

May 24, 2013

Hamilton City Council
71 Main Street West,
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

RE: City of Hamilton Cultural Plan

Dear Members of Council,

I'm writing as an artist and cultural worker, former Co-Chair of the Arts Advisory Commission of the City of Hamilton and community member in support of the proposed City of Hamilton Cultural Plan. **The Strategic Arts Funding Model** has been developed through a thoughtful process over the course of several years with broad community and cultural sector engagement. As a result of this process, more than 250 recommendations from citizens and cultural leaders have been distilled into 12 major recommendations. I'm writing in support of the adoption of this plan by city council.

I can't underestimate how important culture is to Hamilton. Over my many years of involvement as a cultural worker, advisor, and participant, I recognize that this is our chance to build interest and commitment, and to demonstrate culture's important role in developing a vibrant and prosperous city.

The development and engagement of the community in the development to this plan has found that:

- ⇒ 92% of Hamiltonians believe culture adds to their quality of life.
- ⇒ Access to artistic opportunities furthers Hamilton's vision to be the best place to raise a child
- ⇒ A city-wide strategy benefits every ward
- ⇒ Investment is inadequate and our funding system is broken, but it has the potential to be fixed
- ⇒ Arts funding is not a hand-out. It is an investment that has a measurable economic impact
- ⇒ Municipal investment is the catalyst for further funding from federal and provincial programs as well as private sector participation and support

The new model which the plan proposes allows for a best practice standard to be set in the granting of public dollars in Hamilton. The successful revitalization of the city lies partially in the hands of the cultural community and the arts and cultural community has played a very important role in the recent redevelopment of the downtown core.

The new system allows for improved accountability and equality to the community: clear accountability and adjudication allow for a stronger system to determine the best return on investment for every dollar spent. The new model allows for all consistencies of the sector artists (all disciplines and at all career levels), arts organizations (emerging through to established and independent arts businesses) to have an opportunity for investment. Finally, a new funding model will strengthen an already diverse, strong, intellectually critical and arts and cultural sector and therefore an impactful Hamilton.

I'm excited about the next phase of our city's growth and potential with the adoption of this plan. With these tools in place our artists, cultural workers, arts organizations and partners can continue to grow our healthy and vibrant cultural community. I strongly encourage you to adopt this plan and applaud our council's efforts in creating a positive space for artists and cultural workers of all sectors and disciplines.

Sincerely,



Renée Wetselaar