

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

To: Administration and Finance Committee
Meeting Date: November 7, 2023
Report Title: Regional Operating Support for Public Art Galleries

1. Recommendation

For direction.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To provide Regional Council with background regarding operating funding to Public Art Galleries.

3. Strategic Plan:

Robust, transparent, and purposeful grant administration policies support **Equitable services and opportunities**: we will provide equitable, accessible services across Waterloo Region that support the social determinants of health, safety and complete communities as we grow, through collaboration and innovative design.

4. Report Highlights:

- The Region provides funding to various organizations through a variety of grant programs under the Regional Grant Administration Policy.
- In June 2000, Regional Council made a decision that operating support for Public Art Galleries was an area municipal responsibility and that Public Art Galleries should not receive operating funding through the Region's grant budget (Appendix A). Public Art Galleries are uniquely identified in this way.
- Due to this Decision of Council, eligible Public Art Galleries have not received operating funding from the Region of Waterloo since 2000. Public Art Galleries have accessed project support through the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund and a one-time project grant in 2012. In 2023, Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG), Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery (CCGG) and Homer Watson House & Gallery (HWHG) received funding through the Cultural Drivers of Tourism program.
- Over the past 23 years, there have been significant changes in the region's

cultural landscape, municipal funding programs, and the Region's approach to grant funding.

- Public Art Galleries are a vital part of our community's cultural ecology. Like other cultural organizations, their artistic and cultural programming, and the facilities that they manage, contribute to the artistic, social and economic vitality of the region.
- Eligibility criteria should be addressed through individual grant program guidelines that are approved and subject to regular review and evaluation, in line with the Regional Grant Administration Policy.
- There is nothing in the current Council-approved grant program guidelines that make Public Art Galleries ineligible to apply for funding. However, due to the Decision of Council, they cannot be allocated operating funding from the Region's grant budgets.

5. Background:

Regional Funding to Public Art Galleries

- In June 2000, Regional Council made a decision that operating support for Public Art Galleries was an area municipal responsibility and should not receive operating funding through the Region's grant budget (Appendix A). The Region discontinued funding to the KWAG (\$15,810) and redirected those funds to the Kitchener Waterloo Symphony. The cities of Kitchener and Waterloo increased their financial support for KWAG, and reduced their funding to the K-W Symphony by the same amount.
- In 2012, a group of Public Art Galleries approached Council requesting funding to support a collaborative marketing project and submitted a rationale for targeted Regional funding of major art galleries. In their presentation they noted that Public Art Galleries have wide appeal beyond individual municipal boundaries, nationally recognized collections, diverse mandates, and tourism potential. Council took no action to reconsider their previous Decision of Council and noted the Region's budget constraints would make it difficult to fund annual operating grants to galleries. Council awarded a one-time project grant (\$30,000) (Appendix B).
- In 2015 the Region of Waterloo, in collaboration with the Area Municipalities, established the Key Cultural Institutions (KCI) grant program (PDL-CUL-15-15, dated October 6, 2015). Though KWAG and CCGG met the eligibility criteria for the program, they have never received operating funding through this program because of the Decision of Council.
- In April, 2023, the KCI report (PDL-CUL-23-004) highlighted that the Region does not provide operating funds to Public Art Galleries. On April 19, 2023 staff

presented expanded criteria to make cultural funding more inclusive of organizations across the region (this became the Major Arts and Culture grant program). Staff also provided two grant program budget options to Council; one to provide funding to newly eligible organizations, and one to also include Public Art Galleries, if Council chose to reconsider the 2000 Decision of Council. At that time, Council opted for the lower budget (\$340,000) and took no action on the Decision of Council regarding Public Art Galleries.

- In May 2023, the KWAG and CCGG wrote a letter to Council (Appendix C) requesting that the Decision of Council be reconsidered, and that local galleries be provided with access to funding, in line with other cultural organizations.
- In June 2023, KWAG, CCGG and the HWHG received funding through the new Cultural Drivers of Tourism program, which is designed as an incentive program, rather than an operating grant.

Funding Levels

- In May 2023, the Region of Waterloo launched a new Major Arts and Cultural Organizations (MACO) grant program. The approved program guidelines outline how the program budget is equitably allocated to eligible organizations.
- The table below outlines the funding amounts that eligible Public Art Galleries would have received if they were funded at the at the same level as other eligible MACO grant recipients:

	Awarded Cultural Drivers of Tourism Funding	Comparable Major Arts and Culture Organization grant	Difference
Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery	2,400	88,000	85,600
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery	14,110	70,000	55,890
Homer Watson House and Gallery	2,750	52,000	49,250
TOTAL	19,260	210,000	190,740

- A comprehensive breakdown of the funding allocations provided by Council under the Arts, Culture and Heritage portfolio can be found in Appendix D Funding Allocations to Arts and Cultural Organizations.

Grant Administration Framework

- A Regional Grant Administration Policy was approved by Council in 2022 (PDL-CUL-22-04, dated August 9, 2022). The policy created a framework that supports transparency and accountability for grant funding across the organization, while allowing the necessary flexibility for innovative and responsive approaches to support.
- The Decision of Council about Public Art Galleries exists outside of the Regional Grant Administration Policy framework. It is recommended that Council deal with this matter through individual grant program eligibility criteria. This will allow criteria to be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure it meets the strategic priorities and direction of Council.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities: Regional staff maintain regular communication with Area Municipalities regarding grant-funding structures. Monthly meetings with the Municipal Cultural Initiatives Working Group are held to discuss strategic initiatives and address systemic issues affecting the sector.

Public: Staff met with representatives from Public Art Galleries to discuss the Region's practice of not providing operating funding to these organizations.

7. Financial Implications:

During the 2024 budget process, Council will set budgets for each grant program-funding envelope.

Council may choose to increase budgets to include newly eligible organizations at comparable levels to current applicants. This would require an additional \$190,000.

Council may alternately choose to leave budgets at current levels, and the funding will be equitably distributed among all eligible applicants.

In 2024, grants will be allocated in accordance to approved grant program guidelines within the Council-approved program budgets.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

If Council approves the recommendation, the new Decision of Council will be noted in the minutes and, moving forward, Public Art Galleries will become eligible to receive operating funding from the Region.

The eligibility criteria for grant program guidelines will be periodically reviewed, in line with the Regional Grant Administration Policy, to ensure they align with the strategic priorities and direction of Council.

Staff will continue to work with Public Art Galleries on Regional funding opportunities in 2024 and beyond.

Attachments:

Appendix A: Grants to Voluntary Organizations - 2000 Allocations (FIN-00-030)

Appendix B: Ongoing Regional Investment in Community Arts and Culture Organizations (P-12-105/F-12-075)

Appendix C: Letter re: Funding for Canadian Clay and Glass and Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery - May 2023

Appendix D: Region of Waterloo 2023 Operating Funding Allocations to Arts and Cultural Organizations

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