



Marco Cibola
Partner
Studio Ours Inc.

May 23, 2013

General Issues Committee
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Ours*
studio-ours.com

Dear Chair and Members of the General Issues Committee;

I am a resident of Dundas, where I also operate a design firm called Studio Ours Inc. Additionally, I practice as an illustrator working for a broad range of both Canadian and international clients, including *ON Nature* magazine, *The Grid*, *Time* magazine, and *Washington Post*, among others. Alongside my commercial art practice, I exhibit regularly as a visual artist. I count myself among the 92% of Hamiltonians who believe culture adds to their quality of life.

There has been much discussion in the media in the last few years of the move west to Hamilton from Toronto. A transplant from Toronto myself, I understand the draw of improved affordability in the Hamilton area. However, Hamilton's artistic community was also an important factor in my decision to relocate both my residence and business to Dundas. Having said that, I believe there is room to significantly improve and strengthen the creative sector in Hamilton.

Of particular interest to me are initiatives that support the creative activity of both design businesses and individual artists. The past few years have been challenging for small businesses like mine. Programs that encourage development and sustainability within the creative small business sector are sorely needed. Better municipal support could improve the success rate of small creative firms like my own. Furthermore, the effect of programs that support individual artists cannot be underestimated. Municipal support would have a significant impact on the ability of artists like myself to successfully secure project funding from provincial and national granting bodies. I have taken the time to review the draft material made available online, and I believe the work of the Arts Advisory Commission (AAC) has thoughtfully addressed the needs of all sectors within the arts community, including those that matter most to me. The recommended initiatives will increase the city's investment in its own community with measurable economic impact. They will also ensure that municipal funding is fair, accountable, and available to residents across the entire city.

As the father of two children, I believe Hamilton has great potential to reach its goal to be the best place to raise a child. But I think a vibrant, well-supported arts sector is critical. It is my feeling that initiatives outlined by the AAC will improve access to creative projects and artistic opportunities for children and families across the city, and in so doing, will foster the kind of balanced, culturally rich environment I would like for my children.

I urge you to join the 92% of those in our community who believe culture is an integral part of their quality of life by supporting the recommendations of the AAC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Cibola', written in a cursive style.

Marco Cibola

cc: Mayor Bob Bratina
Councillor Russ Powers