

**Region of Waterloo**  
**Planning, Development, and Legislative Services**  
**Cultural Services**

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**To:** Community and Health Services Committee  
**Meeting Date:** April 4, 2023  
**Report Title:** Temporary Public Art Project – CAFKA Festival

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**1. Recommendation**

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo support a temporary public art installation along the ION Rapid Transit corridor and GRT bus route as part of the Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area (CAFKA) biennial public art festival with funding up to \$20,000 from the Public Art Reserve, as set out in report PDL-CUL-23-005, dated April 4, 2023.

**2. Purpose / Issue:**

Cultural Services staff recommends allocation from the Public Art Reserve Fund for approval by Regional Council. Staff recommends supporting a temporary public art installation in public transit advertising spaces that integrates public transportation, culture, and community.

**3. Strategic Plan:**

This Public Art project supports the following 2019-2023 Corporate Strategic Plan objectives:

**1.3** Support the arts, culture and heritage sectors to enrich the lives of residents and attract visitors to Waterloo Region.

**2.1** Enhance the transit system to increase ridership and ensure it is accessible and appealing to the public.

**5.1** Enhance opportunities for public engagement, input and involvement in Region of Waterloo initiatives.

**4. Report Highlights:**

- a) CAFKA's biennial temporary public art festival will take place June 3 – July 22, 2023.
- b) CAFKA has proposed using public transit advertising spaces along the ION Rapid Transit corridor and GRT bus routes in Waterloo, Kitchener and

Cambridge to present temporary public art as part of its festival.

- c) CAFKA has asked to partner with the Region of Waterloo to cover the costs of printing, installation and rental of advertising space .
- d) The anticipated cost is approximately \$16,300 inclusive of HST.
- e) The Region has a contract with Pattison Outdoor to manage the public transit advertising spaces.
- f) CAFKA will retain responsibility for the selection of the art and the payment of all artist fees.
- g) The CAFKA Programming Committee has selected the artwork to be installed in the advertising spaces. The proposed artwork is an installation entitled “Chains & Crowns” by Ottawa-based artist Stephané Alexis. This installation is a series of photographs that depict the history, politics, science and psychology of Black hairstyles. See **Appendix A** for more information.

## 5. Background:

Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area (CAFKA) is a non-profit, artist-run organization that presents a free, biennial exhibition of contemporary art in public spaces throughout Waterloo Region. CAFKA commissions contemporary artists to develop new temporary art projects that respond to the specific features of the local urban landscape and culture.

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo recognizes the value of Public Art in increasing the stature and maturity of the community, elevating its cultural profile, and adding another feature for consideration in peoples' choices of places to live and work. The Region's Public Art Program includes both permanent and temporary public art projects.

In 2021, CAFKA, in partnership with the Public Art Program, utilized the Pattison advertising spaces at several ION stations to feature a contemporary photography project. CAFKA once again wishes to incorporate the ION rapid transit corridor along with the GRT bus route in its biennial temporary public art festival from June 3 to July 22, 2023. The installation will be part of a self-guided walking/biking/transit tour.

The Public Art Program is overseen by the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) that is made up of community representatives with a diverse range of expertise in public art including artists, architects/landscape architects, design professionals, curators, conservators, educators, and arts administrators. In 2021, PAAC recommended CAFKA's project to Council.

Regional Advisory Committees are currently in the process of being nominated. Because of the time-sensitive nature of this project, and the solid working relationship that was established in previous years between CAFKA and the Public Art Program, staff are bringing this recommendation directly to Council in the absence of an Advisory Committee.

Since its launch in 2019, the ION has been the site of significant Public Art initiatives, including the nine permanent art installations at select stations. It is anticipated that CAFKA's temporary art installation will enhance community engagement along our transit lines in a creative and innovative way.

## **6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:**

### **Area Municipality Communication:**

CAFKA coordinates art installations across the Region, including in partnership with other area municipalities.

### **Public/Stakeholder Engagement:**

CAFKA's programming is guided by a programming committee made up of professional artists and educators in the field. Individual artworks are selected from an open call by a jury that is made up of the programming committee as well as the Director, and additional invited community members, with an emphasis on knowledge and equity.

## **7. Financial Implications:**

Staff have reviewed the financial implications of this briefing note to ensure all aspects can be accommodated within existing capital programs and/or operating budgets. The approved 2023 Public Art operating budget includes a provision of \$20,000 for a CAFKA project.

## **8. Conclusion / Next Steps:**

Subject to approval of the expenditure, Staff will enter into an agreement with CAFKA and Pattison Outdoor to coordinate the temporary installation of the artwork at designated advertising spaces. CAFKA will be responsible for all coordination with the artist and will lead the promotion of the installation, as part of the wider festival event.

## **9. Attachments:**

Appendix A: CAFKA art installation on Transit Advertising Spaces proposal by  
Stephané Alexis

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**Approved By:** Rod Regier, Commissioner, Planning, Development and Legislative Services