Communication Update

To:	Mayor and Members of City Council
Date:	November 23, 2026
Subject/Report No.:	City of Hamilton Arts Awards (2027)
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards
Submitted By:	Lisa Abbott Director Tourism & Culture Planning and Economic Development
Signature:	

Summary

This communication update provides information on the 2027 City of Hamilton Arts Awards nomination campaign and invites the Mayor and Members of Council to support and promote public nominations across their respective wards and networks.

Background

Established in 1976, the Hamilton Arts Awards is a year-round initiative that profiles and honours cultural and artistic excellence. The annual awards event showcases dynamic arts programming, continuing a longstanding tradition of celebrating Hamilton's creative culture.

The Hamilton Arts Awards recognize Hamiltonians for their artistic excellence and/or community leadership in the arts. In 2027, the program marks its 51st year, making it one of the oldest municipal arts awards programs in Canada.

Since 2011, the City of Hamilton, program sponsors and partners have awarded over $400,000 and presented 277 awards.

Details

Outstanding artists and arts community champions are to be nominated by the public for the 2027 City of Hamilton Arts Awards.

- The nomination period runs from November 23, 2026, to January 10, 2027.
- Nominations can be submitted online at www.hamilton.ca/artsawards.
- Hard-copy nomination forms are available on request by emailing artsawards@hamilton.ca or calling 905-546-2424 Ext. 4463.

Nominations are accepted in the following three categories:

Creator Awards

This award category recognizes excellence among artists, arts managers and artistic collectives (including bands) working in any artistic discipline and at all career levels. There are up to nine (9) awards, each accompanied by a $2,500 honorarium.

Arts Champion Awards

This award category acknowledges the essential contributions of arts sector volunteers, advocates and board members. There are up to four (4) awards, each consisting of a gift of recognition.

Lifetime Achievement Award

This award category recognizes individuals who have contributed substantially to the artistic vitality of the city over the course of their career. Only one (1) award is presented annually, and it is accompanied by a $2,500 honorarium.

Next Steps

The City asks the public to nominate outstanding creatives and professionals in any of the three categories. Note that Council and City staff are not eligible to nominate or be nominated. Nominators are required to submit a brief statement outlining why they believe the artist, collective or community champion should be considered for the recognition.

All public nominations are reviewed and ranked by a panel of artists and arts sector experts to generate a shortlist. Final award recipients are determined by a selection panel of leading arts professionals.

The nomination period runs from November 23, 2026, to January 10, 2027. Shortlist announcements are anticipated in Spring 2027; award recipients in all categories will be announced in early July 2027; the public awards celebration marking 51 years of Hamilton's artistic legacy takes place during Hamilton Arts Week.

Request for Support – Mayor and Members of Council

The Mayor and Members of Council are invited to help raise awareness of the 2027 Hamilton Arts Awards and encourage nominations throughout the city by:

- **Sharing the nomination opportunity:** Circulate the attached promotional graphics through ward newsletters, social media accounts, websites and other available communication channels.
- **Encouraging nominations within your networks:** Help identify and encourage residents, arts organizations, community groups, businesses and other local networks to nominate outstanding artists, collectives and arts community champions.
- **Supporting ward-level outreach:** Share the nomination opportunity with local arts organizations, cultural groups, community associations and other contacts who may know deserving nominees.
- **Amplifying the campaign:** Where possible, include the nomination opportunity in upcoming community updates, newsletters, events and other ward communications throughout the nomination period.

The City coordinates a broader promotional campaign in collaboration with the Hamilton Arts Council and community partners. This extends beyond City communication channels and includes outreach through arts-sector and community networks, media and paid promotion, printed posters and postcards distributed through relevant community locations and organizations. The objective is to achieve broad citywide awareness and encourage nominations from across Hamilton's diverse communities and artistic disciplines.

Nominations can be submitted at www.hamilton.ca/artsawards. For hard-copy nomination forms or further information, please contact artsawards@hamilton.ca.

If you require any further information, kindly contact:

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Appendices Attached

N/A

Printable poster and digital media tactics attached separately.