

Halton Hills has a plan a \$100,000 Public Art Master Plan

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Halton Hills residents can expect to see a lot more art in public spaces starting in 2019.

At its last meeting on April 10, council put the final rubber stamp on a new initiative the Public Art Master Plan aimed at beautifying local streets and highlighting the local art community.

According to commissioner of community services, Jane Diamanti, the program was born out of the town's 2013 Cultural Master Plan.

(The Cultural Master Plan) looked at a number of different ways in which we can elevate and strengthen culture within the community, and public art was recognized as one of the most important initiatives the town was looking to complete, said Diamanti.

It really started with the idea of developing a public art policy and determining where the funding would come from to support public art, she added. The Public Art Master Plan was identified as one of the very first things you need to do when you go down that public art road.

Council approved a reserve fund for the program of \$100,000 to be maintained year-

over-year, with \$44,770 to fund the Public Art Master Plan, and contributions \$50K each in 2018 and 2019 to replenish the reserve.

Diamanti said the program will begin funding art installations once the \$100K reserve fund requirements are met in 2019.

The primary purpose of the Public Art Master Plan is to identify high priority publicly owned sites appropriate for public art, propose various kinds of art installations that would best compliment these sites, and estimate the cost of these installations, wrote staff in its final report to council. This plan needs to be in place before the town's public art program can proceed.

Unlike a grant program, council and town staff will follow the plan to determine which public spaces are appropriate for art installations and will put those projects out for tender open to both local and outside artists.

(Art) is a great sort of unifier in the community. The other wonderful thing about it is that it can be an economic driver. As public art beautifies the streetscape and landscape it attracts more people to your community, and of course that helps build local economy as well, she said.

It also benefits local artists and we're really hoping our artists will very much be involved in this process. They can contribute in a variety of ways, but I'm looking forward



The Memorial Garden Tree in Downtown Georgetown, one of Halton Hills's existing public art installations.

Photo by Graeme Frisque

to raising the profile of that artistic community as well.

There are all sorts of great reasons (for it). It invigorates the community and it does create some great civic discussion. Sometimes public art is really welcome, some-

times people may question or wonder why, but that's okay. It does create engagement and I think that's a good thing, added Diamanti. I don't know if you've ever been in a community that's fully embraced public art, but it can literally transform a community.



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