

LOCKE STREET MARKER PUBLIC ART PROJECT



FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Date: Monday, July 12, 2021

Location: on-line Zoom platform

Time: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Attendees

Robyn Allan	Locke St BIA
Jenn Fraser	Kirkendall Neighbourhood Association
Gordon Leverton	Local Artist
Mario Patitucci	Local Landscape Architect, Adesso Design
Rose Senat	Local Creative/Entrepreneur
John Terpstra	Local Community Member/ Author
Sherry Phillips	Local Community Member/ Conservator

Meredith Plant	City of Hamilton, Placemaking, Public Art and Projects
Ken Coit	Facilitator, City of Hamilton, Manager of Placemaking, Public Art and Projects

Purpose

This group was brought together to review plans for a public art competition for a Locke Street Marker and to advise on specific goals and themes for the art work.

Background

Meredith Plant gave a presentation outlining the project background, public art process and context. The public art project has an overall budget of \$100,000. The site for the art work is on Locke Street at the SW Corner of Jackson Street in Hamilton (Ward 1). This site was chosen because it had been identified as a preferred entry feature location in the design of the recently completed street scape and in recognition of the existing public art work Concrete Poetry by Simon Frank that is located along the sidewalks through the central parts of Locke Street.

Discussion

Members of the focus group were asked the following questions as part of a general discussion:

Should the work be functional, aesthetic, or interactive?

What unique and meaningful stories, qualities and characteristics of Locke Street and the Kirkendall Neighbourhood do you think artists should be asked to reflect in proposals for public art?

The following responses were provided:

- Access to green spaces
- Diversity of types of businesses social gathering
- Diversity of buildings mix of new and old
- Locke Street Spirit – collaboration, come together for good, to help other areas
- Walkable most needs within a 15 minute walk - worthy of preserving
- Like the walkability, greenspaces close, village in the city
- Bookend the escarpment
- The feeling of the neighbourhood is a draw for the City
- Art should be visible, visual, totemic for site lines, timeless, vertical, speaks to the history (not right now)
- Welcoming and collaborative
- Timeless
- Events and community engagement
- Escarpment connection
- Incorporate Locke Street
- Accessible to all ages
- Materiality of art work could be used to make a connection to escarpment
- Natural growth and prosperity, authentic, organic growth based on neighbourhood'
- Businesses run by community and people in neighbourhood
- Geology is timeless and meaningful long term
- Unique topography and geology
- Family space
- Walkable/pedestrian
- New members of the community want to help and are excited to share their desire to live in the community
- Vertical
- Art Should not be connected to the current businesses as they may change
- Tourism destination
- Service provided by your neighbour (unique and important to culture)
- Streetscape changes enhanced but did not create the spirit of the community
- Live work and play on Locke street
- Diversity of architecture, economic etc.
- Interactivity- child stops on the bridge to see the locks - multigenerational interest
- Very touristy place, reflective of users of the space
- Viewpoint wall of green (escarpment) that frames the street
- Lively and vibrant
- Leave a piece of yourself behind
- Interactive
- Locke is only cross street (North South) and it therefore ties the community together
- Locke St collects the pedestrians
- Community values local support

- Family owned and community working on the street
- Transitory nature of businesses and change through time
- History of diverse range of incomes all within walking distance complete street
- Identifying marker important
- Art should be Inclusive, multilevels of understanding and challenging
- Volunteering and Love Lockes reflect community well
- View down on Locke from the escarpment provides landmarks (ie steeple, organizes the landscape)
- Locke street welcomes people of diverse backgrounds from across the City and region but would not necessarily be recognized by many as a diverse community.

Summary

The group identified what they felt to be the most important concepts as the evening ended. These are highlighted as follows:

- Connection to the Escarpment/nature/geology
- Neighbourhood spirit of local and collaboration
- Walking and pedestrian scale place
- Neighbourhood has a range of people, types and ages of architecture/houses and types of business 'the Village'
- Piece should be accessible to people with a wide range of lived experiences
- Art should be interactive – this should be defined further in call for artists
- Reflect Locke Street more directly
- Landmark for the neighbourhood
- Accessible to all ages (from cradle to grave)

Based on these concepts, public art staff has developed the following Project Goal:

The Public Art work should be a landmark in keeping with Locke Street's pedestrian character and celebrating the neighbourhood's collaborative and welcoming spirit.

Artists' proposals should:

- **Reflect and enhance the neighbourhood spirit of local collaboration;**
- **Encourage discovery and interactivity for all ages; or**
- **Celebrate the unique natural geology and escarpment green space.**

Next Steps

This focus group report will be posted on the City of Hamilton's Public Art website at www.hamilton.ca/publicart for public comment.

A Call for Artists, including the above project goal, site constraints and technical requirements will be issued in fall 2021.

A jury of citizens, local artists and arts professionals will short list up to six artists' proposals to be posted on the city website and displayed at a Locke Street location for public comment later this winter.

The jury will select a winning proposal based on artistic excellence, response to the competition goal, technical concerns and the public response in early 2022.



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