



**ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE
DEVELOPMENT
MEMORANDUM**

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TO: MAYOR A. NUTTALL AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: C. RYAN, COORDINATOR, PUBLIC ART

NOTED: S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

**B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P.ENG, PMP, GENERAL MANAGER,
INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

RE: TRAFFIC CABINET WRAP PROGRAM

DATE: MAY 8, 2024

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update on the City of Barrie's Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps facilitated in partnership with Traffic Services.

Background

The Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps are part of the City of Barrie's Graffiti Abatement Program. Wrapping traffic cabinets with artist-designed imagery serves as a graffiti deterrent. The wraps feature original works of art that will contribute to civic pride, bring vibrancy to our city, and highlight the talent in our community. The wraps have an expected lifespan of up to 10 years.

This project began with a pilot program, hiring three artists to create unique designs that were installed on new traffic cabinets in the Fall of 2022. Following the successful public reception of the first three cabinets, we have continued with an annual competition for artists and commissioned five in 2023 and will commission and install five more in 2024. The Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps initiative was intended to focus on offering opportunities to local and regional artists who can create artistic designs in a high-resolution digital file suitable for large-format printing.

2024 Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wrap Competition

This year's competition received twenty-four submissions.

An adjudication panel, including two members from BPAC and one local artist, evaluated the twenty-four submissions using a set criterion, as posted in the call to artists. Artwork proposals were reviewed in consideration of:

- Artistic merit, including quality of work, originality, and artistic excellence.
- Artist's demonstrated ability to meet the artwork goals and technical requirements, which included the digitized format qualifications (i.e. high-resolution digital files suitable for large format printing)

The following artists were selected for commission:

- Leandra Almeida
- Angela Aujla
- Scott Crew
- Rainier Naomi Magtalas
- Neil Smith

The wrapped cabinets are scheduled for installation in the Fall of 2024.

While the program is a great way to feature local artists, it is evident there is limited capacity regionally to meet the digital design requirements for this type of project and as a result the most recent competition included submissions and selection of one artist outside the region. With the identification of this limitation, staff explored practices of other municipal programs and have learned that some municipalities take on the process of digitizing analogue artwork on behalf of local artists. At present, the Economic and Creative Development Department are not equipped with the technology or staffing resources to digitize analogue artwork on behalf of our local artists and are viewing this as an opportunity to explore ways in which we can better serve our emerging artist community in the future.

In the meantime, staff have sought to fill this gap to support future submissions by developing a partnership with instructors at Georgian College. Staff are striving to assist local artists who work in analogue media to have their work translated digitally by students and instructors through the School of Design and Visual Arts. This is a one-time pilot we are aiming to offer in Fall 2024, pending timing and suitability within the selected courses and schedules. The goal is to continue iterating and improving the program and staff will be exploring opportunities to support local artists with building high-quality, digitized designs that could be utilized in the Traffic Cabinet Wrap program.

Five Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps – Location and Budget Implications

Only new traffic cabinets are suitable for artist-designed wraps. There is a map of Barrie indicating 14 cabinets that require replacing. Within that map, the Wards receiving the budgeted wrapped cabinets are identified. In this third year of the program, we have made efforts to ensure wrapped cabinets are added to wards that don't have one. There is also consideration given to the location of the cabinet for best visibility and profile.

It must be noted that newer infrastructure that does not need replacement are not recommended to be wrapped. As such, Ward 10 has not had wraps scheduled for replacement in year 2023 or 2024.

Each newly wrapped traffic cabinet costs:

- \$850 for the wrap
- \$750 artist fee for a new design*
- \$20,000 for traffic cabinet and its installation

*each newly commissioned design includes two reproductions as stated in the artist agreement.

If Councilors wish to wrap more or all cabinets identified for replacement in the future, an increase in the annual operating budget would be required for both traffic wraps and the artist's fees. As an alternative, members of Council could also utilize their Community Projects Fund to support the wrapping of cabinets due for replacement in addition to the five cabinets supported through the program. A total of \$1,600 would be required for each additional wrap and new design. If there is interest in duplicating an existing design, the cost for a new wrap would be \$850.

Why Only Wrap New Traffic Cabinets?

To maximize return on investment and artistic impact, wrapping new cabinets ensures that the artwork and product last as long as possible in the field. New cabinets are best suited to wrapping as they are free from oils and outside elements that impact the adhesion of the wrap to the metal. Staff have investigated wrapping the cabinets in the field, but additional charges are incurred to prepare them. Further, the traffic cabinet is an expensive purchase that houses sensitive electronic equipment that could be impacted by pressure washing in the field. Speaking with other jurisdictions who've tried this method, wraps do not last more than a year and in most cases had to be re-wrapped, resulting in additional expenses. Other proposed alternatives such as hand painting the cabinets has also produced challenges



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with residue from taped on garage sale signs and other interferences that negatively impact the integrity and lifespan of the artwork.