



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Services
Date: December 19, 2022
Subject: Mural Program – 2022 Phase 1 Summary and Phase 2 Proposal

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council endorse the proposed development of Mural Program Phase 2: Community Mural Grant Program, mural guidelines, and artists roster/directory.
2. That Council support the Phase 2 Community Mural Grant through referring a resource request of \$55,000 (\$50,000 ongoing and \$5,000 one-time costs to support program development) to the 2023 budget process.

PURPOSE

The purposes of this Report are to:

- Provide Council with a summary of Phase 1 of the approved Mural Program and the outcomes of its 2022 pilot mural project.
- Provide an overview of plans for Phase 2 including a proposed Community Mural Grant program, guidelines, and an artist's directory/roster, and seek Council's endorsement; and
- Confirm Council direction on funding the development of Phase 2 and the Community Mural Grant program.

DISCUSSION

Background

As one of the most accessible expressions of public art, murals play important roles in contributing to community connectedness, identity, well-being, and pride. They create opportunities for engagement and enhance neighbourhoods through placemaking, while reducing instances of graffiti and related maintenance.

In 2022, recognizing the many community and place-making benefits and opportunities for murals within Saanich, Council approved the development of a community mural program and funding for a pilot project to install murals on Saanich properties (a strategy to ensure murals could be delivered within the compressed timelines following budget approval).

Council Direction

On March 14, 2022, Council passed motions regarding a proposed mural program (E6):

1. **“That Council endorse the development of a Mural Program as outlined in this Report, and direct Staff to report back with proposed Program Guidelines and Community Mural Grant Parameters.”**
2. **“That Council support the creation of two to three outdoor murals on the District of Saanich owned property as part of a 2022 Mural Program and refer a one-time resource request of \$50,000 to the 2022 budget process.”**

Council discussion of the motions included comments that the program was supportable beyond the one year request, and that the addition of this item to the budget in future years would be necessary to develop an ongoing mural program.

Funding for the 2022 pilot project was approved by Council as part of the 2022 budget process - Annual Surplus and 2021 One-time Resource Requests.

Phase 1 Summary: 2022 Mural Program Pilot – “Community Canvas Mural Project”

Parks, Recreation and Community Services and Planning Departments jointly developed and launched a pilot mural project, with input from an Inter-Departmental working group. The pilot’s objectives were to:

- Enhance Saanich neighbourhoods and public spaces through the integration of public art and opportunities for the public to engage with the arts.
- Support artists to produce publicly accessible, engaging art in Saanich that provides community impact, sense of pride, identity and belonging.
- Celebrate community, culture and diversity.

The Mural Program Pilot was also intended to inform the development of an established mural program that would include mural guidelines and procedures. It also aimed to raise awareness and interest in murals within the community and inspire potential future murals within Saanich.

Staff were successful with developing and delivering the mural pilot project both within the timeline and budget available. Despite the narrow weather window for creating outdoor murals, a Community Selection Committee was established, a successful two-stage Call for Artists process was completed, and three large-scale murals were created:

- **Claire Crawford: *Flight*, Cedar Hill Park near Cedar Hill Recreation & Arts Centre**
[Claire Crawford](#) is an artist and illustrator living and working on Vancouver Island.
- **Sarah Jim, *Rain Shadow*, Beckwith Park**
[Sarah Jim](#) is an artist of Coast Salish, Mexican, and Russian-Jewish ancestry, and is a proud member of the WSÁNEĆ nation from the Tseycum village.
- **Jesse Campbell, in collaboration with Chazz Elliott (Temoseng): *Flight*, Layritz Park**
[Jesse Campbell](#) is of Michif (Métis), Salteaux, Cree, Scottish, and English ancestry and has been a professional mural artist since 2010. Temoseng (Chazz Elliott) descends from the WSÁNEĆ WJOLELP (Tsartlip) First Nation and Lekwungen Nations. While growing up in WJOLELP (Tsartlip) First Nation., he began learning the ways of Coast Salish art and the WSÁNEĆ teachings. Note: Artist Chazz Elliott is in the process of engaging with his community to identify a SENĆOFEN title to be added to the mural.



Figure 1: Mural at Cedar Hill Park near Cedar Hill Recreation & Arts Centre. Artist – Claire Crawford.



Figure 2: Mural at Beckwith Park. Artist – Sarah Jim.



Figure 3: Mural at Layritz Park. Artists – Jesse Campbell with Chazz Elliott (Temoseng).

Public Response and Reflections from Participating Artists

The initiative and its murals have received significant media coverage. It received some very positive community feedback via social media and in-person comments. The project also generated valuable insights from the chosen artists both into the process of creating the murals and the role of murals within the community. Some of the media coverage and feedback received by community members and participating artists has been included as “Appendix A”.

Internal Staff Review of the Phase 1 Pilot Project

Reviewing the pilot project with staff members of the Inter-Departmental Working Group, the project was seen overall as a positive success. The murals have contributed highly visible and valued community assets within the parks and continue to generate interest.

While it was necessary to focus the pilot on Saanich-owned properties and locations to be able to realize the murals in the very short time frame available, it did require staff support commitments from impacted Departments. Due to limited staffing, busy summer workloads and pre-planned projects, some delays to the murals occurred and resulted in one final maintenance element being deferred to Spring 2023.

Looking ahead to future Saanich murals, staff involved Departments felt that it would not be possible to undertake annual mural projects in Saanich parks and places that would require a similar level of staff involvement. Additional staffing and resources to support development, preparation, installation and maintenance would be required. Anticipating the challenges of providing such levels of internal support for mural projects without additional staffing resources, and recognizing the potential additional benefits that community-led and involved murals could bring, Mural Project staff continue to propose that Phase 2 of the Mural Program focus on a community mural grant program and accompanying advisory services to support community-led murals in Saanich.

Public and staff response to Phase 1's pilot murals demonstrate the project's success and support for future mural program initiatives that would bring more murals to Saanich.

Phase 2: Development of a Community Mural Program

The overall intent of the Mural Program is to encourage the creation of publicly accessible artwork that has artistic and community benefits. The second phase of the project focuses on developing an ongoing program with two streams:

- **Stream A** – Supporting the development of community led murals with new guidelines, a mural artist roster/directory and a Community Mural Grant program, with funding starting in 2023.
- **Stream B** – Streamlining the existing process for businesses or private property owners led murals, supported with an update to the existing application process, guidelines, and a mural artist roster/directory

This phase was initially planned to be developed between June and September of 2022. With delays to the implementation of Phase 1's mural pilot projects, the transition of the public art portfolio to the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department and integration of responsibility into existing staffing resources, Phase 2's development is expected to continue into Q1 and Q2 of 2023.

Research and Consultation

Comprehensive research into the mural and mural granting programs in other municipalities was undertaken at the onset of the initiative and provides a solid foundation for the development of Phase 2. An updated scan, outreach and check-in with other programs for changes to their programs based on lessons learned will help ensure that Saanich's program considers current trends and best practices.

Staff would continue engaging with other internal departments (including Planning, Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PR&CS), Engineering, Police and Public Works, Finance). As Phase 2 is developed, Staff would return to the Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) Advisory Committee to present the proposed program and seek their feedback and support for the initiative. The Committee had been highly supportive of the initiative and provided feedback and suggestions for developing the program. Their suggestions for establishing a canvas directory of possible mural sites for artists and communities to consider for mural applications; consideration of maintenance requirements and the use of materials that reduce the amount of yearly maintenance and restoration; diverse community outreach and future potential for a mural festival (with possible regional coordination) were considered in Phase 1 and would be considered within Phase 2's development along with any additional input.

A) Stream A: Community led murals

Supporting community led mural projects with resources and funding through a new Community Mural Grant is a cornerstone of the Mural Program. Review of other municipal mural programs demonstrates the value of municipal investment (financial and other support) to the success and impacts of the program. While providing support for community groups/organizations to develop projects, it also encourages a collaborative process between artists and the community. A dedicated mural grant would enable would help realize more neighbourhood murals in Saanich.

Under Stream A, private property owners and businesses would not be eligible to apply for grants on their own, but could engage in a partnership with community groups to be part of an application (e.g. offer a building wall in public view as a community mural location).

Support for mural development would be provided through comprehensive mural guidelines, development of an artists' roster/directory, staff advisory services and financial support through a Community Mural Grant Program.

- **Development of the Program:** Further development of Stage 2 of the mural program would be contingent upon receiving support and direction from Council on future funding of the initiative. Should Council approve Phase 2 of the program, with input from the Interdepartmental Working Group, various aspects of the Community Mural Grant process will need to be developed including program goals, funding structure, application procedures, selection process, legal agreements, and maintenance requirements. Some elements that would require further research, engagement and analysis include:
 - Eligibility: It is anticipated that community groups/organizations (including arts and culture organizations) would be eligible to apply for the grant. Community groups/organizations would potentially be able to partner with artists and private landowners on mural proposals.
 - Locations: Mural applications would be considered for sites on both public and private property on sites that are visible to the public. Mural applications on private property would require the approval of private landowners and adhere to Saanich requirements.

Mural applications on public property would require the approval of impacted departments as part of the review process. The number of murals approved annually for public spaces such as parks may need to be capped or restricted based on capacity of impacted departments to support mural applications and projects with existing staff resources. While community led mural initiatives would situate more of the project development, management and maintenance within the community, projects would still require some levels of staff involvement or support. Further consultation with related departments in the development process would be required.
 - Mural Guidelines: The development of guidelines will be a key deliverable, outlining processes, procedures, and requirements for the two program streams. Until the program, its streams and parameters are developed, the guidelines cannot be finalized.
- **Budget:** The funding structure of the Community Mural Grant would be developed by staff through consultation with the Interdepartmental Working Group, including Finance, and presented to Council for consideration. It is anticipated that the funding structure will include a requirement for matching contributions (cash and/or in kind) from applicants. However, the matching contribution required from applicants may be proposed at a lower percentage than required for other Saanich grants given the nature and costs of mural projects.

Based on a preliminary assessment, it is estimated that an annual budget allocation of approximately \$50,000 would be recommended to support five or more murals through the Community Mural Grant. In addition, a one-time investment of \$5000 would be required for consulting fees to support program development. The level of financial support would be dependent on the size and scope of the murals and matching contributions (cash and/or in kind) from community groups. Grant funding could be directed to artist fees, paint supplies,

or other needs associated with the creation, and installation of a mural. A portion of the allocation would be dedicated as program administrative costs as the existing staffing and administrative budgets could not otherwise absorb the costs of running this new program.

B) Stream B: Business or private property owner led murals

While the primary focus of the newly developed Mural Program would be on community led initiatives, it is important to encourage and continue to support applications for murals from businesses or private property owners and make improvements to the current application process. These updates would include guidelines and procedures adapted from the mural guidelines for Stream A, a new application form, access to an artist roster or directory, and an updated approval process.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council approve the recommendations as outlined in the Staff Report.
2. That Council reject the recommendations as outlined in the Staff Report.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

If Council is not in agreement with the recommendations outlined in this Report, potential alternatives could be:

a. Phase in the funding support for a community mural grant program to a reduced amount for the 2023 year, followed in 2024 by full funding.

This approach would continue the momentum for the development of a mural program and projects in Saanich but reduce the financial commitment and staff resources required within the upcoming year. This could potentially be achieved through development of fewer murals through a Request for Proposals process (RFP).

b. Allocate \$50,000 of 2022 surplus funding or as a one-time resource request to the 2023 budget as a “pilot grant program” to be followed with a 2024 resource request to support ongoing funding.

This approach would continue the momentum for creating murals in Saanich through a pilot year to continue engagement, establish the granting structure and process, populate the artist roster/directory and develop program communications.

However, when approving the Mural Program and Phase 1 Pilot in Spring 2022, Council members had indicated at that time that they felt the program deserved ongoing support rather than one-time support. Taking a pilot approach for the grant program further delays an ongoing supported mural program. Additionally, it delays the launch of grant opportunities and thus reduces the timelines available for community groups and artists to plan, apply for funding, and implement murals within 2023 and in 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To achieve the 2022 Council motion to realize five (5) or more murals in Saanich per year, it would be recommended that Council allocate up to \$50,000 annually as well as a one-time \$5000 investment to support program development to create a fruitful and sustainable program. Staff would proceed with the development of a Community Mural Grant program, supported by Mural Guidelines, an Artists Roster/Directory, a staff liaison and Inter-Departmental Working Group. The proposed Mural Program and Community Mural Grant would be submitted to Council for review.

This funding would cover a limited number of grants (estimated between \$5000 to \$10,000 per application, depending on the size, scope and requests of proposed mural projects). This grant program would require a matching component from applicants. It is estimated that 25% of the program's allocation would be allocated to cover internal administration costs. For example, murals proposed on public properties may require staff assistance/resources for preparation, installation, and any future maintenance or remediation issues outside of the multi-year maintenance agreements that would be signed with applicants.

DEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The initial Mural Program was developed jointly by Community Planning (Planning) and Community Services (PR&CS). Due to changes in the oversight of the public art program in Saanich, future program development would be led by Community Services (PR&CS). Staff from Engineering, Finance, and Facility Operation Departments provided input into the proposal and program, and their input would be needed to develop the program and for input into proposed community murals on an as needed basis. An Interdepartmental Working Group would be maintained with representatives from Engineering; Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PR&CS); Facility Operations; Finance; and Corporate Services. Support from Purchasing Services would be required for the RFP process should that approach be considered.

The establishment and delivery of an ongoing Mural Program would take dedicated staff time. Allocating a portion of the existing Community Arts and Public Art Programmer's time to this initiative would require an ongoing allocation of some of the funding to offset administrative support for the mural program along with other community arts and culture programming and development priorities. Staff work plans would need to be adapted to accommodate this work should it be identified as a priority.

CONCLUSION

By initiating the Saanich Mural Program through a phased approach, Saanich achieved the creation of three successful and celebrated public mural projects within a pilot year. This strategy provided staff with the opportunity to engage the arts community and artists in mural development and oversee and review the mural process from start to completion. Evaluating each step of the process, including administrative, preparation and maintenance requirements, as well as consulting and working with artists on the development and delivery of the program, has helped inform the future development of Phase 2 of the project.

Phase 2 of the Saanich Mural Program will help support community groups, businesses, landowners, and artists to successfully initiate mural projects in Saanich. In turn, these projects

will provide meaningful engagement and improvements to Saanich neighbourhoods. Developing new mural guidelines and procedures for community and business/private led mural projects, along with grant funding for community led mural initiatives aim to deliver a sustainable approach to achieving Council's objective to realize new murals in Saanich each year in partnership with the community.

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Attachments: Attachment A: Community Canvas Mural Project Community and Artists Feedback

cc: Paul Arslan, Director of Finance
Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering
Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendations from the Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services

Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Community Canvas Mural Project – Media Coverage and Community and Artists Feedback

The initiative and its murals received positive media interest and community feedback.

Media Coverage included:

[Vancouver Island artist leads first mural painting in Saanich community art project – Black Press/Victoria News \(vicnews.com\)](#), August 30, 2022

[Our Community: Everyone pitches in for Saanich mural - Victoria Times Colonist](#), September 4, 2022

[This Saanich park is getting a fabulous new mural by a beloved local artist \(victoriabuzz.com\)](#), September 6, 2022

[Our Community: New mural in Saanich - Victoria Times Colonist](#), September 25, 2022

[Saanich strongman becomes professional artist in Saanich, B.C. | CTV News](#) (broadcast on CTV News Vancouver Island and National News), October 16, 2022

Public comments on social media included:

"Community spirit at its best!"

"Love that Saanich is encouraging more public art!"

"So glad to see the District of Saanich promoting local artists and sending important messages about our environment. Thank you to the District and to Sarah for her beautiful artwork."

"Thank you Saanich and artists!!"

"Beautiful, thank you!"

"Absolutely stunning!"

"Breathtaking!"

"Gorgeous, poignant mural work in Saanich"

"And this is why we need art! ... SO important. Love it!"

"Awesome! How do we get more of these or propose future parks/locations?"

The project also generated valuable feedback from the chosen artists both into the process of creating the murals and their role within the community. Through media interviews and direct input to staff, participating artists also shared their perspectives on the project and the value that murals bring communities.

From Artist Jesse Campbell:

"A large part of my practice as a Métis artist involves working with Indigenous Artists from local First Nations to create space for their artwork through the medium I've specialized in. As Métis we have always lived on the lands of other Indigenous peoples, and through mural painting I try and reclaim spaces for greater visibility of our local Indigenous families."

Through murals like this the intention is to create an opportunity to share space in a good way and hopefully develop more opportunities for representation.”

Murals are a high impact, low maintenance, low barrier, community beautification medium. They can be used for practical, aesthetic, and educational purposes. Any surface that can be painted has the potential to be activated by design. For a relatively low cost these works access hundreds of people per day year round and require very little maintenance annually.

Murals are never created in Isolation. Every bit of inspiration and implementation comes from somewhere and ends up going back into the community. Everyone who comes by the Layritz mural has partial ownership as the work can be enjoyed 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, rain or shine. Murals break down the barriers imposed by the white walls of the traditional gallery space while creating new opportunities to access art for commenters, walkers, workers, unhoused folks, and every socioeconomic class regardless of race, religion, or gender identity. When we consider safe spaces murals provide an opportunity to create spaces of reflection without restriction. They can change the tone of an area that once inspired anxiety or fear and provide points of conversation between strangers.

Murals are for everyone, and I am very privileged to continue to take part in their creation.”

From Artist Sarah Jim:

“Public art is important because it creates community and collective identity. Murals especially are an accessible way for the public to view art without going into a gallery or seeking it out. I love stumbling upon a piece of art that I didn't intend on. Art is a necessity in beautifying our spaces and expressing complex ideas in a visual way that may not be able to be communicated in other ways. Creating Coast Salish art on traditional territory is an obvious way to re-establish Indigenous presence while honouring the past and looking toward the future.”

From Artist Claire Crawford:

"I was so happy to be included in the Community Canvas Mural project in its first year! I can't speak highly enough about the project, and about my experience while creating a mural in the District of Saanich. I think the importance of public art within a community really shined through when I was on site at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre. I had the wonderful opportunity to engage with many members of the public through this initiative, not only through the community engagement day we hosted at the mural, but also people stopping by such as dog walkers, folks using the recreation centre, motorcyclists, and many other community members. I was thrilled that many different folks felt welcome to come up and chat about the project and the special nature of the surrounding community. This was such a gratifying experience that really gave me hope for the future of public art in the Greater Victoria area.”