

NO R250:

COUNCIL DATE: December 18, 2017

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **December 14, 2017**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **7800-01**

SUBJECT: **Recommendation for the Creative Enhancement of a Concrete Barrier Wall in Bear Creek Area**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Authorize staff to undertake a contract and work with Phyllis Atkins of the Kwantlen First Nation, to create a design for the creative enhancement of a concrete barrier wall as generally described in this report.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with background information regarding the public art plan for the creative enhancements to civic facilities and infrastructure and obtain Council approval for staff to contract an artist to undertake a design to enhance cast concrete barriers.

## BACKGROUND

On September 23, 2013, Council approved a recommendation for staff to engage an artist in residence to create a public art plan describing the opportunities and methodologies for the creative enhancement of civic facilities and infrastructure across the City (Corporate Report R189; 2013). The resulting report describes precedents in civic engineering projects such as creative manhole covers, and enhancements to civic facilities such as artwork applied to the glazing of existing buildings using vinyl films.

Public Art Staff have begun the process of identifying specific civic facilities and infrastructure to receive creative enhancements in consultation with the stakeholders of those facilities. In response to this opportunity, Transportation Engineering requested the development of a design concept to be used for the creative enhancement of cast concrete infrastructure including barrier and retaining walls as part of new construction in the Bear Creek area. This recommendation is informed by the success of the project undertaken in partnership between the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department and the Engineering Department for the Brownsville Bar Park cast concrete barrier wall (Appendix "I").

The All Our Relations Social Innovation Strategy report, Phase 2 of the Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Project, recommends the City *Indigenize public spaces* (Goal #10). The creative enhancement of civic facilities and infrastructure provides an opportunity to fulfill both the objective of the Public Art Plan for Civic Facilities and Infrastructure, and Goal #10 of this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

Public Art Staff have developed a series of opportunities for creative enhancement of existing civic facilities and new infrastructure, in consultation with the stakeholders of those facilities including Libraries, Parks, Recreation & Culture and Engineering, that will be brought forward to Council over the next few months as designs are developed. Transportation Engineering requested public art develop in partnership, a design concept that could be used for the purposes of the creative enhancement of cast concrete infrastructure, in particular supporting the City's walking and cycling network. Staff anticipates the prototype of this design will be suitable as an enhancement to the surface of a barrier wall associated with the Bear Creek Bridge which is similar in form to the barrier wall of the Brownsville Bar Park (Appendix "I").

### **Call Process**

The process followed by Public Art Staff for the City of Surrey was guided by recommendations from the Chiefs of the Kwantlen, Katzie, and Semiahmoo First Nations for developing a call to artists and the selection process for artists and artwork concepts.

Kwantlen, Katzie, and Semiahmoo First Nations recommended eight artists to create design proposals. These artists participated in an information session provided by Public Art Staff, were given templates for various opportunities including the concrete barrier wall, and provided with background information on each context.

### **Selection Process**

On December 4, 2017, staff welcomed Elders from each Nation to recommend a design for fabrication. Honorariums were provided to the Elders who offered their time for this endeavor, and staff ensured that the support for Elders to attend was provided. Participating in the Selection Panel (the "Panel") were:

- Semiahmoo First Nation: Barbara Calder
- Kwantlen First Nation: Hazel Gludo and Verna Davies
- Katzie First Nation: Cookie Schwartz, Charles Moody, Diana Evans, Helen Johnson, Leslie Bailey and Harry Pierre
- Public Art Advisory Committee Representative: Diane Purvey
- Staff: Liane Davison, Manager of Visual and Community Arts, Hossam Meawad and Ashley Guindon, Public Art Coordinators

The selection process included the display of the design proposals and Panel interviews with eight artists. As a result of the meeting, the Panel unanimously voted to recommend to the Public Art Advisory Committee Phyllis Atkins of the Kwantlen First Nation be commissioned for the opportunity of a design for the creative enhancement of a concrete barriers.

## **Public Art Advisory Committee Endorsement**

At its meeting on December 7, 2017 the Public Art Advisory Committee received the Panel's unanimous recommendation, and in turn voted unanimously to recommend that the General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture prepare a report to Council recommending the selected artist, Phyllis Atkins of the Kwantlen First Nation, for the pilot project for the creative enhancement of a concrete barrier, as supported by the Public Art Advisory Committee.

### **About the Artist and Artwork**

Phyllis Atkins is an artist of the Kwantlen First Nation. She has had several public art commissions, including *Paddling Through the Waves of Change*, a glazing design on a meeting room window at Surrey City Hall. Atkins' design concept sketch for the creative enhancement of a concrete barrier depicts an eagle as a protector, pictured with the sun and moon; a male and female salmon representing the importance of salmon and their energy to the First Nations; and a wolf representing the clans of the Katzie and Kwantlen peoples (Appendix "II").

### **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

The recommendation of this report complies with the City's *Public Art Policy*. The implementation of the public art project is guided by the Public Art Master Plan.

The recommendation of an artwork by an Indigenous artist complies with the Surrey Indigenous Leadership Committee's Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Project, entitled *All Our Relations, A Social Innovation Strategy*. Increasing First Nations art in public spaces supports the following recommendations in the document:

- Goal #10: Indigenize Public Spaces: Partner with the City of Surrey to increase Indigenous art in City Hall, city-owned buildings and public spaces.
- Goal #38: Combat negative stereotypes and discrimination in the City: Create opportunities for visual representations of reconciliation.

### **FUNDING**

Funding for the implementation of multiple creative enhancements of civic infrastructure city-wide draws from a public art fund reserved for this purpose, and established using part of the public art budget associated with the construction of the Operations Centre.

As such, the creative enhancement design component of concrete barriers is funded by Public Art Budget; installation and fabrication of the barrier wall construction will be funded by the Engineering Department. The fee to be paid to the artist for their design for a one-time use is approximately \$3,000.

### **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

This initiative will assist in meeting the following Desired Outcomes contained within the City's Sustainability Charter Sub-themes of "Neighbourhoods and Urban Design":

- DO 1: "Surrey is compromised with distinct, diverse and compact town centres with an engaging public realm";

- DO 8: “The built environment enhances quality of life, happiness and well-being”; and
- DO 15: “All new buildings, public places and outdoor spaces are welcoming, safe and universally accessible”.

The initiative supports the Community Theme of “Education and Culture” identified in the City’s Sustainability Charter:

- DO 7: “An enviable and vibrant arts and heritage sector contributes to Surrey’s citizen engagement, enrichment, economy, community livability and civic pride”; and
- DO 10: “Surrey celebrates, protects and promotes its natural and built heritage sites”.

The initiative supports the Community Theme of “Inclusion” identified in the City’s Sustainability Charter:

- DO 7: “Surrey’s Urban Aboriginal community is thriving with high educational outcomes, meaningful employment and opportunities for cultural connections”.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council recommend staff proceed with the process to contract the recommended artist for the creative enhancement of concrete barriers as generally described in this report. Should Council approve the recommendations of this report, it is expected that the artist will begin the next phase of the project in January 2018 to completely detail their design in an electronic format suitable for use for creating the casting form for concrete.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager,  
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix “I” – Brownsville Bar Park Concrete Barrier Wall  
Appendix “II” – Phyllis Atkins’ concept sketch for the pilot project for the creative enhancement of concrete barriers.

## APPENDIX "I"

### Brownsville Bar Park Concrete Barrier Wall

The cast concrete barrier wall at Brownsville Bar Park features designs provided by Surrey's Heritage Services including a road map and drawings of the paddlewheel ferry and a person fishing on the river.



APPENDIX "II"

Phyllis Atkins' concept sketch for the creative enhancement of concrete barriers

