

# KING WILLIAM ART WALK PUBLIC ART COMPETITION



## FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Monday November 10, 2014. 7:00 PM

The Lister Block, 28 James Street North Hamilton, Room: B05

### ATTENDEES

Lorna Zaremba	Theatre Aquarius/Local Business
Susie Braithwaite	International Village BIA/King William Art Walk Committee
Evan Apostal	Downtown Hamilton BIA/King William Art Walk Committee
Steve Kulakowsky	Core Urban Inc./Local Business
Tyler Tekatch	Artist/Local Business
Dane Pedersen	Hamilton Arts Council/Arts Professional/Local Resident
Sylvia Nickerson	Artist/Local Resident

Ken Coit	City of Hamilton, Facilitator
Stephanie Vegh	Hamilton Arts Council, Facilitator

### REGRETS

Emily Groom	Steel Lounge/Local Business
Grant Winestock	Baltimore House/Local Business
Jimmy Skembaris	Baltimore House/Local Business
Yvonne Felix	Artist

### PURPOSE

To determine themes and/or goals, in keeping with the values and characteristics of the King William Art Walk and project parameters that artists making submissions to the competition will use to inspire and inform their proposals.

### BACKGROUND

Ken Coit provided an overview of the project site, scope, budget and selection process. The project budget is \$70,000 of which \$55,000 is allocated for artist's fees, fabrication and delivery to the site and \$15,000 for installation, honorariums and costs related to running the call. The site for the work addresses the expanse of King William Street from James Street to Ferguson

Avenue and will be limited to City-owned sidewalks while respecting the accessibility and service requirements of Public Works. Stephanie Vegh provided examples of themes and goals from other Public Art projects to provide context for the group's consideration.

## **QUESTION**

Focus group members were asked to address the following question:

What types of public art are appropriate for King William Street? What are the important qualities and characteristics of the King William Art Walk area and community that artists submitting to the competition should address?

## **DISCUSSION**

The following qualities and characteristics were identified as part of the general discussion addressing the question:

- “the entertainment district” / “the theatre district”
- Theatre patrons at one end (Ferguson), music bars and restaurants at the other (James-John)
- Diversity
- Railway history
- New vibrancy as new venues open (Steel Lounge)
- Inter-generational
- Performance
- Not a lot of bike racks on the street; new SoBi rack on Ferguson not immediately accessible; would like to see funky, colourful bike racks
- Something interactive that invites performance
- Funky lighting; the street is well used at night so lighting would create a safer environment while designating the whole street/district
- Something that connects the whole street
- Create “bookends” with lighting
- King William is challenged by unfriendly middle space between centres of gravity established at James and Ferguson
- Could we use existing street lights or add new infrastructure?
- Gateway/entrance at both ends to connect the district
- Prefer aesthetic over functional work, allows for greater creativity
- Transformation
- Idea of bookends is rich artistic territory, like the idea of pairing, especially since this could create balance/equality between the two participating BIAs
- A weird street, interrupted by empty lots; a lot of unusable space that needs “neat forms”, something to cut up the voids on the street, not necessarily monumental
- Small pieces, creating visual movement
- Something that promotes exploration and encourages people to move through space
- King William is quiet, a more intimate walk compared to using King Street
- King William feels smaller, safer
- “a people place” – one that is unique in Hamilton
- Walkability

- Can hear things when walking on King William, senses are alive
- History of old demolished theatres
- Could it be a sound piece? Something using both sound and light?
- Something experiential, non-traditional to reflect renewal happening on the street
- The street is very different during the daytime vs. nighttime; a light piece would need to work at both times, show transition between day and night activity
- Something that alludes to nightlife
- Recent Fringe Festival and outdoor projection activity suggests lots of opportunity for temporal and temporary arts
- Kinetic, wind-propelled art could be another way to animate the street

## **PRIORITIES**

The group worked together reviewing the results of the discussion to identify the most appropriate goals and themes for a new permanent work. The following were developed:

The work should consider the role of King William Street as a “performing arts district” and should address one or more of the following characteristics:

- Bookends/connections between both ends of the street
- Performance and interactive experiences
- A shared, pedestrian-friendly people place
- A destination and gathering place

## **NEXT STEPS**

The priority statements resulting from this focus group along with technical and site criteria will be used by the City to develop a Call for Artists Document. The City will also develop a short history of the area to be included in the call document to inform artists’ proposals. It is anticipated that this call will be issued by the City via the website [www.hamilton.ca/publicart](http://www.hamilton.ca/publicart) in early 2015 pending internal City approvals.



Tourism and Culture Division  
 Planning and Economic Development Department