

NO: R080

COUNCIL DATE: April 23, 2018

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

**TO: Mayor & Council** **DATE: April 17, 2018**

**FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** **FILE: 8000-30**

**SUBJECT: Recommendation for Surrey Arts Centre and Guildford Library Public Indigenous Art Projects**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Authorize staff to undertake contracts and implement Brandon Gabriel's public art design for the creative enhancement of the Guildford Library as generally described in this report;
3. Authorize staff to undertake contracts and implement Drew Atkins' public art design for the creative enhancement of the Surrey Arts Centre as generally described in this report; and
4. Authorize staff to undertake contracts and implement Leslie Wells' public art design for the creative enhancement of civic facilities at the Surrey Arts Centre with vinyl glazing as generally described in this report.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with background information regarding three public art designs proposals by artists from Kwantlen and Semiahmoo First Nations and obtain Council approval for staff to implement three artworks for the creative enhancement of the Surrey Arts Centre and Guildford Library with vinyl glazing.

## BACKGROUND

The Public Art Master Plan has guided research into strategies for the creative enhancement of civic facilities and infrastructure. The resulting report describes cost effective precedents for accomplishing this goal, such as designs applied to the glazing of existing builds using vinyl films.

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 objectives of the Public Art Master Plan, and Goal #10 of this report.

## DISCUSSION

Public Art staff determined eight sites for creative enhancement in consultation with stakeholders from Surrey Libraries, Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, and the Engineering Department.

The process for commissioning and selecting preliminary designs by artists was guided by recommendations from the Chiefs from Kwantlen, Katzie and Semiahmoo First Nations.

Eight artists were invited to create design proposals:

- Brandon Gabriel (Kwantlen);
- Drew Atkins (Kwantlen) ;
- Leslie Wells (Semiahmoo);
- Trenton Pierre (Katzie);
- Phyllis Atkins (Kwantlen);
- Roxanne Charles (Semiahmoo);
- Tony Gabriel (Kwantlen); and
- Wes Antone (Kwantlen).

On December 4, 2017, staff welcomed Elders from each Nation to review and provide recommendations on the proposed designs. Elders participating in the Selection Panel were:

- Semiahmoo First Nation: Barbara Calder;
- Kwantlen First Nation: Hazel Gludo and Verna Davies; and
- Katzie First Nation: Cookie Schwartz, Charles Moody, Diana Evans, Helen Johnson, Leslie Bailey and Harry Pierre.

Following the Elders' recommendations, Public Art staff worked with each artist to develop their concepts into final designs. The final designs include precise line-work and colour and indicate the transparency levels required for fabricating in vinyl.

Of the eight designs proposed and recommended by the Elders, two were approved by Council in December 2017 and are now in fabrication: Phyllis Atkin's design will be realized as a creative enhancement on a concrete barrier to be constructed by Engineering near Bear Creek Park, and Anthony Gabriel's design will be featured on the 2018 City of Surrey public art street banners.

In March 2018, three more artists completed their designs for review by the Public Art Advisory Committee: Brandon Gabriel, Drew Atkins, and Leslie Wells.

## **Public Art Advisory Committee Endorsement**

At its meeting on April 5, 2018 the Public Art Advisory Committee received the Elders' unanimous recommendation, and in turn voted unanimously to recommend that the General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture prepare a report to Council recommending the following artists be commissioned to realize their proposed designs for these venues:

- Brandon Gabriel (Kwantlen) - Guildford Library glazing
- Drew Atkins (Kwantlen) - Surrey Arts Centre - Courtyard glazing
- Leslie Wells (Semiahmoo) - Surrey Arts Centre - Program Room glazing

## **About the Artists and Artworks**

### Brandon Gabriel

Brandon Gabriel is an artist of the Kwantlen First Nation and the youngest grandson of Chief Marilyn Gabriel. He studied at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, focussing on anthropology, and continued at Emily Carr University to complete a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts. His art has been exhibited internationally and his other commissions have included the design for the 2010 BC Summer Games medal, a sculpture for the Stave Dam in Mission, a sculpture for the Surrey School District, and four buffalo hide drums in the City of Surrey public art collection, Four Seasons, which can be found in the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre.

Gabriel's design for the Guildford Library windows, entitled Raven and the First Sunrise, tells the First Nations story in which the raven brings sunlight to the earth. This important origin story is depicted in bright colours that will glow from interior and exterior light, similar to stained glass (Appendix "I").

### Drew Atkins

Drew Atkins is an artist of the Kwantlen First Nation. He is traditionally trained as a carver and has apprenticed under renowned Master Carver Xwa-lack-tun (Rick Harry). He operates a studio with his wife and fellow artist, Phyllis Atkins, called K'wy'i'y'e Spring Salmon Studio.

Atkins' design for the Surrey Arts Centre courtyard windows, entitled Retro-Perspective, features traditional Coast Salish design elements, such as the crescent, circle, and "trigon" (a triangular shape). A functional canoe and paddle are pictured, as well as hands raised in a sign of welcome, a 400-year-old Kwantlen feast bowl, and a wolf from a 600-year-old stone carving. The elements that make up the design are Coast Salish, but the viewer will also notice that the shapes are stylized with "retro" or "vintage" qualities reminiscent of wallpaper or linoleum from the 1950's or modernist sculptures from the 1970's (such as those found in the courtyard's fountain). By combining Coast Salish elements with Western culture's "retro" styles, Atkins shows us that what is considered old-fashioned depends on one's perspective. Retro-Perspective is a reminder that we all have our own truth based on our experience and that of our ancestors – an important message to consider when we encounter a different perspective. (Appendix "II").

## Leslie Wells

Leslie Wells is an artist of the Semiahmoo First Nation. He has apprenticed with Haida artist Robert Davidson and creates carvings, paintings, jewellery, and prints. He has completed several public art commissions, including a totem pole in White Rock and a carving in the City of Surrey public art collection: Under the Double Eagle and Elder Moon, which consists of two cedar disks carved by Wells with his fellow artist and brother, Leonard Wells. His work is often described as having a “quiet spirituality”, a quality expressed in his design for the Surrey Arts Centre program room windows.

Entitled Eight Salmon Heads, Wells’ design invokes the salmon that are strongly associated with the Semiahmoo people. Salmon were traditionally caught in reef nets and were the staple of the Semiahmoo First Nation’s diet. Eight Salmon Heads depicts the salmon that continue to spawn in Bear Creek, which runs beside the Surrey Arts Centre. Wells has depicted the salmon in a repeating, rotating pattern, and has called upon his print- and jewelry-making background for the crisp, precise lines seen in the drawing. (Appendix “III”).

## **Next Steps**

Upon approval by Council, Surrey staff will engage a professional designer, fabricator, and installer to translate the artist’s final designs into digital files suitable for printing on vinyl, and fabricate vinyl prints to be adhered to the windows. Completion of all three projects is expected before the end of summer 2018.

## **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 these city-wide creative enhancements of civic infrastructure draws from a public art fund of \$200,000 reserved for this purpose. The fund was established following the recommendations of the Public Art Policy, through public art contributions of 1.25% of the total construction costs of the Surrey Operations Centre. The public art fund also funded the permanent sculpture installed at the facility.

Total cost to implement these three initiatives will be approximately \$25,000.

## SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This initiative will assist in meeting the following Desired Outcomes (DO) contained within the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0 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 2.0:

- 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 2.0:

- 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 proceed with the following:

- Authorize staff to undertake contracts and implement Brandon Gabriel's public art design for the creative enhancement of the Guildford Library as generally described in this report;
- Authorize staff to undertake contracts and implement Drew Atkins' public art design for the creative enhancement of the Surrey Arts Centre as generally described in this report; and

- Authorize staff to undertake contracts and implement Leslie Wells' public art design for the creative enhancement of civic facilities at the Surrey Arts Centre with vinyl glazing as generally described in this report.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager  
Parks, Recreation & Culture

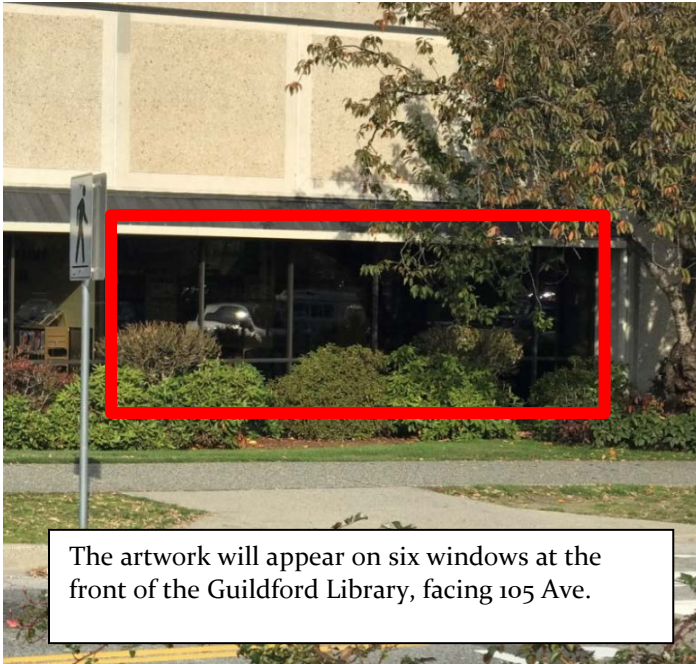
Appendix "I" - Brandon Gabriel's final design for the creative enhancement of the Guildford Library's windows with a vinyl glazing

Appendix "II" - Drew Atkins' final design for the creative enhancement of the Surrey Arts Centre's courtyard windows with a vinyl glazing

Appendix "III" - Leslie Wells' final design for the creative enhancement of the Surrey Arts Centre's program room windows with a vinyl glazing

## APPENDIX "I"

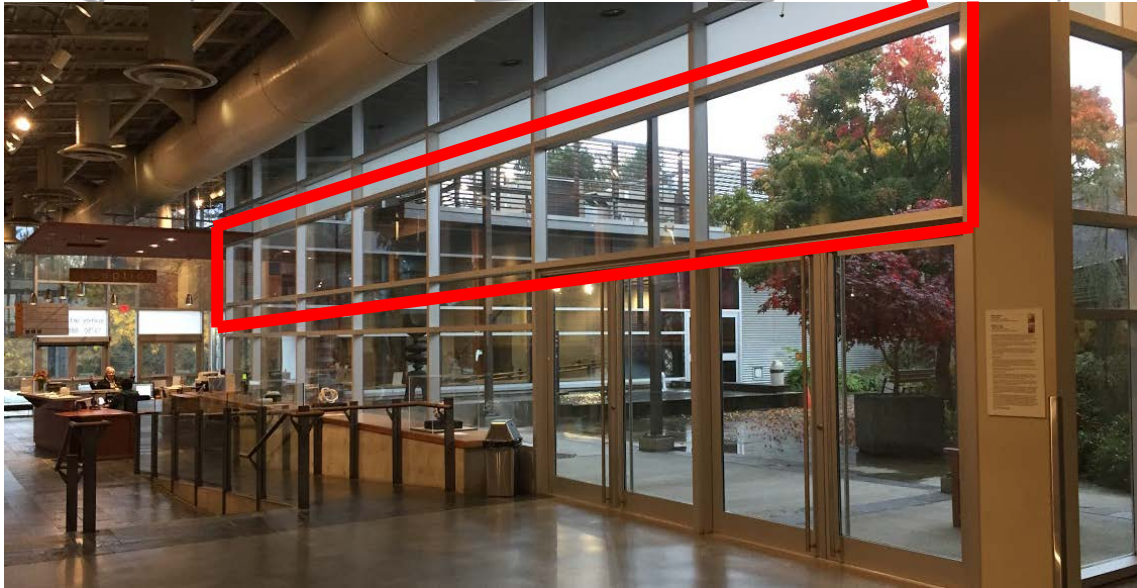
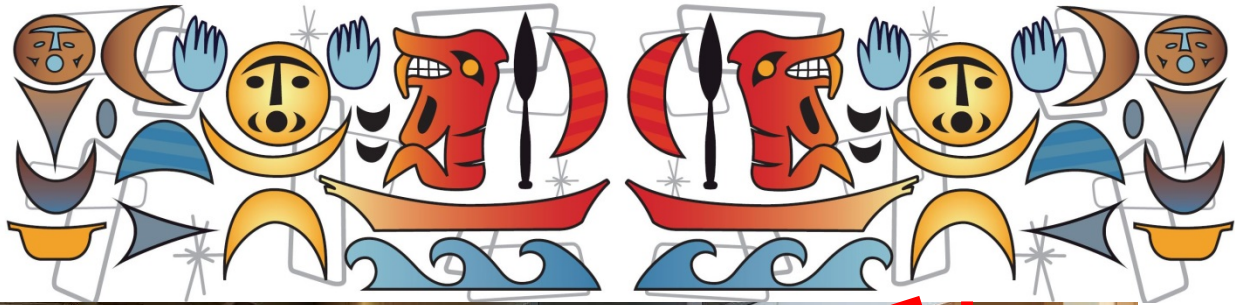
Brandon Gabriel's final design for the creative enhancement of the Guildford Library's windows with a vinyl glazing:



The artwork will appear on six windows at the front of the Guildford Library, facing 105 Ave.

## APPENDIX "II"

Drew Atkins' final design for the creative enhancement of the Surrey Arts Centre's courtyard windows with a vinyl glazing



The design will repeat across six windows





## APPENDIX "III"

Leslie Wells' final design for the creative enhancement of the Surrey Arts Centre's program room windows with a vinyl glazing



Wells' line-drawing, left, will be printed on vinyl to mimic frosted glass, similar to the artwork *Paddling Through The Waves of Change* by Phyllis Atkins, seen above, located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor in City Hall.

Location of Artwork at Surrey Arts Centre:

