

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
CORPORATE REPORT



**DATE:** April 11, 2022

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Eric Stepura, Director, Recreation & Culture

**SUBJECT:** Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue Public Art Selection Panel Recommendation

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Council:

1. Receive the recommendation of the Public Art Selection Panel and direct staff to work with the Saltaire Strata Council to negotiate a Public Art Installation, Management and Funding Agreement; and
  2. Direct staff to award a contract to Marianne Nicolson as the selected Artist for the Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue Public Art Project.
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Completing the public art project at Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue is a high priority identified in the Public Art Advisory Committee's Workplan. The project began with a high-level Art Plan (Appendix A), and staff have been working together with the public art consultant and the selection panel to conduct an open and fair process aligned to the City's Public Art and Placemaking Art Policy #708. The project stage is now at the awarding of a contract to an artist for the final design and installation.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION**

<b>Motion # &amp; Meeting Date</b>	<b>Motion Details</b>
#2021-371 October 4, 2021	That Council accept the approved Intersection Art Plan as circulated and direct staff to proceed with this project.  CARRIED  <b>Note:</b> the updated Art Plan attached as Appendix A includes four shortlisted artists, not three, and a reduction in fees to the Selection Panel. The final budget in the Art Plan was not changed.

## **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

After conducting an open call for artists (including reaching out to all artists on the City’s local public art database), and our public art selection panel shortlisting four qualified artists to prepare proposals, and reviewing the proposals, City staff are now at the stage of awarding the contract for design and installation of a new public art piece.

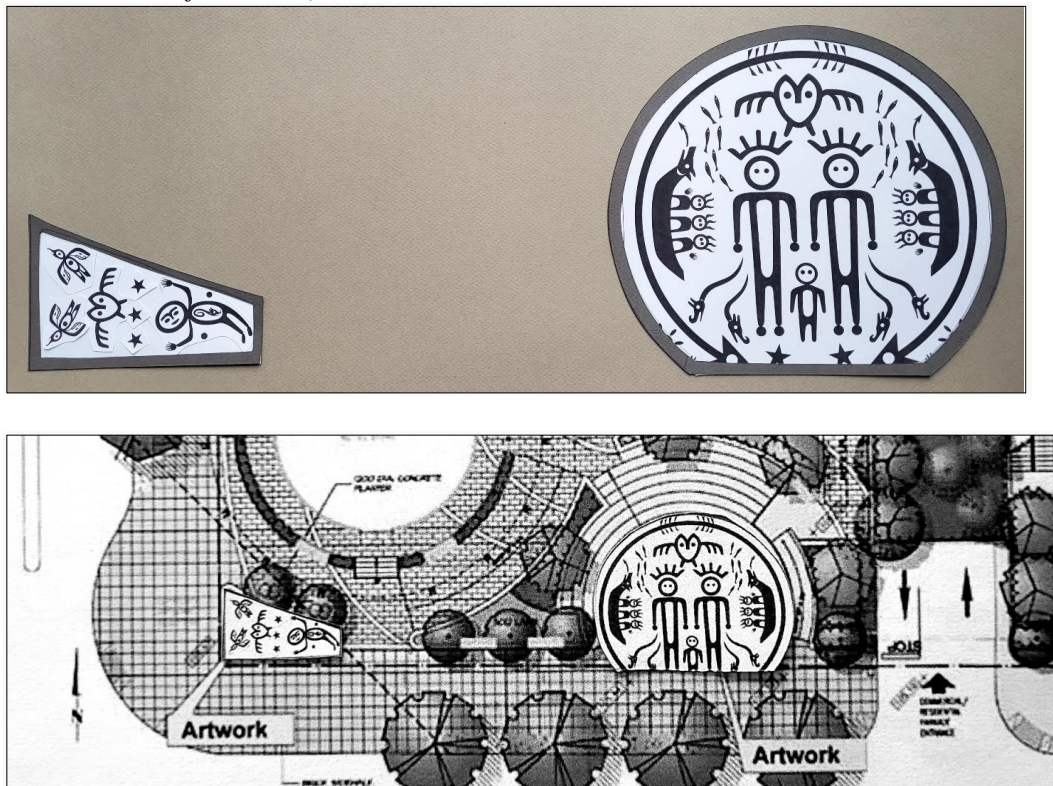
Although all shortlisted artists did an outstanding job re-imagining the site (the northeast corner of Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue), the unanimous consensus by the Selection Panel was Marianne Nicolson as the artist for this project.

Marianne Nicolson is an artist activist of the Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw First Nations. The Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw Nations are part of the Kwakwaka’wakw (Kwak’wala speaking peoples) of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

The tentative title for the art installation is “Joined.” The installation will be placed at two sites at the corner location using inlaid cut rock mosaic and further details are found in the attached concept plan, the Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue Art Plan (Appendix B). The artist describes the project and how it fits this location as follows:

*The proposed artwork is a ground work which relates it to the landscape conceptually. However, this format was also chosen to compliment to the other surrounding public artworks which are more sculptural (3-dimensional) in presentation particularly the large crane which is situated within the vicinity and could possibly compete visually with another 3-dimensional large-scale sculpture.*

*(artist example concept for planter area and inlaid at amphitheater location – Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue)*



Although Semiahmoo First Nation was not able to send a representative to participate on the Public Art Selection Panel, an outstanding element of Ms. Nicolson’s approach is her desire to

seek collaboration and input from the Semiahma people before finalizing the design. As Ms. Nicolson notes in her concept plan:

*Part of the community consultation would be to find out what images might be appropriate to use more relevant to the local Semiahmoo Nation. Pictographs are an indigenous way of mapping and knowing our world. They indicate a deep relationship between people and the environment. Much of the composition will depend on this consultation. The images pictured in this proposal are simply there as an example.*

In her presentation, Ms. Nicolson relayed personal stories of her ancestors paddling down and visiting this area. “Joined” encourages the visitor to interact with two distinct areas at one location. As she notes:

*The two sites, and the space in between, reference the division of the local landscape by the colonial-imposed border between the United States and Canada which overlays and now divides a previously unified indigenous space.*

Marianne Nicolson is trained in both traditional Kwakwaka’wakw forms and culture and contemporary gallery and museum-based practice. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Emily Carr University of Art and Design (1996), a Master of Fine Arts (2000) from the University of Victoria, as well as a Master of Arts (2005) in Linguistics and Anthropology and a PhD (2013) in Linguistics and Anthropology with a focus on space as expressed in the Kwak’wala language. Nicolson works as a Kwakwaka’wakw cultural researcher and historian, as well as an advocate for Indigenous land rights. Her practice is multidisciplinary encompassing photography, painting, carving, video, installation, monumental public art, writing and speaking. All her work seeks to uphold Kwakwaka’wakw traditional philosophy and worldview through contemporary mediums and technology. Exhibitions include the 17th Biennale of Sydney, Australia, The Vancouver Art Gallery, The National Museum of the American Indian in New York, Nuit Blanche in Toronto, Ontario, Museum Arnhem, Netherlands, and many others. Major monumental public artworks are situated in Vancouver International Airport, the Canadian Embassy in Amman, Jordan and the Canadian Embassy in Paris, France.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The \$200,000 funding budget for this project was provided by the Saltaire Development community amenity contributions for the specific purpose of a public art installation on that site. The budget included both public art consultant work and the art piece design, fabrication and installation.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Staff will negotiate a Public Art Installation, Management and Funding Agreement with the Saltaire Strata Council for the use of their outdoor amphitheater space. A similar agreement was negotiated with Peace Arch Hospital for “The Stande” public art installation. Attached as a sample agreement is the McCracken Court Public Art Installation, Management and Funding Agreement agreed to by Council in December 2018 attached for example only (Appendix C).

The planter that will be used for the second part of the art installation, which is located at the northeast corner of Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue is on City property, therefore, a property use agreement is not required for that site.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The project has already involved considerable local community representation for both the creation of the Art Plan and on the Selection Panel. Information will continue to be shared in a timely manner with the community prior to the unveiling. The artwork will form part of the City's inventory of public art and appear online on the Public Art Story Map.

Community consultation by the artist involving Semiahmoo First Nation is paramount to the finalizing of the design and the art piece story.

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS**

Recreation & Culture staff will work closely with Communications staff, as well as Municipal Engineering and Operations to ensure installation goes well and does not conflict with other adjacent projects. Recreation and Culture staff will assist with a formal art unveiling ceremony through the support of Corporate Administration at the appropriate time.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

Council's Cultural Strategic Plan and the Creative City by the Sea mission to integrate arts into everyday life supports building a community where people interact regularly with the arts. Public Art projects help build that kind of community. Additionally, this project encourages a stronger relationship with Semiahmoo First Nation by including input on design and incorporating local storytelling.

### **OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES**

An alternative option available for Council's consideration is not to support the recommendation of the Public Art Selection Panel, and direct staff to begin a new artist and artwork selection process.

### **CONCLUSION**

The process of selecting public art is outlined in the City's Public Art and Placemaking Art Policy #708 (Appendix D) and includes convening a Selection Panel of nearby residents, public art experts and representatives from the Public Art Advisory Committee.

The artist and artwork selection process by the Selection Panel was unanimous in its support and selection of Artist, Marianne Nicolson, who is internationally renowned. Her sensitive approach to inclusion and consultation with Semiahmoo First Nation will make this project a significant and relevant new addition to the City's growing public art inventory. The installation of this public art piece in our Town Centre will help create an inviting attraction at a main intersection in White Rock.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Stepura  
Director, Recreation & Culture

**Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer**

I concur with the recommendations of this corporate report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guillermo Ferrero', written in a cursive style.

Guillermo Ferrero  
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue Art Plan

Appendix B: Marianne Nicolson Concept Johnston Road and Thrift Avenue

Appendix C: McCracken Court Public Art Installation, Management and Funding Agreement

Appendix D: #708 Public Art and Placemaking Art Policy