

NO: R205

COUNCIL DATE: October 20, 2015

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor and Council** DATE: **October 9, 2015**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks Recreation and Culture** FILE: **8000-30/N**
xc: 7800-01

SUBJECT: **Recommendation for Newton Recreation Centre Public Art Project**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. receive this report as information; and
2. authorize staff to work with artist Sean Alward to create the design on the glass curtain wall as the public art component for the new expansion to the Newton Recreation Centre as generally described in this report.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval for staff to retain an artist to undertake a public art project for the proposed Newton Recreation Centre expansion.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The recommendation of this report complies with the City's Public Art Policy. The integration of public art in the Newton Recreation Centre expansion will add to the vibrancy of civic facilities in the Newton Town Centre. The implementation of the public art project is guided by the Public Art Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

The intention of the expansion of the Newton Recreation Centre is to increase the fitness area, provide more building transparency, and make the entrance to the building very welcoming. The site for the public art is the new two storey high glazing that will serve as the façade of the expansion and wrap around the building to where the existing grove of mature trees is located (See **Appendix I**). The public art opportunity is the design of the frit pattern that will coat the glazing to address the solar gain issues of the building given it is south facing direction.

The artwork theme "Weaving Communities Together" could refer to many concepts – from representing diversity, to representing a community, to the imagery of weaving. The artwork formed by this frit design will be highly visible and provide a positive metaphor for the Newton

community that surrounds this facility. The public art is intended to make the building welcoming, and to contribute to the visibility required in a meaningful way. The artist will work closely with the architectural and building project team to develop a design that will also be functional and reduce the solar heat gain and glare of this glass curtain wall.

Support for this approach to the public art opportunity for the Newton Recreation Centre was supported unanimously by the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Call for Letters of Interest and Selection Process:

A call was extended to professional artists interested in working collaboratively with the Newton Expansion Design Team. The call was posted on BC Bid, on the City's opportunities for business webpage, the City's Public Art Opportunities for artists' web page, and on the Vancouver Public Art list serve.

A Call for Expression of Interest (EOI) was issued resulting in seventeen (17) submissions received by the City. A Selection Panel to evaluate the submissions was convened and included the following:

Selection Panel Members:

- Nicoletta Baumeister, Surrey Artist;
- David Dalley, Friends of the Grove, Community Advocate and Surrey Resident; and
- Nick Sully, Shape Architecture.

Advisors:

- Perry Fulop, Manager, Newton Recreation Centre;
- Shira Standfield, Beautification Planner, Parks, Recreation and Culture Department; and
- Debbie Langtry, Public Art Advisory Committee.

On September 12th, 2015, there was an information meeting and site visit with interested artists to review the artwork location; community context and values; and expectations. The architect gave a detailed presentation on the building design and the project opportunities and potential constraints.

On September 29th 2015, EOI submitted by artists were reviewed by the Artist Selection Panel. As a result of this process, the Panel unanimously voted to recommend to the Public Art Advisory Committee the artist Sean Alward for this commission.

DISCUSSION

About the Artist:

Sean Alward is a multi-media artist who lives in Metro Vancouver. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia. Since 2002, he has been exhibited in solo and two person shows at the Access Gallery, 304 Days Gallery, Or Gallery, Richmond Art Gallery, Helen Pitt Gallery and part of group shows at the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery, Wil Aballe Art Projects, Belkin Satellite Gallery. In early 2015, he did a large wall tapestry at the Surrey Art Gallery focused on the historical background of a site along the Fraser River known as the Glenrose Cannery. He states "I am interested in how painting and photography reconfigure space, how time is enacted within these

spaces, and how history is formulated as a present experience: now.” The artist proposal for this project is attached as **Appendix II**.

Funding:

Total funding for this artwork design for Newton Recreation Centre is \$10,000 inclusive of all costs and taxes.

Schedule:

Subject to Council approval of the recommendations of this report, it is expected that the artist will begin work in mid-October 2015 and conclude with the final design of an artwork by the end of December, 2015.

Public Art Advisory Committee Endorsement:

At its meeting on October 8th, 2015 the Public Art Advisory Committee received the selection panel’s recommendation, and voted unanimously to recommend to Council artist Sean Alward to be contracted as the artist for this project.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed artwork supports the socio-cultural and environmental pillars of the City’s Sustainability Charter; more particularly, the following action items:

SC6: Building Cultural Awareness in the Community;

- EC9: Quality of Design in New Development and Redevelopment; and
- EN13: Enhancing the Public Realm.

CONCLUSION

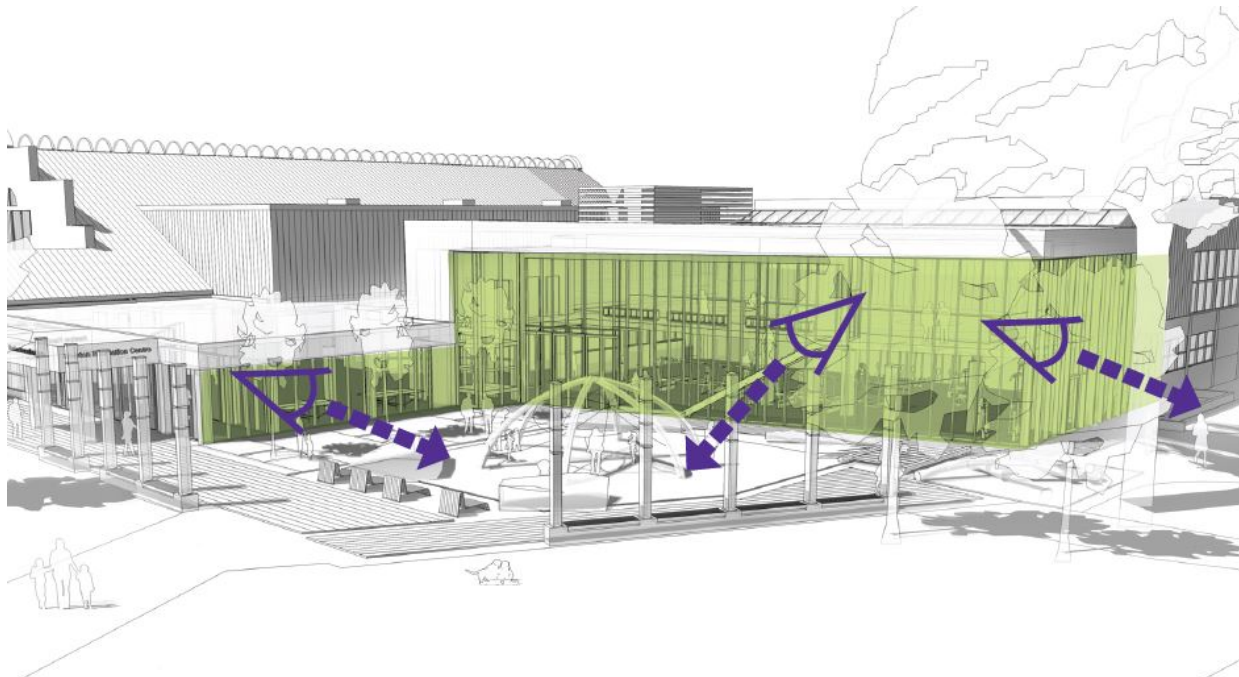
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Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation and Culture

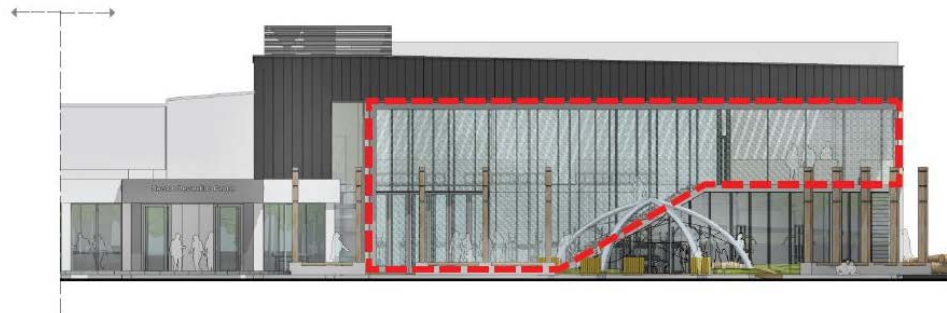
Appendix I - Artwork location
Appendix II - Artist’s Proposal

Location of the Public Art on Newton Recreation Centre Expansion



Architectural rendering of the proposed two storey high glazing expansion to the Newton Recreation Centre.

South Elevation



East Elevation



Architectural rendering of the location of the public art on the south and east glazing, Newton Recreation Centre

Artist's Proposal

Artist statement - I am interested in combining the architecture, natural history, and human history around the site of the Newton Recreation Centre into an integrated visual design. My art practice and recent projects have been focused on these same goals for several nearby locations around metropolitan Vancouver. All of these projects involve working collaboratively with curators, clients and project managers.

Currently, I am working on a large glass mural design for the New Westminster Skytrain Station, also to be manufactured using glass frit technology. The content of this mural is based on research into New Westminster's history and incorporates manipulated archival imagery. This project involves working

with a diverse team of architects, engineers, lighting consultants, project managers, and fabricators.

In early 2015, I did a large wall tapestry at the Surrey Art Gallery focused on the historical background of a site along the Fraser River known as the Glenrose Cannery. This project was based on 5 years of research and site exploration.

In 2010, I did a large collaborative mural project for the East Coast Forensic Hospital in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. This particular project involved a very specific community of incarcerated patients and the psychologists and security personnel attending them. Working with the patients, we developed a modular mural on aluminum panels for their central courtyard/recreation space.

I enjoy making art for a gallery environment, but I am particularly



Pressure, Light, Oxygen: Glenrose Cannery (installation at Surrey Art Gallery), 2015, 14 x 10.5 feet, acrylic, clay, crushed seashell, cyanotype, and indigo, on cotton and linen

excited about reaching a broader audience via public art projects. I strongly believe that art is for everyone and not just a specialized few. I would be very excited to research the Recreation Centre site location in Newton and develop a project on the theme of “weaving.

Approach to the Project

In considering the theme of "weaving together communities" for this project, I would like create a design that incorporates elements of both the natural and social environment, specifically local plant species and human figures. Contemporary Newton may be highly urbanized and densely populated, but it is nonetheless deeply rooted in its West Coast geography and natural environment. This aspect of place is something that all members of the community can share in common, regardless of cultural or socio-economic background. Newton is a diverse community with various social challenges. Alluding to a shared natural history may help bring some perspective into the deep time and ancient heritage of a city often regarded as “new.”

One preliminary design idea involves digitally scanning plants such as sword or bracken ferns, salal, vine maple, etc. and creating patterns alluding to human figures or activity. Another idea is to arrange botanical forms in either layered or interwoven patterns, referencing geology, mapping, or textile weaving.

I have done previous projects involving local plant forms and cultural history (images included in this submission) and would like to research further ways of

incorporating these motifs into the community architecture of Newton. I think there could also be some interesting resonance with the “Grove” adjacent to the Recreation Centre.



Cellular, 2015, 50x12 inches, ultraviolet photograph of lady fern on English ivy digitally scanned and printed with inkjet on paper

