

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Community Human Services
Arts & Culture

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Heather Slater, Manager, Arts & Culture
Date: November 7, 2022
Subject: Public Art Policy and Public Art Reserve

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Public Art Policy as attached be approved and adopted;
2. A Public Art Reserve be created;
3. The surplus of \$33,826 related to the divestment of Blenheim Heritage House be transferred to the Public Art Reserve; and
4. In next year's multi-budget process, a supplementary budget allocation of \$25,000 per year for 2024 and 2025 for the Public Art Program be considered for approval

Background

Council first directed administration to draft a Public Art Policy in January 2014. Early drafts of this policy were revisited beginning in 2019, when the operations of the Municipal Theatres, Galleries and Museums were merged into the new division of Arts and Culture Services. Between 2019 and 2021, a new Public Art Policy was drafted as found in Attachment 1, Public Art Definitions in Attachment 2, and a Public Art Procedures Manual in Attachment 3.

The draft Public Art Policy aligns with action items in various municipal master plans and strategies, including CK Plan 2035, as follows:

CK Plan 2035 Area of Strategic Focus	Ideas and Priorities	Public Art Program
Economic Prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enhancement of infrastructure- Community education and skills development	Integrating Public Art into development projects will enhance the built environment, and stimulate economic growth through the attraction and retention

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of business-friendly initiatives and investment 	of new businesses and residents, tourism opportunities, and opportunities for artists and fabricators.
A Healthy and Safe Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle - Quality of life - Accessibility 	Public Art encourages outdoor exploration, contributing to a healthy lifestyle; it provides opportunities to participate and engage in the community and connect with other residents, and brings cultural experiences into areas accessible to all.
People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote cultural engagement and diversity - Fuel the creative economy - Promote the value of the arts - Build collaborative partnerships to advance the vision of Chatham-Kent 	Investing in Public Art demonstrates the Municipality's awareness of the importance of arts and culture in the life of a community, assisting in the formation of strong partnerships for an engaged, inclusive and diverse community.
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect and enhance natural heritage resources - Implement strategies to help everyone become stewards and adapt to a changing climate 	Integrating Public Art into open spaces promotes preservation and enhancement of the natural environment, and can be a valuable resource for engaging the public in many areas of social concern, including climate change and sustainability.

The Chatham-Kent Official Plan: Action Toward Sustainability (consolidated 2018) also outlined a role for Public Art within the Municipality:

5.4.2.7 A volunteer Public Art Advisory Committee shall be established to advise Council of the need and adequacy of Public Art in the Municipality. Public Art in the Municipality may incorporate themes supporting local history, civic pride, business and technology.

5.4.2.8 The provision of Public Art in downtown areas and main streets of the Urban Centres shall be encouraged. Larger development proposals shall also be encouraged to incorporate public art. The Municipality may facilitate the provision of Public Art through bonusing policies that allow for increased development density where a developer provides public art. The appropriateness of the Public Art in a development proposal will be determined by the Public Art Advisory Committee.

6.3.3.19 [re: private development] The Municipality may authorize increases in the height and density of residential or commercial development, above what is permitted in the Zoning Bylaw, in return for the provision of Public Art.

Subject to the approval of the draft Public Art Policy and the creation of a Public Art Reserve, the next steps toward developing a Public Art Program are as follows:

- 1) Creation and initial meetings of core committees (Interdepartmental Public Art Team and Public Art Advisory Committee);
- 2) Creation of a manual and checklist for Public Art in Private Development;
- 3) Launch of an initial Public Art call for completion in 2023-24;
- 4) Creation of an inventory and database of existing public art assets; and
- 5) Development of a Public Art Master Plan.

Comments

Many towns, cities and municipalities across the country and around the world have implemented Public Art Programs, and have subsequently built a diverse collection of Public Art pieces that define and enhance their communities. The draft Public Art Policy for Chatham-Kent is modelled on some of the most successful Public Art Programs across Canada, including best-practice policies and procedures, and recommendations for funding, administration and ongoing management of Public Art Assets.

The Public Art Policy is intended to provide Council, administration, and the community with a clear and consistent framework for procuring and caring for Public Art, in order to ensure a lasting legacy through a sustainable Public Art Program.

The CK Public Art Policy is built on the following ten principles:

- 1) Art contributes to the health and vibrancy of a community
- 2) Public Art can be integral to the civic planning and development process
- 3) Public Art must be accessible to all, through placement in public space, content and/or community knowledge, and experience as context for creation

- 4) Artistic excellence and innovation are encouraged through careful adjudication and selection
- 5) Effective community engagement stimulates an artistic process that reflects and interprets people's experience and aspirations
- 6) Art in public places can highlight the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's landscape, history and cultures, as well as issues of importance to residents of the area
- 7) Public Art can shape the community fabric through functional pieces and integration into infrastructure, as well as independent site-specific artworks
- 8) Diversity, equity, and inclusiveness, through the selection of artists, committee members, artistic medium, scale, and style will guide both the processes and the selection of Public Art
- 9) Instigating major works to serve as municipal landmarks, as well as smaller scale community-oriented works, which may be temporary or mobile in nature, will lead to a diverse and rich Public Art inventory
- 10) A Public Art program must prioritize the commitment to the responsible long-term care of Public Art works

The following section summarizes the content of the draft Policy and its appendices:

Funding Sources

The recommended funding model of the Public Art Policy is two-fold: a) Capital investment based on the "Percent for Public Art" model employed by the vast majority of Public Art programs, and b) a Public Art Reserve. The "Percent for Public Art" model requires that 1% of the budget for applicable Capital projects be set aside for the inclusion of a Public Art element. The Reserve will ensure a reliable source of funding for the ongoing commissioning, maintenance and care of public artworks, the administration of the program itself, and regular inclusion of community art projects for smaller infrastructure items (i.e. utility boxes, benches, bike racks, etc.)

Types and Origins of Public Art

Public Art comes in many forms, from sculpture and murals to landscape art, from functional art to participatory and pop-up installations. Public Art may originate from and/or be funded by any one of a number of sources, from fully public (i.e. art initiated by the Municipality, perhaps as part of a Capital project) to fully private (i.e. a developer wishing to incorporate a public art element with assistance from the Municipality), to any combination of the two. Residents and artists may also approach the Public Art Program with ideas and/or funding for Public Art projects.

Administration

The Public Art Program will be administered by staff within the Arts and Culture division. An Interdepartmental Public Art Committee will be formed, including representatives from the following departments/divisions:

Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Community Development
Financial Services

This committee will meet annually to discuss potential Public Art projects.

Public Art Advisory Committee

It is standard practice for Public Art Programs to engage an external committee of volunteers called a Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC). The role of the PAAC is to review and contribute to Public Art proposals and to assist administration in the selection panels for individual projects. PAACs generally comprise members of local Arts Foundations, Arts Councils, and/or other groups of community arts and culture stakeholders. The model proposed for Chatham-Kent is a committee of administration; specifically, an external PAAC with a Municipal Liaison. The PAAC will be formed as a sub-committee of the CK Arts and Culture Network, which acts as a community Arts Council for Chatham-Kent as a whole.

Why Public Art?

Public Art has demonstrated benefits to communities throughout history, beginning with the Great Depression and the subsequent art of the “New Deal”, through to the present day – from the powerful murals created in response to Black Lives Matter, to sobering installations about the Residential School crisis, to the animation of restaurant patios in the wake of COVID-19 isolation. In addition to guiding the Municipality toward a successful Public Art Program, the draft Policy also stresses the need for Public Art in general, and speaks to the role of Municipal staff and Council in advocating for its inclusion in the community.

Public Art not only beautifies communities – it also helps them to grieve, to heal and to prosper. Now more than ever, as Chatham-Kent navigates through this period of pandemic recovery, community renewal, and social change, the community needs Public Art.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

- ☒ Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- ☒ A Healthy and Safe Community:
Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
- ☒ People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

- ☒ Environmental Sustainability:
Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

- ☐ Financial Sustainability:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable
- ☐ Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership
- ☐ Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- ☐ Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Thorough and ongoing public engagement is the key to a successful Public Art Program – Public Art is for, and often about, the community(ies), and relies on the input of individuals from those communities to be impactful and successful.

Community consultations thus far include:

June 19, 2019: Public Art Information Session 1, Thames Art Gallery, Chatham Cultural Centre

June 27, 2022: Let's Talk CK Survey "Building a Public Art Program for Chatham-Kent" launched

June 28, 2022: Public Art Consultation Town Hall, Studio One, Chatham Cultural Centre

October 14, 2022: Pop-up Public Art engagement booth at Crowfest 2022, with Public Art Bike activity

Internal consultations have included:

October 12, 2021: Presentation of Draft Policy to EMT

April 1, 2022: Presentation of Draft Policy to Mayor Canniff

June 14/21/22, 2022: Virtual Education Sessions for Municipal Councillors

In the consultation activities thus far, the community has been asked about their experiences with public art within and outside of Chatham-Kent, as well as their input about funding models. During the in-person sessions, attended mainly by local artists and arts consumers, the role of the artist in collaboration with the Municipal departments involved in vetting and discussing projects was discussed, considering the autonomy of the artist, and balancing that with the complexity of creating art for viewing by a wide segment of the public, in spaces accessible to all.

In general, public feedback has been extremely supportive of the implementation of a Public Art Program for Chatham-Kent, with funding from public or private sources, or any combination of the two. Sample feedback includes:

- 1) Large-scale, big budget public art projects should not be the sole focus of the program; there should be regular calls for smaller-scale projects, such as infrastructure beautification and community art installations
- 2) Opportunities should be provided not only for professional artists of national and international significance, but also local and community based artists of diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as young artists with little to no experience with public art
- 3) Requests for Quotes (RFQ) would be preferable to Requests for Proposals (RFP); the project should begin with the artist, not with the concept
- 4) Public art must be created, commissioned, and promoted in all communities across the Municipality
- 5) The decisions about art (specifically artist selection and thematic ideas) should consider input from a wide variety of community members, not just artists
- 6) We need to honour and care for the existing public art pieces, through restoration and regular maintenance
- 7) Jury selection needs to be transparent, with sufficient publicity of jury calls so that a wide range of citizens can apply
- 8) The arts should be prioritized as a key component of Municipal planning
- 9) Training and mentoring for local artists should be part of the master plan, so that interested local artists without public art experience can become public artists
- 10) Consistent municipal staffing and funding support is essential to a sustainable public arts program

Consultation, both internal and external, will continue as the Public Art Program takes shape, and will be a key component of each new Public Art call and approval process.

Financial Implications

For applicable municipal capital projects, where Public Art would enhance the project, 1% of the total budget will be allocated to the inclusion of Public Art.

In 2021, the Blenheim Heritage House was divested; historically, the lease revenue from this building exceeded the operating costs of the facility. As a result, upon the sale

of the facility there is a balance of \$33,826 in unused funds which are to be reallocated. Administration is requesting that these funds be transferred to the Public Art Reserve. The division will also be requesting a supplementary budget allocation of \$25,000 per year for years two (2024) and three (2025) of the Public Art Program.

At this time, it is recommended that, using existing resources, Administration proceed to develop a Public Art Master Plan at a preliminary service level; the Public Art Master Plan will include recommendations for increased service levels and staffing resources, consistent with comparable municipalities, to be considered in a future budget process.

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Attachments: Attachment 1 – Draft Public Art Policy
Attachment 2 – Public Art Definitions
Attachment 3 – Public Art Program Administrative Procedures Manual