

PUBLIC ART POLICY UPDATE

4.3 Public Art Policy Update- 2023-359

My name is John Fisher. I writing to you as a private citizen living downtown and as President of the Guelph Hiking Trail Club. The Club completed a number of what should be considered public art projects on private property which are adjacent to city owned trails. I was a former member of the Council appointed Public Art Advisory Committee.

We urge you to send the Public Art Policy Update back to staff for a more robust update that will result in the creation of more public art in our city.

The **Policy Statement** captures what public art means in the city. However, the **Purpose** of the public art policy is much too timid and too heavily weighted to process roles as opposed to actual creation of public art in the city.

We believe the **definition of Public art** is too narrow. Adding murals to the definition is a first step but does not go far enough.

We need a definition that would incorporate a broader vision of public art which engages and encourages people to interact and be curious about public spaces. A broader definition would streamline our ability to display and honour some of those historical artifacts you are likely to find stored in city warehouses. ("Museum, Library and archival collections. Commemorative planks and memorials fall under other city policies are not, therefore subject to this policy") There is no evidence that these policies are working. They are low hanging fruit that would enliven public spaces and engage other community organisations.

Public Art Operational Plan

The plan would Recommend A practical implementation strategy for public art. We still do not have one!

How can we "encourage" contributions to leverage funding from other governmental and private sources when there is no Public Art Site vision?

Funding

The second part of the Purpose statement is to provide a sustainable funding model for the growth and management of Public Art through the Public Art Reserve Fund.

The old model included approved transfers from the operating budget and approved surplus allocations from the operating budget at year end. (2 of the last 4 years had operational budget surpluses)

We don't think the new model which provides funds through a council approved competitive multi year budget process will be any more successful in ensuring funds flow into the PAR. We suggest a guaranteed tiny % of development funds flow to the PAR which would provide more certainty and sustainability.

More visibility and communication about the PAR in combination with an Operational Plan would encourage more private donations to the fund.

1.3 Role of City Council.

Council Will :

d) authorize expenditures from the Public Art Reserve Fund.

There should be some delegated authority here for staff to take advantage of low hanging fruit opportunities without unnecessary council debate.

e) Approve the annual Public Art budget through the budget process.

(Please prove me wrong and approve the \$50000 ongoing operating budget transfer for the acquisition of public art.

Public Art Reserve Fund (From Tara Baker via Danna Evans to John Fisher)

Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (YT
Opening balance	152,411	76,179	62,499	63,874	65,124	66,6
Plus:						
Transfer from operating	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interest earned	2,476	1,678	1,375	1,250	1,525	
Less:						
Expenditures	78,708	15,359	-	-	-	
Closing balance	76,179	62,499	63,874	65,124	66,649	66,6

Most of spending for 2018/2019 is for Sudden Garden commission(the deer).

Conclusion

Is it **policy**, an **operational plan**, **staffing** or **money** that have prevented the city creating public art since 2019 and as the Policy Statement states "enhancing the quality of life of citizens, fosters inclusion and belonging, strengthens community pride, improves the aesthetic of the public environment and contributes to social wellbeing and economic vitality"

The **role of council** under a) "act as an advocate for art in Public Spaces in the city".

Council has to ask if the lack of visible Public Art acquisitions in the city over the last 5 years will be rectified by these few timid amendments being proposed by staff.

If the answer is "NO" council needs to send the policy back to staff to create a Policy that will truly make a visible difference and reflects the policy statement.

Respectfully

John Fisher

Past PAAC member.

As President of GHTC secured funding and commissioned Seth's "Civic Dreamscape" at the rear of the private property Matrix building adjacent to a public trail.

Secured funding through My Main Street for art work on private property behind Angel's to enliven the city owned public trail.

Currently have a Public Donation sculpture request for consideration by the PAAC.(Our proposal was declined at the last PAAC meeting).