

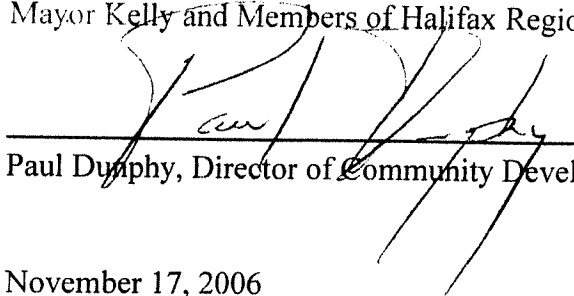


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Halifax Regional Council
December 5, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

DATE: November 17, 2006

SUBJECT: Community Art Pilot Project

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

March 28, 2006	Cultural Plan approved by Regional Council
August 1, 2006	Graffiti Management Plan approved by Regional Council
September 12, 2006	Council motion requesting staff report on community enhancement initiatives and a youth program to address graffiti issues

BACKGROUND

In 2006 Regional Council adopted two strategic plans that will have a tangible and long-term impact on graffiti vandalism in communities across HRM. The Graffiti Management Plan establishes a solid approach to removal, enforcement and anti-graffiti education program as well as policy to engage communities and youth in addressing the root causes of the problem. The HRM Cultural Plan establishes Council's commitment to protecting and developing HRM's cultural identity and civic pride including community beautification and community art.

The implementation of both Plans is based on partnership development and relationship-building. The Cultural Plan sets the stage to create more art in the public realm and to provide opportunities to showcase the emerging and professional artists who create these works. Engaging youth in creating community art projects is an approach that speaks to both Plans and one that will have an immediate and visible effect on HRM's communities.

Council acknowledges the concerns of communities and has expressed an immediate and ongoing need to deal with the increasing incidents of graffiti on public and private property. Staff has been attempting to manage the problem by both monitoring and removing graffiti in a timely and effective manner, particularly in communities targeted by graffiti vandals on a regular basis. However, Council and staff recognize the scope of the problem is deep and that an innovative and multi-partnered approach must be taken to effect long term change. Beyond removal and enforcement, HRM needs to make a concerted effort to engage youth at the community level.

DISCUSSION

HRM's Community Development Department plays a key leadership role in implementing the Graffiti Management Plan. One of these key areas of focus, as supported through the HRM Cultural Plan, is creative expression and art as a means of engaging young people in a positive and meaningful way in the development of their communities.

Recently, staff have launched a new pilot project called the ***Community Art Pilot Project***. The Pilot was developed with the aim of engaging young people (and emerging) artists by providing new opportunities to work with each other and in their communities to create vibrant and creative murals. A mural artist and youth educator has been hired to work directly with young artists in developing a series of art-works that reflect the creativity and spirit of youth culture in HRM. Having youth involved directly in community beautification and art development is a powerful community development.

To date, youth from the communities of Sackville, and Spryfield-Herring Cove-Armdale have developed community art murals that will be mounted at Acadia School and Captain William Spry Centre. Creating the art involved youth working together on evenings and weekends to learn painting techniques and the importance community pride and identity.

Beyond the immediate positive impact of community art, the pilot was designed to achieve specific community development and cultural plan outcomes that will be used by staff to measure both the short and long term effects. These outcomes include:

- **Social Inclusion** - youth feel engaged, appreciated and respected, feelings of inequalities or disadvantage are reducing;
- **Strong Volunteer Capacity** - youth have experienced a very positive local government initiative and may be more inclined to volunteer and or help in other community initiatives;
- **Safe Communities and neighbourhoods** - the addition of community art has deterred acts of graffiti so residents feel more confident and optimistic about their safety;
- **Sense of Community and Civic Pride** - youth feel good about and have pride in where they live. They feel they live in a friendly and supportive environment;
- **Informed Communities** - youth learn the difference between art and vandalism, and know where to obtain information on graffiti;

- **Active Involvement** - youth have more access to art education, and meaningful opportunities to participate in civic life. They feel their voice and opinions have meaning.

Next Steps

The positive response to the **Pilot Project** has resulted in a decision to extend the project for six-months. Particularly, communities struggling with the effects of graffiti vandalism will be the focus of future projects. Over the coming weeks staff will work with Council and the community to begin identifying a number of priority areas where murals can be painted. Two priority locations have already been identified including the Halifax Common Skate-park and Pavilion building as well as the Clayton Park area. Staff will work in the short-term to mobilize partners and to gather youth to begin work on creating a work of art that expresses the identity of a particular site and community.

Conclusion

The positive impact that youth can have when effectively engaged in building civic pride is evident. HRM's Youth Engagement Strategy speaks to the fact that youth want to be involved in their communities and want more involvement in creating art and experiencing other cultural opportunities. Youth want to be a part of building vibrant, creative and sustainable communities. With the success of this pilot program it is the intention that future programs would be developed to enable youth to be directly involved in community development initiatives and to provide support for those who wish to explore art as a means of developing their own cultural and personal identity.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

\$25,000 will be allocated through operating account number E500 as well as \$25,000 through the Heritage Reserve (public art capital project CDG00487) which will be used jointly to fund the pilot project.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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