

REPORT

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: April 24, 2023

From: Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer
File:

Item #: 2023-250

Subject: **City Hall Community Art Exhibition Program**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the establishment of a City Hall Community Art Exhibition Program as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's approval to establish a City Hall Community Art Exhibition Program. This initiative was developed in response to a past Council motion asking staff to look at ways to reimagine the space and walls outside Council Chambers to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

BACKGROUND

At the November 1, 2021 Council meeting, a motion was put forward to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment in the lobby area outside Council Chambers at City Hall. The motion read as follows:

Whereas the City of New Westminster's vision is "A vibrant, compassionate, sustainable city that includes everyone"; and

Whereas Reconciliation, Inclusion and Engagement is a high priority for the City as we work towards "creating a welcoming, inclusive and accepting community that promotes a deep understanding and respect for all cultures; and

Whereas our 2019 Arts Strategy outlines goals and a vision that encompasses "Communicate, Nurture, Include, Generate and Innovate" while expanding opportunities for the Arts in our community; and

Whereas a motion approved in January 2020 called for ways in which the City can be more welcoming and inclusive, specifically related to Civic facilities, City Hall and Council Meetings;

Therefore be it resolved that Arts Services report back to Council and the PAAC¹ with options to reimagine the space and walls outside Council Chamber to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

Following a review of the opportunity, staff brought recommendations to the Arts Advisory Committee for review and input.

DISCUSSION

City Hall Community Art Exhibition Program Concept

It is proposed that staff develop a City Hall Community Art Exhibition Program, working in partnership with the Arts Council of New Westminster (ACNW) to facilitate and install a rotating exhibition of work by ACNW member organizations and other local artists.

The exhibition space would be located on the second floor mezzanine at City Hall, including both the wall directly outside the Mayor's office and Council Chambers as well as the full second floor corridor. Exhibitions would rotate every three (3) to four (4) months.

Exhibition-related tasks would be shared between Art Services staff and the ACNW. This includes scheduling of exhibitions, preparing exhibition materials (labels, artist statements), liaising with the member organizations, installation and strike of exhibitions, marketing and promotion.

Community Benefit

This rotating community exhibition would serve to raise the profile of the City's local community-based visual arts organizations and local artists, and expand opportunities for New Westminster residents to experience and enjoy art in the community.

Arts Advisory Committee Feedback

The Arts Advisory Committee was supportive of this direction and felt that it aligned with the City's Arts Strategy to support broadened opportunities to connect artists with the community. As part of the program, the Committee asked staff to ensure that there is adequate signage to direct City Hall visitors to the second floor mezzanine exhibition space, and to consider future opportunities to include art work in other public spaces at City Hall where feasible.

¹ PAAC refers to the Public Art Advisory Committee, which was dissolved in early 2022 when Council approved the formation of the Arts Advisory Committee.

NEXT STEPS

Following Council’s endorsement of this proposal next steps would be as follows:

- Complete an environmental review of the mezzanine walls to determine if there are any asbestos containing materials remaining within the wall structure;
- Complete any required remediation of the area to provide a safe hanging surface;
- Install a hanging rail to support the exhibitions;
- Prepare a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Arts Council of New Westminster to outline and define roles and responsibilities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Program funding is available within the existing Art Services operating budget to support the one-time and ongoing operating costs to purchase and install a hanging system and exhibition signage, at an estimated cost of \$3,000.

The total forecasted capital cost to test and abate/remediate the walls is estimated at \$5,000 with funding from the Facilities Hazardous Materials 2023 Capital Budget (note – this work is being undertaken outside of the planned remediation or facility work at City Hall). If funding is insufficient, staff will report back through the quarterly budget report.

OPTIONS

Council is asked to consider the following options:

1. THAT Council approve the establishment of a City Hall Community Art Exhibition Program as outlined in this report;
2. Provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommend option 1.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Todd Ayotte, Manager, Community Arts and Theatre

This report was reviewed by:
Harji Varn, CFO/Director of Finance
Tobi May, Manager, Civic Buildings and Properties

This report was approved by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer