto.¹⁷

Figure 5: The Social Benefits of Live Music



The Mississauga Music Strategy outlines how live music can serve as a powerful cultural and social force by connecting people and communities, transcending language and cultural barriers, and fostering shared

¹⁶ World Travel and Tourism Council. 2024. "Travel & Tourism set to Break All Records in 2024, reveals WTTC."

¹⁷ City of Mississauga. 2022. "Mississauga Music Strategy." Page 10-14.

experiences. As a highly diverse city,¹⁸ Mississauga is uniquely positioned to harness the **cultural impact of music**. Events such as the Bollywood Monster Mashup, Canada's largest South Asian festival, demonstrate the unifying power of music in celebrating heritage and promoting cross-cultural understanding. Music also plays a crucial role in storytelling, preserving traditions, and passing down cultural narratives across generations, reinforcing its importance as a driver of **social cohesion and community identity**.

A vibrant live music scene also enhances Mississauga's appeal as a **creative and dynamic city**. Through longstanding efforts, music can become a defining element of a **city's brand and reputation** and contribute to a sense of place. Similarly, Mississauga's music assets and talented local artists can serve as a cornerstone of its identity, appealing to residents, visitors, and potential newcomers. Live music strengthens the city's **nighttime economy** by attracting more people to the city's core, which in turn supports goals related to **city building and public safety**, as well as growing the customer base for other core businesses such as restaurants and retail stores. This vibrancy contributes to Mississauga's **attractiveness as a place to live and work**, particularly for skilled professionals seeking to live in a market with rich, fun creative and cultural experiences. By investing in its live music ecosystem, Mississauga can continue to build its reputation as a creative hub that supports talent attraction and retention, community involvement, and cultural enrichment.

3.4. The Role of Live Music within the Music Ecosystem

In addition to the above impacts, live music is becoming increasingly important within the broader music ecosystem. For one, live music is the key source of meaningful income for artists, given small returns generated from streaming platforms.¹⁹ In addition, live music plays an important role in artist development, in the following ways:

- **The Importance of a Venue Ladder for Artist Growth:** Diverse venues that cater to various genres and audiences are critical for any robust music industry. Starting out in small venues like bars and cafés allows artists to build a loyal, local fanbase. As an artist progresses in their career, they ideally move up the rungs of the ladder, playing larger venues such as theatres and potentially amphitheaters. Venues are an essential component of not just live music, but the entire music ecosystem as a whole. Without them, artists would not have opportunities to perform, grow audiences, and hone their craft.
- **The Role of Music Festivals in Supporting Emerging Artists:** Music festivals provide a platform for artists – new and old – to play to a sizeable audience. For emerging artists in particular, festivals form a critical steppingstone in advancing careers. By performing at festivals, these artists can gain exposure and grow their following, and often have the chance to play alongside established acts. The exposure offered by festivals can help artists gain more industry attention and open doorways to an expanded network in the industry.

¹⁸ City of Mississauga. N.d. "Equity, Diversity and Inclusion."

¹⁹ Nordicity. 2023. "The Digital Media Universe: Measuring the Revenues, the Audiences, and the Future Prospects."



Photo by Adam Pulicchio

4. Where Mississauga Goes from Here: Areas of Opportunity and Need

Mississauga's live music industry holds significant potential. If supported through beneficial policies and initiatives, Mississauga could unlock even greater economic, tourism, and social benefits through live music. Realizing this potential requires addressing key needs and opportunities apparent in the industry. These needs and opportunities emerged through **Hear and Now** industry roundtables, and resonate with the priorities laid out related to live music in the Mississauga Music Strategy.²⁰

4.1. Supporting Places to Play

Having various types of venues and spaces to rehearse and perform is critical to any thriving music industry. Without venues, there are no spaces for live music to take place, and without spaces to rehearse, artists cannot hone and refine their craft. Across Canada, there is a current shortage of venues in part

²⁰ City of Mississauga. 2022. [Mississauga Music Strategy](#).

spurred on by the pandemic, but not entirely. For instance, Toronto was already experiencing roughly one venue closure per month between 2017–2019.²¹

In Mississauga, industry roundtable participants note that there are only a handful of music venues, and most of these tend to be restaurants and bars. As a comparison, Hamilton has over 100 music venues and spaces, and is ranked seventh among cities worldwide for number of venues per capita.²² Moreover, industry roundtable participants note a need for mid-sized venues (500–1500 capacity) – a fact that it is echoed in the Mississauga Music Strategy. Overall, Mississauga does not have a fully developed “venue ladder,” which is uncharacteristic of a music city.

To help grow live music in Mississauga, industry roundtable participants call for support to help the creation of more varied music-first spaces that would better support the growth of local talent, provide more job opportunities in live music, as well as promote and cater to the diversity of genres present in the city. While developing new venues takes time, in the interim, the City of Mississauga has been exploring ways of animating public spaces through funding concert presenters, as well as expanding busking and other performance opportunities to help increase inclusive spaces for live music.

Relevant Recommendations from the Mississauga Music Strategy:

1. Increase the number and frequency of live music events in Mississauga.
2. Create a regulatory environment in which music venues can thrive.
4. Make City-owned spaces more affordable for the music community.
9. Foster safe and inclusive music events.

4.2. Growing a Reputation (and Audiences)

There is opportunity to grow Mississauga’s reputation as a music hub – a priority that is indicated in the Mississauga Music Strategy. The city’s proximity to Toronto – a central hub for live music in Ontario and in Canada as a whole – has presented an ongoing challenge for Mississauga. In addition to many Mississauga artists choosing to identify as Toronto-born, some have moved to Toronto in search of greater opportunity. Moreover, radius clauses – provisions established by venues and promoters preventing artist from performing at nearby venues for a certain length of time – can present a challenge in securing acts and developing Mississauga’s live music scene. Not only is Mississauga often subject to radius clauses from neighbouring Toronto venues, but also venues in other Greater Toronto Area (GTA) cities. Despite these challenges, Mississauga is seeing a shift in perception, with more artists embracing their Mississauga roots, which could help keep talent in the city. Furthermore, there are opportunities to mitigate the

²¹ City of Toronto. 2022. [Music Industry Strategy: 2022-2026](#).

²² City of Hamilton & MDB Insights. 2018. [City of Hamilton Creative Industries Sector Profile Study](#).

challenge of radius clauses, for instance by pursuing mutual agreements or partnerships with surrounding event venues, and developing partnerships with other cities that might fall outside the radius of most clauses (e.g., Kingston, Ottawa, Niagara, London).

With a burgeoning cultural corridor located in the city centre, and three hotspots of live music activity (City Centre, Port Credit, Streetsville), there is a growing sense of pride in Mississauga. Industry roundtable participants also applaud the efforts of Visit Mississauga, which sponsors several festivals, in promoting and championing local live music.

While Mississauga often feels to be in Toronto's shadow, this proximity is not always viewed negatively. For instance, Mississauga musicians and live music workers can readily access performance and work opportunities in Toronto. As another example, industry roundtable participants note that Mississauga tends to draw audiences from and focus promotional efforts in Toronto, leveraging Toronto's more robust media ecosystem. Promotion, otherwise, is a challenge in Mississauga as noted by roundtable participants and as reflected in the Mississauga Music Strategy. Increased promotion could attract more audiences to local live events and venues, supporting greater sustainability and helping to grow the fanbase for local talent. Additionally, there is a call in the local industry to see more targeted awareness-building of the diverse genres present in Mississauga, like the city's reggaeton, hip hop, and afrobeat scenes.

Relevant Recommendations from the Mississauga Music Strategy:

- 5. Encourage and empower Mississauga businesses to support local music.
- 6. Celebrate and commemorate Mississauga's music history.
- 7. Enhance promotion of Mississauga's music sector.
- 11. Build connections across Mississauga's creative industries.

4.3. Strengthening Grassroots Infrastructure

As previously mentioned, Mississauga's live music infrastructure is still evolving. However, the city's greatest strength lies in its close-knit community of advocates and industry champions, who continue to drive efforts to grow the local live music scene.

At present, Mississauga's existence of key supports, like Mississauga Music, are initiatives spearheaded by the community and many run on a volunteer basis. As Mississauga's live music industry continues to evolve, there will be a need to ensure the continued sustainability of these structures, and support the entrepreneurial spirit of new advocates and industry champions.

Relevant Recommendations from the Mississauga Music Strategy:

- 8. Create musical pathways for youth.

12. Take advantage of local industry expertise.

13. Support music entrepreneurs looking to grow their business in Mississauga.

4.4. Addressing Financial Pressures

The live music industry across Canada faces a variety of financial pressures that are reshaping its landscape and creating new challenges. These financial pressures are also being experienced by Mississauga artists, organizations, and businesses. With the right policies and initiatives in place, Mississauga could see a greater economic return from live music.

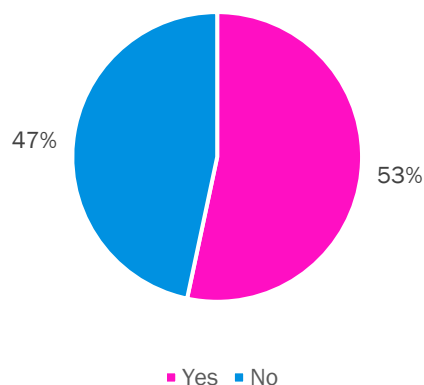
The rise in cost of living is making it increasingly difficult for artists and live music workers to maintain a career, and industry roundtable participants note that many are leaving the city to settle in lower cost of living areas. The industry is also dealing with rising operational costs and stagnating public revenues, all the while festivals and events are still recovering from financial deficits caused by the pandemic.

Industry roundtable participants note that declining support from corporate sponsorships and philanthropy is making recovery even more difficult. Corporate sponsorships are subject to shifting corporate priorities; before the pandemic, many Mississauga organizations and businesses were tapping into support from Scotiabank for example, but that is no longer the case. Moreover, many music festivals and venues rely on alcohol sales as a key source of revenue, but that is being challenged with younger audiences drinking less.²³ Overall, these financial difficulties present an obstacle to growing a thriving live music scene.

Grant funding is an important source of income for many Mississauga music companies and organizations. According to **Hear and Now** survey data, over half of respondents (53%) received grant funding in 2023 (see Figure 6). For these companies and organizations, grants comprise nearly half (45%) of their revenue.

²³ Forbes. 2023. [“Why GenZ Is Drinking Less and What This Means for the Alcohol Industry.”](#)

Figure 6: Portion of Mississauga Companies and Organizations Receiving Grants, 2023



n=15

Source: Nordicity, *Hear and Now* survey

Mississauga artists, music organizations, and businesses can tap into a wide array of federal and provincial grants including from FACTOR, Musicaction, the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Creates, and the Ontario Arts Council. The vast majority of respondents listed “municipal government” and/or “municipal arts council” as main sources of grant income, illustrating the importance of local supports. As an important pillar of local funding, the Mississauga Arts Council continues to look for new partnerships to increase the pool of funds available. At present, the Mississauga Arts Council provides two matchmaking grants for artist-led projects.²⁴ Additionally, the City of Mississauga offers a Live Music Grant to offset eligible costs for for-profit concert presenters featuring a minimum of 50% of Mississauga-based musicians.

Industry roundtable participants note a need for policies to help support compensation in the industry, such as establishing a Basic Income, to counteract the rising cost of living and retain artists and live music workers in Mississauga. Although such an initiative would fall under national jurisdiction, it would have trickle down effects for Mississauga. Ireland recently launched a pilot of its own Basic Income for the Arts in 2022, providing €325 per week to 2,000 eligible artists and creative arts workers. This program has been granted €35 million as of Ireland’s 2025 budget to continue past the pilot phase and is illustrative of an effective model.

Relevant Recommendations from the Mississauga Music Strategy:

3. Help create employment opportunities for Mississauga musicians.

²⁴ Mississauga Arts Council. N.d. “[MAC Microgrants](#).”

4.5. Developing Talent & Artist Discovery

Industry roundtable participants note a need to support the development of local talent in Mississauga and increase their chance of discovery. Where climbing the venue ladder once served as the only way of building a following and reaching success, shifts towards online discovery through platforms like Instagram and TikTok are changing the landscape.

Venues in Mississauga note using social media as a discovery tool to help them parse through the number of portfolios received in a day. However, presenting new, emerging talent can come at a risk for venues, and with mounting financial pressures, many may not readily be inclined to take on such risks. As such, there is a call in the industry to help encourage investment in and showcasing emerging talent.

Moreover, industry roundtable participants note a need for more business skill development across the sector. Increasing awareness of and access to various workshops, mentorships, and professional development opportunities would empower artists and aspiring live music workers to effectively pitch themselves and foster more entrepreneurship in the industry. Many such programs do exist within Ontario, and in Mississauga in particular. For instance, the City of Mississauga established an incubator program called Love Local Music in conjunction with Canada's Music Incubator, providing skill-building workshops and industry mentorship to a select number of aspiring professionals.²⁵

Relevant Recommendations from the Mississauga Music Strategy:

- 8. Create musical pathways for youth.
- 13. Support music entrepreneurs looking to grow their business in Mississauga.

²⁵ City of Mississauga. 2022. ["Are You a Musician Looking to Take Things to the Next Level?"](#)



Photo by Adam Pulicichio

5. Conclusion

Mississauga's live music sector delivers substantial economic benefits, contributing to the city's economy through both direct operations and associated tourism. The sector supports an estimated **290 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs**, generating an estimated **\$14.7 million in labour income**. Additionally, the sector adds an estimated **\$28 million to Mississauga's GDP**, with a total **tax revenue impact of \$10.9 million**, including a **property tax impact of approximately \$1 million**.

These economic impacts would not be possible without Mississauga's **dynamic and diverse live music scene** that reflects the city's rich multicultural identity. With festivals such as Carassauga and Southside Shuffle and a range of venues, from major City-owned spaces like the Living Arts Centre and Celebration Square to the locally-owned venues along Port Credit, **Mississauga punches above its weight in live music activity**. The city enjoys a higher-than-average share of musicians among its professional artists and a thriving ecosystem of festivals, venues, and community-driven initiatives.

As a **strong incubator for artists and live music workers**, Mississauga fosters talent through institutions such as Metalworks, and has a track record of producing internationally recognized artists, including Billy Talent, PARTYNEXTDOOR, among several others. The city is **building a reputation as a music hub** with recent accolades like 2023 Music City of the Year and the hosting of the CMAOntario Festival and Folk Music Ontario. While Mississauga's sprawling geography presents challenges for cohesion, areas such as City Centre, Port Credit, and Streetsville have established themselves as key hotspots for live music.

The city's cultural dynamism, diverse talent pool, and strategic growth efforts position it as an emerging leader in Ontario's music landscape. A thriving live music sector leads to more jobs and more opportunities

for artists to develop audiences and advance their careers, while also unlocking greater economic, tourism and cultural impacts for Mississauga.

Appendix: Summary of Live Music Assets

A total of **111 live music-related assets** were identified through this study. These numbers are subject to changes over time as Mississauga's live music sector evolves, and will need to be continually revisited and updated. An interactive map of Mississauga's live music sector is [available on Tableau](#).

Table 9: Number of Live Music Assets in Mississauga

Category	Sub-Categories Included	Total
Venues	Core Live Music Venues	29
	Occasional Live Music Venues	
Professional Services	Live Music Promoters	43
	Live Music Recording or Rehearsal Spaces	
	Live Music Managers/Agents	
	Live Music Production	
	Live Music Equipment Rentals and Supplies	
	Live Music Support Organizations	
Professional Organizations	Artist Entrepreneurs	20
	Choirs	
	Orchestras	
Showcase and Celebration	Music Festivals and Events	19
	Indigenous Live Music	
	Cultural Festivals with Live Music	
	Award Shows	

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