



REPORT

REPORT TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

REPORT FROM: Catherine McLeod, Senior Arts and Culture Specialist

DATE: May 18, 2021

REPORT NO.: ADMIN-2021-0026

RE: Public Art Program Implementation – Bell Box Mural Project

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. ADMIN-2021-0026, dated May 18, 2021, regarding the Public Art Program Implementation - Bell Box Mural Project, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the recommended project's budget, scope, scale and concept be approved;

AND FURTHER THAT the requested budget of \$7,850, including 1.76% non-refundable HST, be transferred from the Public Art Reserve to a capital project dedicated to the implementation of the Bell Box Mural Project, as outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2020, Council approved moving forward with the Under Wraps project which will feature the artwork of local artists on nine Town-owned utility boxes. Under Wraps is on track to be installed and unveiled in summer 2021. While developing Under Wraps for Town-owned utility boxes, Cultural Services staff also reached out to utility providers to form partnerships in order to increase opportunities for and impact of public art throughout the community. Based on this outreach, pending Council approval, Bell Canada will be the first Corporate partner in the Town's Public Art Program. This is a very positive development and demonstrates the continued growth and evolution of the Town's public art program.

Per the Town's Public Art Master Plan and Public Art Policy, this report seeks Council's approval of the project's budget, scope, scale and concept.

COMMENTS:

The Public Art Advisory Board has developed a partnership with Bell Canada as part of the Bell Box Mural Project. Four boxes will be painted in 2021 as a pilot project that can be continued and expanded in future years - pending further discussions and confirmation with Bell Canada, as well as Council approval. This project will be directed at local artists as part of the Cultural Services section's COVID-19 Recovery Programs for the arts and culture sector. Subsequent iterations of the project may be opened to a wider range of artists.

The following section outlines the recommended scope, scale, locations and budget of the Bell Box Mural Project. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, non-material modifications may be made to the scope, scale, locations and/or budget:

- 1. Project Brief:** The Town's Public Art Program will invite professional artists or artist teams living in or having their artistic practice in Halton Hills to submit proposals for designs to paint one of four Bell Canada utility boxes. Only one design per artist or artist team will be selected to ensure that there are opportunities for at least four artists or artist teams.

The Commissioned artists will be responsible for developing their design and painting their assigned Bell box. Bell Canada will be responsible for cleaning the boxes prior to them being painted and applying an anti-graffiti coating to the boxes once they are painted. The Town will be responsible for issuing the artist call, running the art selection process, and coordinating with the artists and Bell Canada. A Letter of Agreement outlining Bell Canada's and the Town's responsibilities was drafted and accepted by Bell.

- 2. Goals:** The Bell Box Mural Project will take advantage of existing infrastructure in the form of utility boxes. It will use them as canvases to enliven the streetscape and profile the work of local artists. The project will support Halton Hills' local artists by commissioning them and raising the profile of Halton Hills' vibrant arts scene. High quality of life, which includes a vibrant arts and culture scene, is a key factor in economic development investment decision-making.

This project is the first Town Public Art Program to be undertaken with a corporate partner. Upon successful completion of this project, the Public Art Advisory Board hopes to engage additional private sector businesses in the Town's Public Art Program.

- 3. Artwork Parameters:** Artwork may be site specific or suitable for installation in any of the identified locations, and may address any theme or topic. Artists may create artwork specifically for this project or may use and adapt existing work.

4. Locations (see Appendix 1): Installation locations were selected based on:

- Priority sites identified in the Public Art Master Plan (PAMP);
- Locations with high visibility and ample pedestrian, cycling and/or motorist traffic;
- Locations with Bell Canada boxes in good repair that are not planned to be replaced for at least 5 years; and
- Consultation with Town staff and Bell Canada regarding infrastructure suitability for this project.

Selected Bell Boxes:

Box Number	Site/Intersection	Location
211-1	Poets Path & Atwood Avenue	Georgetown
FDI101P	280 Guelph Street	Georgetown
110-3	273 Delrex Boulevard	Georgetown
2031A	Beside 138 Churchill North	Acton

*The project locations may be adjusted pending artist submissions and changes to infrastructure replacement schedules – among other factors. See Appendix 1 for maps and photos of the selected Bell boxes.

- 5. Scope and Scale:** Phase 1 of the Bell Box Mural Project will consist of four painted boxes featuring the work of four local artists or artist teams. Painting of all locations will depend on receiving appropriate artwork of sufficient quality and the receipt of detailed quotes for fabrication and installation.

The Bell Box Mural Project has been designed as a program that may continue in future years provided that:

- Bell Canada approves the continuation of the project;
- Additional suitable sites are identified; and
- Council approves subsequent project phases.

- 6. Budget:** The budget for this project is approximately \$9,850, of which Bell Canada will contribute \$2,000. Therefore, the Town's portion will be \$7,850 - excluding any unforeseen circumstances.

Item	Estimated Costs (including 1.76% non-refundable HST)
Artist Fees	\$6,200 (\$32/square foot*)
Administration, including art selection panel honorariums, documentation, advertising, launch, promotion	\$2,750
Contingency	\$900
Total	\$9,850
Bell Canada Contribution	\$2,000
Town Cost	\$7,850

*Taking into account the varying sizes of the boxes, the commissioned artists will receive \$1024 - \$1952 + HST each (Canadian Dollars). Artist fees are based on \$32/square foot. The cost of materials has been incorporated in the artist fee.

7. Timeline (2021): The anticipated project schedule is:

Date*	Project Phase
June 16	Launch Call for proposals
July 19	Deadline for Artist Proposals via email, by 9:00 AM
July 21 – 27	Art Selection Panel meets to review proposals and choose finalists
July 28	Artist recommendations sent to Bell for approval
August 9	Finalists notified
August 10 - 16	Contracts finalized
August 16 - 20	Bell Boxes Cleaned
August 21 – September 27	Selected artists paint their assigned Bell Boxes
September 28 – October 1	Bell applies anti-graffiti overlay
Early October	Bell Box Mural Program promotion/unveiling

*Schedule is subject to change

- 8. Selection Process:** Proposals will be reviewed by an independent Art Selection Panel comprised of art professionals and community representatives. The Panel will receive technical input and advice from appropriate Town staff. The Art Selection Panel will recommend artists and/or artist teams for the award of the four commissions to the Town's Public Art Advisory Board (PAAB) for approval. Upon approval by the PAAB, the selected work will be sent to Bell Canada for approval. Once approved by Bell Canada, the selected work will be brought to Council for information, per the process laid out on in the Public Art Master Plan.
- 9. Project Readiness:** The PAAB and Town staff from several departments have dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort to develop this project by completing pre-project work. This has included:
- ongoing coordination with Bell Canada;
 - confirming available infrastructure;
 - defining project parameters;
 - researching and drafting the artist proposal call; and
 - drafting a letter of agreement with Bell Canada.

This project is tied to Cultural Services' COVID-19 Recovery Programs. A Request for Proposals has already been drafted with input from Purchasing staff. This will ensure that, pending Council approval, the project can continue to move forward expeditiously.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Bell Box Mural Project supports the Strategic Plan's vision and mission, and relates to numerous priorities and values, including:

- Shaping Growth
- Foster a Prosperous Economy
- Foster a Healthy Community

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The total funding request for this project is \$7,850 (including non-refundable HST) - to be funded from the existing Public Art Reserve. The public art capital program will be adjusted in the forecast as part of the 2022 Budget process, in order to accommodate the reserve top-up requirement resulting from this project.

CONSULTATION:

In the development of this project, Cultural Services consulted with staff from Development Engineering, Purchasing and Finance.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The Public Art Advisory Board, which includes representation from the arts and culture community, the Arts and Culture Working Group (volunteer community members), in addition to Town staff, developed the project idea and parameters. Public art on utility boxes was a project suggested by multiple community stakeholders during the public consultation process for the development of the Public Art Master Plan and is included in the 'What We Heard' portion of that Plan.

Since announcing the Under Wraps project, Cultural Services staff have received community requests to wrap or paint utility boxes in front of their homes, suggesting ongoing public support for utilizing utility boxes for public art.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

The recommendation outlined in this report advances the Strategy's implementation.

This report supports the Cultural Vibrancy, Economic Prosperity and Social Well-being pillars of Sustainability, and in summary the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is Excellent.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The artists Call for Proposals will be widely distributed throughout Halton Hills, including via artist networks, groups and organizations, to attract the best possible proposals. Town communications channels will be used in addition to paid advertising and local newsletters. Social media feeds focused on the arts and culture sector will also be used.

CONCLUSION:

The Bell Box Mural Project will be the Town's third public art project. It will be the Town's first public art project to engage a corporate partner. The project will be engaging and enliven the streetscape and support local artists. Interestingly, it will also give the public a peek behind the curtain of the creative process as they will be able to watch the artists at work as they paint their boxes. The Bell Box Mural Project will raise the profile of local artists and the local art sector as well as that of the Public Art Program. It will contribute to supporting a thriving cultural sector that has been especially hard hit by COVID-19. The Bell Box Mural Project is another example of the Town's ongoing commitment to cultural vibrancy and the delivery of responsive cultural initiatives.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Damian Szybalski". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Damian Szybalski, Director of Economic Development, Innovation & Culture

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "C. Mills". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "C" and the last name "Mills" written in a cursive script.

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer