



CITY OF MARKHAM
DIRECTION FOR PUBLIC ART
MAIN STREET
UNIONVILLE

Prepared by:

ART + PUBLIC UnLtd

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Introduction

In July 2022, The City of Markham retained ART + PUBLIC UnLtd to deliver a creative community engagement process for the Markham Public Art Program coordinated by the City's Department of Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship.

Our process began through desk research and interviews with key internal stakeholders. As we proceeded it was agreed with the Public Art Curator that the program would include a site visit and an internal stakeholder engagement process to understand the technical issues and physical constraints of the site. As located within a designated Heritage District, an engagement workshop with the City of Markham's Heritage Committee was critical. The process culminated with a community engagement workshop to which the wider community was invited.

This final report details the process and outcomes of each engagement event undertaken with internal and external stakeholders. It synthesizes the results of the engagement process as a whole and provides thematics for artists to explore in the creation of concepts for public art commissions on Main Street Unionville.

About Markham's Public Art Program and Markham's Unionville Street Redesign

In the fall of 2019, Markham City Council approved its Public Art Master Plan 2020-2024, and a related Implementation Plan in Winter, 2020. The objectives of the program are to inspire people to live, work, visit and invest in Markham; to celebrate the city's diverse cultures and heritage from multiple points of view; and to connect residents to Markham's built and natural environment.

The revitalization of Unionville's Historic Main Street has been in development for multiple years with the Main Street Unionville Community Vision Plan (2015) providing the foundation for the revitalization of the street. The plan included "future land uses and character of specific 'Focused Areas' between Highway 7 and Toogood Pond Park" along with the identification of areas of improvement (e.g. a streetscape beautification initiative). In 2018, the City of Markham initiated the Main Street Unionville Streetscape Master Plan for Commercial Core which included a background analysis, review of issues and opportunities, the development of a number of streetscape concepts and the implementation of a community engagement process to gather input (2019).

In March 2022, Council approved the recommended streetscape plan which includes: new sidewalk, boulevard and road surfaces, along with streetscape improvements, underground infrastructure improvements (watermains and storm sewers), new road surfaces and parking arrangements (The East Lane), and a new streetlight system from Highway 7 to Carlton Road on The East Lane. As of 2022's third quarter 60% of design development has been completed. At

the time of this report, a number of additional improvements have been recommended to be included.



Early construction on a sidewalk along Main Street, Unionville, 1890s. Photograph courtesy of Markham Museum.

Through the integration of consistent streetscape elements, site furniture, plantings, surface treatments, a gateway banner, and public art, 'Street Rooms' may be created that are intended for the public's use. The integrity and heritage character of the district is to be maintained by using materials that are complementary to the existing heritage environment. In accordance with the Streetscape Master Plan, City Council recommended that Markham's public art staff focus their efforts on this site and facilitate an approach for the integration of new public art.

Overview of our Research and Process

The engagement process was used as an opportunity to develop internal consensus on the implementation and direction for public art at Unionville as prioritised by City Council. Furthermore, this engagement process was used to explore best practices and support communication around the integration of public art within the wider construction project.

Our approach consisted of a site visit, desk research (including carefully selected public art case studies), followed by a tiered engagement process that consisted of one-on-one Internal Stakeholder Interviews followed by two Stakeholder Group Sessions (one for the Internal team and one for the Heritage Markham Committee). The Stakeholder Group Sessions built on the learnings of the interviews and included the synthesis of 'what we learned'. The group sessions were intended to build consensus and address concerns while sharing and discussing public art siting opportunities, the public art approach at Unionville–Markham, and the presentation of case studies. The sessions were facilitated with the idea of sharing what is possible for public art at Unionville, signalling a way to move forward and improving interdepartmental communication around the context of public art.

The two-phased approach and their corresponding activities are as follows:

Phase 1: Public Art Direction (September - November)

- Kick-off meeting with client, used to define, stakeholders, timelines, etc
- Background materials review
- Write approach document
- Site visit
- Develop interview and session guides
- Stakeholder interviews (8 individuals)
- Project check-ins with Public Art Curator
- Stakeholder Group Sessions (2 groups):
 - Internal (7 individuals)
 - Heritage Markham Committee (9 individuals)
- Synthesis of findings into report providing clear direction for the public art opportunity in Markham–Unionville

Phase 2: Virtual Community Engagement Session (November-December)

- Design of session (format, presentation deck, activities)
- Design of assets + production
- Promotion of session: communications and outreach (social media, manage Eventbrite registrations, share with community organisations to disseminate)
- Facilitation
- Synthesis of the session
- Community Engagement document (Appendix B)

Deliverables

ART + PUBLIC UnLTD synthesised our findings across the research activities as noted above into this report to provide a clear direction for the public art at Main Street Unionville. The report identifies project opportunities, constraints, and articulates the next steps and best practices to inform the commissioning process.

Following the completion of the report, we planned a virtual Community Engagement Session with the public. Through active outreach to communities and promotions and communications in collaboration with the City of Markham, the session was held on December 7, 2022. This culminated in Appendix B, a report focused on our conversations with participants and findings. The session engaged the public through the use of interactive tools and dialogue on the future of public art at Unionville while creating thoughtful discussion around Unionville's identities, stories and themes to be explored through public art. These takeaways will inform future artist briefs for commissions at this site.

Heritage Context

Part of our work has been to understand and work within the Heritage designation of Unionville. Under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, Unionville is one of four (4) protected heritage districts in Markham.

A heritage district is defined as:

- A collection or grouping of buildings, streets and open spaces that together are of cultural heritage value to our community.
- An area with a special character with an integrity of its own that distinguishes it from other areas of the community.
- A defined boundary where all properties are protected from inappropriate changes through the use of policies and design guidelines.



View of Queen's Hotel down Main St. Unionville, 1915. Photograph courtesy of Markham Museum.

Under the City of Markham, heritage sites are viewed as “living parts of our community, not museum sites.” The designation is intended to guide change to further contribute to the uniqueness of the area.

The purpose of this designation is:

- To preserve heritage buildings - these features are fragile gifts from past generations. They are not a renewable resource. Once lost, they are gone forever.
- To preserve original features - it is important to retain original or early building fabric such as windows, wall claddings and architectural elements.
- To promote the following concepts:
 - It is better to maintain than to repair
 - It is better to repair than to restore
 - It is better to restore than replace
- To ensure new construction is complementary and respectful - this can range from an addition to a heritage building to a new building in the district.
- To protect features in the public realm that make the area unique - this includes streetscapes, lot patterns and vegetation.

These precepts are intended to maintain the historical integrity of Unionville and other heritage districts.

Heritage Markham is Council's volunteer-based advisory council, tasked with maintaining the historical integrity of Unionville and other heritage districts. Heritage Markham consists of ten (10) citizen volunteers and three (3) members of City Council. They provide recommendations on designation, alteration and demolition of heritage resources using the guiding principles outlined by the policies of the Ontario Heritage Act, policies endorsed by the Ministry of Culture, the Markham Official Plan, individual heritage conservation district plans and heritage policies adopted by Heritage Markham and/or Council.

ART + PUBLIC UnLtd held a workshop with members of Heritage Markham to discuss strategies for maintaining this historical integrity within the context of a contemporary public art program that will focus on future public access and engagement while providing opportunities for multiple stories and histories.

Site Visit

To kick off this work, our team met with the public art Curator and the Director of the Varley Art Gallery. From there we explored the length of Main Street, walking to the Unionville Train Station and back. We explored adjacent public art sites to understand the pedestrian experience, discuss siting opportunities and observe the current streetscape (including restaurants, cafes, historical sites, pedestrian traffic, etc).



Main Street Unionville site visit, September 2022.

This site visit helped inform the discussion guide and the types of questions we prioritised in our stakeholder interviews.

One-on-One Stakeholder Interviews

The interviews were designed to support our information gathering process and research phase with insights from those closely connected to the public art program and the Main Street Unionville Streetscape Master Plan for Commercial Core. This section provides an overview and synthesis of 'what we heard' in the stakeholder interviews ART + PUBLIC UnLtd conducted during the months of September and October, 2022.

The Public Art Curator of Markham and the Director of the Varley Art Gallery provided a list of interviewees and through our initial conversations, we added project team members based on recommendations. Our interviewee's insights and feedback helped us in our understanding of how public art can operate along the site, potential challenges and risks, and also informed our approach to the Stakeholder Group Sessions and Community Engagement session.

Our list of interviewees included:

Ron Albright, Director, Associate Partner/Infrastructure: Municipal Engineering, CIMA
Alain Cachola, Senior Manager, Infrastructure & Capital Works, Engineering, City of Markham

Lisa Cullen, Associate Partner, Senior Project Manager, Infrastructure: Landscape Architect, CIMA

Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning, City of Markham

Reid McAlpine, Markham Ward 3 Councillor

Arvin Prasad, Commissioner of Development Services, City of Markham

Chris Rickett, Director, Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship, City of Markham

Sarah Sterling, Executive Director, Main Street Unionville BIA

**Note: Due to the timing of the election we were unable to interview Mayor Scarpitti*

The interviews were conducted confidentially to ensure interviewees could speak candidly. We recorded the sessions for internal note-taking purposes and have included anonymous pull-quotes from our conversations.

The goal of the interviews was to:

- Share the initial direction of integrated public art for the Main Street Unionville revitalization
- Gain further understanding about the heritage designation and structure of Heritage Markham
- Learn about project constraints
- Learn about the multiple stories of the area that could inform public art commissions
- Share the concept of public art as 'wayfinding'
- Understand other sites of interests and potential connections

We synthesised our key findings from what we heard in these conversations. After conducting a cluster analysis, we defined seven (7) takeaways that informed the design of the Stakeholder Group Sessions (Internal and Heritage Markham Committee). An overview of these sessions with key observations appears on page 27.

What We Heard



1 Unionville is treasured within the community. There is a desire to maintain its unique character for generations to come.

Many interviewees spoke of how cherished Main Street Unionville is. We consistently heard the importance among stakeholders in preserving the historical town and its surrounding buildings.

"A hidden little gem in a sea of urban sprawl"

"A contemporary village, but traditional in the modern world, that has survived over time"

"The character should be preserved with anything new that's introduced"

"One thing that comes up time and time again is you don't want to Disney-ify it"



2 Public art supports local businesses, tourism, and creates conversation.

Main Street hosts many local businesses and has become a destination for visitors. Many interviewees expressed interest in how public art can draw crowds and spark conversation whether positive or negative. The Public Art program for Main Street Unionville can support this activity through adding interest and creating buzz.

"Desire to create pedestrian movement throughout Main Street"

"Success would be in the people - does it create public conversations, at the cocktail party, do your friends bring it up, among the people who live here"

"The unveiling would be really great as an 'event'"

"Would like to see it within the BIA boundaries"

"Business impacts are going to be key in this process"

3

There is a strong desire to balance contemporary art within the heritage context of Unionville.

The creation of contemporary public art within the heritage designation neighbourhood can find alignment through thoughtful placement and siting, process and material choices. We heard a strong desire to create contrast between the old and new with numerous participants understanding the value that can come with public art, viewers engaging with the work deeply and rethinking their surroundings.

"The value would be a modern [artwork] on the street - the community that is Markham today is not the community of 50 or 20 years ago"

"Looking for something new... Public art doesn't need to push heritage more than we have"

"Public art is challenging - but it could be introduced in a discreet manner... making unattractive [elements] special"

"Something to be said about establishing those contrasts, it forces you to then look at the heritage pieces around you, put them into context a little more differently"

"Heritage and modern can be mixed"

4

There is excitement to push the envelope with temporary installations.

Overwhelmingly, the topic of temporary public art arose in almost every interview

we conducted. It was noted that, since the COVID-19 pandemic, alternative uses to public space have become the norm with an increased interest in temporary installations, performances, etc. We heard that temporary installations provided an opportunity to try something new, test the enthusiasm within the community, and provide an opportunity for engagement and interaction.

"The City of Stratford has done an amazing winter lights festival that [became] a destination draw..."

"People are trying different things post-pandemic in public space"

"Temporary creates more openness to be different"

"Temporary installations are a great way to try new things"

"Temporary public art: a project for 3-5 years... there would be more openness to what it could be"

"Pop ups for Instagram haven't been regulated at all"

"This is an opportunity for the process to push the bar"

5

Storytelling creates a unique opportunity to highlight heritage and place.

There is a unique opportunity to incorporate storytelling into the Unionville public art program and pass along the history of Unionville for future generations. Our conversations raised not only the colonial, settler history (represented in the heritage designation and established aesthetic qualities of Unionville), but the non-dominant histories (e.g. Indigenous connections), stories of evolution (e.g. the area's immigration and changing industries).

"Stories about the evolution of the community"

"There's an opportunity to build on the concept of heritage. How do we tell the story? Not just the German history - but the full history that includes the people who originally lived here"

"Let's go back to pre-settler history and broaden it out"

"Diversity of stories and backgrounds"

"The Mill and the train station... sharing industry stories..."

"I like the idea of storytelling - how do we reimagine public spaces?"

"Visuals can share a different side of the story"

6

Integrated public art creates something new and makes use of limited public space.

Overall, there was alignment in the desire to make use of limited space, and avoid over-programming. The pedestrian experience will be improved with the revitalization of Main Street, but many cautioned to not overpopulate the streetscape with visual clutter. The participants agreed that a more integrated approach that works with existing surfaces is the best approach for the site.

"Anywhere on the street is good - but there is very little public space"

"Let's add rather than take away"

"Could be introduced in an area where it's currently unattractive, make something 'special'"

"Would like to see something that could be interactive, something that just sits there isn't that useful"

"The parkette is really under utilised - that would be a great fit and where I could envision something"

"There are not a lot of public spaces, there aren't any that lend themselves to any scale"

7

Public art forges connections across people and places.

The concept of creating connectivity came up many times in our conversations. There is a desire to make connections to areas often overlooked or not visible from Main Street (Rouge trail connections, the creek, etc). This idea also extended to people, we heard the desire for people to come together, both in the physical sense and metaphorically, as a community. Furthermore, the idea of public art as wayfinding came up as we heard interest in creating movement along the length of Main Street from the train station to the Varley Art Gallery.

"Let's use public art to bring people together"

"Make a connection between the river and the trail system"

"The gallery could be more of a hub and more of a draw, perhaps it could be the centre"

"Very few places to congregate, very little public space"

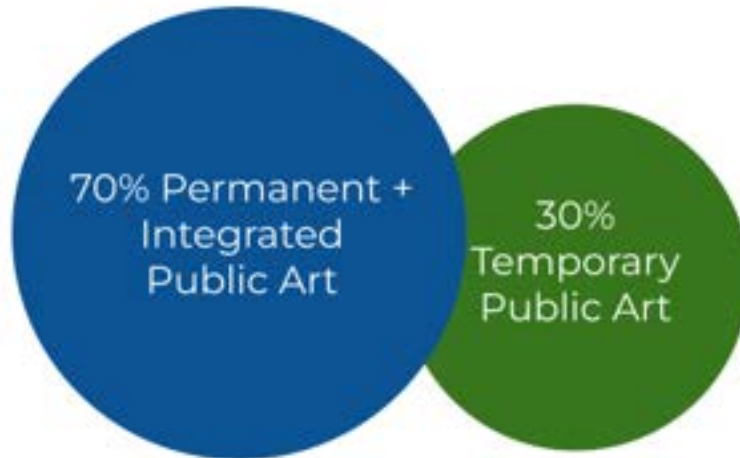
Approach for Public Art at Main Street Unionville

Stemming from our interviews with Internal Stakeholders and consultation with Public Art Curator and Director at the Varley Art Gallery, we defined the direction for public art at Main Street, Unionville as:

A dynamic and mixed program featuring integrated public art, permanent installations and temporary programming that are thematically linked.

The program will make connections along Main Street, Unionville and to adjacent sites of interest.

After taking into consideration what we heard in the interviews and group sessions, in consultation with the Public Art Curator and the Director of the Varley Art Gallery, we determined a high level prioritisation of 70% integrated + permanent public art and 30% temporary public art was viable. The inclusion of temporary public art is in direct response to our interviews where we heard overwhelming support for it.



For the purpose of this report, we have defined these terms as such:

Permanent Public Art

Permanent artworks may be stand alone sculptures/installations, embedded works and structures. These works often add to a unique destination experience in a fixed, 'iconic' way.

Permanent artworks are commissioned to have a lifespan of at least ten (10) years and thought of as fixtures in perpetuity.

Integrated Public Art

A subset of permanent public art, integrated art is the application of an art concept to the form and/or material of an existing infrastructure element.

Infrastructure provides the structural support, without which, the artwork does not exist. This can include the application of art to pavement, retaining walls, planters and building skins (e.g. tiles).

Like permanent public art, integrated artworks are commissioned to have a lifespan of at least ten (10) years and thought of as fixtures in perpetuity.

Temporary Public Art

Temporary public art can include a mix of disciplines including, but not limited to: visual arts, media arts, performance art, music, theatre, dance, literary arts, etc. Activations may include: performance art staging, readings, installations, artist talks, community engagements, tours, or musical performances.

Projects vary in activation length from one (1) day to one (1) to five (years), and often have flexible timelines. If there is expressed interest and budget for a project, it may run longer than intended.

The key consideration for the emphasis on these typologies of public art included:

Why integrated and permanent public art?	Why temporary public art?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Builds on the construction opportunity of the Main Street revitalization• Does not compete with historic buildings and structures• Has potential to support wayfinding• May synchronize with construction schedule• Cost effective for long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible and efficient use of limited space• Creative and conceptual merit - ability to 'test things out'• Refreshing - returning visitors, create new opportunities for participation

Case Studies

As part of our desk research, nine (9) examples of public art were selected and researched. The long list of case studies were chosen by ART + PUBLIC UnLTD and narrowed down by the Public Art Curator and Director of the Varley Museum. Examples of permanent, integrated, and temporary public art in line with the evolution of the public art programming at Unionville were chosen. The projects selected were a combination of both local and international works, varying in artist, processes, scale and timeline and presented as part of the Stakeholder Group Sessions (Internal and Heritage Markham Committee).

Please refer to Appendix A for the full case studies.

Stakeholder Group Sessions

On October 18 and 26, 2022 we held two (2) Stakeholder Group Sessions (Internal and Heritage Markham) where we presented our findings to date and reviewed siting priorities. The stakeholders in the work sessions were those with a deep understanding of the wider revitalization project and provided an opportunity for interdepartmental dialogue with a focus on the implementation of public art at Main Street Unionville.

The agenda for the 90 minute sessions was as follows:

- Introductions + Goals for Today
- Overview of Research + Process

- Approach to Public Art for Unionville
- Case Studies
- Discussion
- Siting Opportunities
- Discussion
- Wrap Up and Next Steps

Our attendees included:

Session 1: Internal Project Team members

Yan Wu, Public Art Curator, City of Markham

Niamh O'Laoghaire, Director Varley Art Gallery of Markham, City of Markham

Tanya Lewinberg, Public Realm Coordinator, City of Markham

Lisa Cullen, Associate Partner / Senior Project Manager / Infrastructure – Landscape Architecture, CIMA

Ron Albright, Director, Associate Partner / Infrastructure – Municipal Engineering, CIMA

Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning, City of Markham

Steven Dollmaier, Senior Manager Roads and Survey, City of Markham

Session 2: Heritage Markham Committee

Yan Wu, Public Art Curator, City of Markham

Niamh O'Laoghaire, Director Varley Art Gallery of Markham, City of Markham

David Wilson, Heritage Markham Committee Member

Karen Rea, Ward 4 Councillor, City of Markham

Peter Wokral, Senior Planner, City of Markham and Heritage Markham Committee Member

Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning, City of Markham and Heritage Markham Committee Member

Reid McAlpine, Ward 3 Councillor, City of Markham

Victor Huang, Heritage Markham Committee Member

Elizabeth Wimmer, Heritage Markham Committee Member

The purpose of these sessions was to:

- Present findings based on our research
- Share an approach for public art at Unionville–Markham
- Facilitate a discussion around the approach, production process, and siting opportunities to gain consensus moving forward

Facilitation Approach:

We split the session into two main sections; the presentation of our findings and work to date, and roundtable discussion with prompts guiding our conversations with participants.

Our prompts included:

- *What resonated with you the most about the approach and implementation methods in the case studies?*
- *What approvals would be needed to achieve this? At what point(s) in the process would they need to occur?*
- *Are there specific heritage and/or engineering considerations at these sites we should be aware of as we develop a contemporary public art direction?*

The discussions were fruitful and we have synthesised those conversations into a breakdown of key observations as follows:

Key Observations

1. We heard a strong desire for collaboration and to find ways for the various departments to work together.
 - a. The conversation was collaborative with an overall desire to understand alternative viewpoints in support of finding ways of incorporating public art in the infrastructure project
 - b. Through these discussions, new opportunities were uncovered and identified in this report
2. There was endorsement of the typologies of public art as presented: Integrated, Permanent and Temporary, following the high level breakdown of 70% Integrated/Permanent and 30% Temporary.
 - a. There was consensus that overall, temporary programming can offer more flexibility, opportunities for experimentation, offer a litmus test on community tastes, and 'push the boundaries'
3. There was a general endorsement of the four main siting opportunities as defined, with the following provisos:
 - a. Prioritise editing to avoid 'visual clutter' and taking a 'less is more' approach
 - i. There was an overall wariness of any large installations or works that would take up too much sidewalk real estate
 - b. Avoid lighting and/or screens that are in contradiction of heritage standards
 - c. Be sure to consider the entire length of Main Street from the Varley Art Gallery to the Unionville Train Station

- d. Embrace the greenspaces that surround Main Street as potential 'backdrops' for installations
- 4. Openness to the use of new technologies, such as AR, to support public art projects, either with interpretation or as the form itself.
 - a. It was noted that using AR could create a multi-generational experience promoting engagement with younger audiences
 - b. It is expected that new technologies would be used within the context of heritage guidelines
- 5. Desire to build connections between wayfinding and public art. Public art can support the pedestrian experience and orientation, creating movement to lesser trafficked areas.
 - a. Utilising the repeated features in the urban landscape can create movement along Main Street, the art becoming wayfinding itself
 - b. Collaboration with CIMA on the form of and content provided by wayfinding kiosks
 - i. Could support QR code to direct to a public art AR project or interpretation material for example
- 6. Aligning with the overall construction schedule will ensure a more streamlined and effective process, especially for elements that are integrated into surfaces. Define sites/requirements for other works that can be installed after construction to ensure proper bases/space accommodates these plans.
- 7. With the heritage designation, it is advised that public art should be 'compatible' with the historical Main Street (via placement, material considerations, scale, etc).

Siting Priorities

Four main siting opportunities have been defined in an effort to prioritise public art opportunities for Main Street as discussed and reviewed in our research phase. These sites will require further investigation for the implementation of public art, but act as a guiding post for the Public Art Curator in the development of the program. These sites were presented in the Stakeholder Group Sessions (see pg. 15) and were a starting point for discussion. They have been refined based on the feedback received to date and through the addition of images of public art precedents that illustrate the types of commissions the stakeholder groups felt were well suited to the site.



1. Rouge Trail Connection



About:

This is the main site that came up repeatedly in our interview process. The site has the ability to support public art by making a visual and conceptual connection between the Rouge Trail and Main Street. The area lies approximately halfway down Main Street on the East side between numbers 185 and 177. It is already a 'hub' with public seating at the top of the stairs. As part of CIMA's additions to the scope of their work, they have been drafting a walkway connection from the stairs to the Rouge Trail and are open to collaboration with the Public Art Curator on supporting the creation of public art on the site.

Commission Opportunities:

Artwork commissions could include coloured pavement or a painted design on the walkway. Further possibilities include plantings on the sloped area adjacent to the stairs, the risers of the stairs, and an integrated or standalone piece at the entrance to the Rouge Trail. There is an opportunity to consider the landing at the top of the stairs and the foot of the staircase to also host commissions. The area at the top of stairs does not have services underneath (able to mount a base if required). It is recommended that one artist or team consider this as one site, creating one or a series of permanent or integrated works that support this wayfinding connection.

Key Opportunities:

- Supports wayfinding between Main Street and Rouge Trail
- Highly visible central gathering area
- Connects to nature and expansive trail system
- Highlights heritage and connection to Indigenous stories and histories
- Opportunity for multiple commissions
- A wayfinding kiosk could be used to incorporate and support new technologies (QR code, access to a digital artwork, AR technology, etc.)

Site Images:

Public Art Precedent Images:



Collaborative project between poet and graphic designer John Morgan. BBC White City public art program. 2004.



Laara Cerman. What Seeds Will You Leave Behind? Vector / Vinyl Mural Wrap. 2022. 204" x 483" x 89.5" St. Andrew's Wesley United Church (temporary), Vancouver, BC



Jeannie Thib. The Knot. 2012. Scarborough, Metrogate for Tridel



Amy Westover with McKibben+Cooper Architects. Virgo Virgo. Stainless steel, saw cut lines, pavers 2015. Commissioned by CCDC and Boise City Public Works Dept.



Bau & Cós, The Bridge On the Tuck, City of Burlington. CNC powder-coated stainless steel panels. 75 by 15 metres. 2020.



Jud Fine, 1993. Part of Spine sculptural installation, Maguire Gardens, Los Angeles Public Library.

2. Millennium Square Trail



About:

The current work underway by CIMA includes the creation of a new trail linking Main Street to Millennium Square, a parkette behind the community's beloved bandstand.

Commission Opportunities:

This trail could host one artwork or a series of works along its path. As the surrounding area is quite expansive and open, we have identified this area as a potential host for temporary artworks. Off Main Street proper, it avoids the risk of 'visual clutter' often voiced as concern for the length of Main Street, and provides the opportunity to experience and appreciate work 'off the beaten track'.

Key Opportunities:

- Open space with untapped potential
- Proximity to highly trafficked Bandstand
- Connects green space, including creek, to Main Street making it more visible
- Stories re: natural elements, connection to nature and related histories
- Creates wayfinding opportunities
- **Ability to host temporary programming**

Site images:



Public Art Precedents (Integrated and Temporary):



Metz & Chew. lulu, a memory garden. Paulik Gardens Neighbourhood Park, Richmond, BC 2009. Commissioned by City of Richmond



Mark Puigmarti, Lake Wilcox Park Carin Toppers - Richmond Hill, ON, Canada. 2012 - 2018. A series of works with local natural symbolism and kinetic movement.



Foray led by Diane Borsato and Amish Morrell of Outdoor School, Doris McCarthy Gallery, Scarborough, 2021.



Insectageddon is a collective performance and call to action presented by artist and poet Cecilia Vicuña. Various locations on and around the High Line, New York. 2021.



DeRAIL, Nuit Blanche 2017.



Chantal Rousseau. We are all here – Osprey, commercially printed vinyl flag, 3/16" laser cut stainless steel bars, aircraft cables, swag sleeves, 32" x 32", 2020, Erindale Park – Mississauga, Ontario, commissioned by the City of Mississauga

3. Street Level Series



About:

Throughout all of our conversations, there was a desire to consider movement along the full length of Main Street, from the train station on Station Lane to the Varley Art Gallery at the north west intersection of Main Street and Carlton Road. There was emphasis on thinking about the pedestrian experience - with the possibility of the artwork supporting wayfinding, moving pedestrians along with visual interest throughout the length of the street.

Commission Opportunities:

As we determined in our Stakeholder Group Sessions, the greatest opportunity is in the repeating elements: tree grates, stormwater covers, maintenance hole covers, etc. Within this, there is opportunity to create work of a narrative or curatorial theme that stretches the length of the street. Other possible interpretations of work or projects could be: an AR project that engages with specific sites of interest, temporary programming, interpretive tours, or a counter-plaque project.

**Note: Integrated work embedded in the sidewalk should be avoided as it is likely to be damaged by winter maintenance machinery.*

Key Opportunities:

- Opportunity to beautify the streetscape
- Creates moments of interest, linking activity, along the length of Main Street
- Supports pedestrian experience
- Could connect to natural elements, providing pause in the urban landscape
- Possibility for custom tree grates and manhole covers

Site Images:



Public Art Precedent Images:



Luc Melanson. Montreal maintenance hole covers. Photograph by Chloë Ellingson. 2021.



Simon Frank. Concrete Poetry. Bronze (plaque size variable) 2011.



Karen Hofatt. A Pattern Language. 2021. Aluminium, painted, 30" H x 55' L. City of Edmonton



Various artists. Japanese maintenance hole covers. Image via Tsunagu Japan.



Fiona McCargo. Project: Division Gateway, University District, Spokane, WA. Custom 4' x 8' tree grate, raw cast iron. Commissioned by: Spokane Arts.



Buchart Horn Architects and Engineering. Locust 6' Dia. tree grate installed with 12" trench arrayed on various radii. Etna, PA.

4. Community Centre Pedestrian Area



About:

The Crosby Community Centre driveway that connects to Main Street is set to be redeveloped as sidewalk and a pedestrian-only space as an add-on of the revitalization project. Currently the space hosts numerous benches and plantings. There is opportunity for the public art team to work with the City of Markham's appropriate departments to further develop a vision for the space. In our sessions it became clear that there is desire to create a larger vision and rethinking of how this space operates, with further conversations needed with regards to the Cenotaph placement.

Commission Opportunities:

Through our conversations, we heard excitement around public art supporting the creation of a gathering place. It is recommended that the public art team work with the City to help determine the vision for the site and work to further define the public art opportunities. There is the possibility that public art can create seating and plantings as well as support the creation of a new prominent public space at the entrance of Main Street. Artist-designed benches and/or bike racks are also of interest for this space.

Key Opportunities:

- New pedestrian only public space
- Creates interest, potential for creating a gathering space
- Ability to host benches and/or bike racks designed by artists
- Potential for larger standalone work as there is more footing space than in other areas along Main Street
- Could support wayfinding, a meeting spot

Site Images:**Public Art Precedents:**

Laara Cerman, The Frasers (series of bike racks), Surrey, BC



Bike Plants. City of Toronto: Artist-Designed Bicycle Stand/Lock-Up Multiple Artist Team: Marianne Lovink & Scott Eunson Toronto. 2011-2012.



Scott Eunson. Bench. St James Park Toronto. 2022



Brian Jungen, The ghosts on top of my head. 2011.



Nadia Myre, Dans l'attente....While Waiting. 2019.

Georgia Dickie. Listening Ears. CorTen steel. 2019.

Other sites were explored, but were deemed to be less feasible by the Public Art Curator, these sites include:

- Area by Unionville Train Station: Metrolinx has oversight of land up to 30 feet from its infrastructure (the railway tracks) which could lead to a difficult approvals process with an uncertain outcome
- Main Street and Victoria Street (the north east corner across from the gazebo): small and shallow site due to underground utilities and infrastructure

Recommendations and Next Steps

The following recommendations are informed by our research, key observations and a synthesis of what we heard during our Stakeholder Interviews and Stakeholder Group Sessions. These recommendations act as a foundation for supporting next steps in the implementation of public art at Main Street Unionville as well as providing suggestions for how public art can continue to integrate within the public realm.

1 Develop a curated program for Main Street Unionville consisting of integrated, permanent and temporary projects that are thematically linked.

Creating a curatorial vision, or theme, in which all artworks in the program are linked will ensure a cohesive and connected experience. This will ensure cohesion and deliver a rich experience for the participant/viewer.

- This program may utilise all or some of the sitings listed above depending on budget allocation and needs
- The scale of commissions may vary depending on budget, typology, City priorities, etc.

2 Prioritise defining specific sites for public artwork commissions along Main Street

By harnessing the timeline of CIMA's work, and lining up with the construction schedule to maximise efficacy, the public art team is recommended to:

- Define site priorities and surfaces for installations by the end of 2022 with special consideration given to urban density and the relationship between amenities and utilities within the visual landscape
- Provide a detailed design brief by February 2023 to CIMA which includes: surfaces, scale and size, heritage parameters, material application, and competition process
 - This will also provide opportunity to define the overall program budget and project budgets within the program

3

Establish a selection process and launch in Spring - Summer, 2023

Define the selection process for each opportunity in the program.

In keeping with industry best practices, it is recommended that the commissioned components of the art program be selected through a competitive process, either through open call or invitation (e.g. open competitive process with a Call to Artists and Interview Stage, concept development by selected artists).

For temporary works or programming, curatorial oversight to include a combination of open or invitation competition

it may be beneficial for curatorial oversight to include a combination of open or invitational competition as well as curation through direct invitation.

Informed by our conversations with the Public Art Curator, it is recommended to launch this selection process in Spring/Summer 2023, following the construction tender timeline.

4

Continuously engage stakeholders (Internal, Heritage Markham, and Community) throughout the process

This program has tremendous potential to support interpretation, education and engagement with contemporary public art within the City of Markham. Building and sustaining trust among project stakeholders will be critical to maintaining the success of the project.

Recommendations include:

1. Regularly updating the stakeholders who were engaged in this process, including project team members, Heritage Markham Committee and the greater community
2. Regularly meeting with internal team (Public Realm, Engineering, Heritage Markham, etc.) to forecast and brainstorm future opportunities
3. Continuing to shape current opportunities at Main Street Unionville (Crosby Community Centre)
4. Sharing and providing updates on departmental projects to ensure education and communication
5. Continuing engagement with the Heritage Markham Committee to understand and meet their evaluation and review processes

This is an opportunity to build support for public art at Main Street Unionville and for future public art projects at the City of Markham.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Case Studies

PERMANENT PUBLIC ART

***Shift*, Carl Taçon, 2008**



Shift, with its 20 individually carved marble sections of drapery, balances classical imagery with a contemporary pictorial experience. The artwork is used to delineate the property line of One St. Thomas Street, Toronto and is deliberately fragmented to give the work a cinematic effect. The classical imagery references the building directly across from it (i.e. columns) and its slight angle upwards allows it to be viewed by those on street level as well as those residing in the condominium.

Process

Shift was commissioned through a private developer to create a more aesthetically pleasing functional wall (privacy barrier). Prospective artists were given the wall as a site and invited to come up with a concept for the integration of artwork. While the base of the wall was built as part of the general contract, the marble came in the artist agreement later on. The artist budget paid for the artwork, not all infrastructure.

Timeline

The retaining wall was built with the marble element defined in the artist agreement and

installed afterwards.

Materials

A concrete functional wall with twenty (20) individually carved marble sections of drapery totalling 136 feet in length.

Budget

~\$350,000 (2008)

***Stolpersteine*, Gunter Demnig, 1996 - Present**



The *Stolpersteine*, literally meaning 'stumbling stones' is a decentralised memorial project founded by German artist Gunter Demnig to commemorate victims of Nazi extermination or persecution. Unlike many other memorials that focus on one persecuted group, the project honours all of those who experienced persecution. Each 10 cm brass stone is inscribed with the inscription "Here Lived", followed by the victim's name, date of birth, and fate. The stone is embedded in the street in front of the door at their last chosen residence. As of 2019, there are over 70,000 blocks laid in more than 1,200 cities and towns across Europe and Russia, all part of the largest decentralised memorial project worldwide. The project was conceived of by Demnig in 1992 with the first stone installed in 1996. Despite the success of the project, it largely remains a grassroots initiative, often with local community members researching and raising funds for the €120 stone.

Process

The *Stolpersteine* are permanent artworks inlaid into pre-existing streets, often cobblestone, in front of buildings that were the last freely chosen home of the individual they memorialise.

Timeline

The project was conceived of in 1992 with the first stone laid in 1996.

Materials

Stone cube with a brass plate handcrafted and engraved by Friedrichs-Friedländer (since 2005 when Demnig could no longer handle the scale of the project on his own).

Budget

€120 per stone

***Bus Shelter IV*, Dennis Adams, 1987**



Dennis Adams' site specific public installations combine his often used approach of photography and architecture. Each installation in his *Bus Shelter* series focuses on a specific theme that examines and investigates historic events from our collective visual memory and examines our perception of these events as influenced by the media. The series started in 1983 with the most recent iteration in 2018 appearing in cities around the world. *Bus Shelter IV* was conceived for the Skulptur Projekte 1987, an exhibition of public sculptures held in Münster, Germany every 10 years. While the multi-paneled structure resembles a bus stop, the benches are on the front and back. Light boxes, referencing the presentation of advertising imagery are filled with historical photographs from the Nazi era during a time when Germany is coming to terms with its history. The imagery faces outwards, the viewer faced with imagery from the trial

of SS war criminal Klaus Barbie. The mirrors serve to 'question the spectators' relationship to both the city and German history'.

Process

Part of an artist series of "functional" bus shelters that was commissioned and envisioned for Skulptur Projekte 1987 in Münster, Germany. Originally the artwork was installed on Domplatz close to Westfälisches Landesmuseum, when the artwork was acquired by LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur it was installed at the Aegidiimarkt A / LWL-Museum, Johannisstraße bus stop.

Timeline

Installed post-construction, not in relation to a construction project. Due to the nature of its construction it has been relocated to numerous sites.

Materials

All of Dennis Adam's *Bus Shelter's* are functional architectural steel constructions, offering protection from the elements, as well as seating. *Bus Shelter IV* also contains historical photographs installed in light boxes along with mirrors.

Budget

Unknown

INTEGRATED PUBLIC ART

Peeled Pavement, Jill Anholt, 2015



Peeled Pavement was developed in collaboration between Vancouver-based artist Jill Anholt and the Planning Partnership Department of the City of Toronto. The artwork was built as an integrated feature of the public realm design for Mill Street located within the historic Distillery District, Toronto. The artwork punctuates the sidewalk, tearing at the urban fabric to reveal an underside of industrial artefacts cast in bronze. While operating independently as a work of art, *Peeled Pavement*, also serves as street furniture. Exposing the layers and systems of the site, the piece links history to the renewal of life in the present with growth envisioned for the public realm of the future.

Process

The concept of the work was developed by Anholt who worked in collaboration with the City of Toronto's public realm team. The artist was contracted to supply and install the isolated piece of art.

Timeline

The artwork was completed in tandem with the construction of the street with the bronze and glass elements installed towards the end of the construction process.

Materials

The underground construction was in the construction tender and wider construction budget. Bronze and glass elements were installed later in the process towards the end of completion.

Budget

~\$300,000 (2015)

MOTH Gardens, Jeannie Thib, 2006



MOTH Gardens, located within the Downsview Memorial Parkette (North York), was commissioned by the City of Toronto in 2006. The work is an ode to the location's history of aviation - Gypsy and Tiger Moths were the first aeroplanes manufactured at Downsview. The work is inspired directly from an aerial photograph from the 1920s featuring the word 'MOTH' written in large white letters close to the old airstrip. The work consists of numerous parts: stone sections of various heights which serve as tables and seating (which form the letters M,O,T,H when seen from above, a steel arbour which incorporates aircraft references, a row of windsocks, and a grassy "airstrip" that cuts through the centre of the park. Each letter of the sculpture is surrounded by a unique garden: rose, flowering annual, scented herb and butterfly garden with nods to Italian Renaissance gardens, in recognition of the Italian immigrants who first came to the area, along the walkway.

Process

The artist worked collaboratively with Scott Torrance, Landscape Architect, in an artist-led design process. As the project was larger in scale, considerable collaboration and discussion between the culture division and the parks department.

Timeline

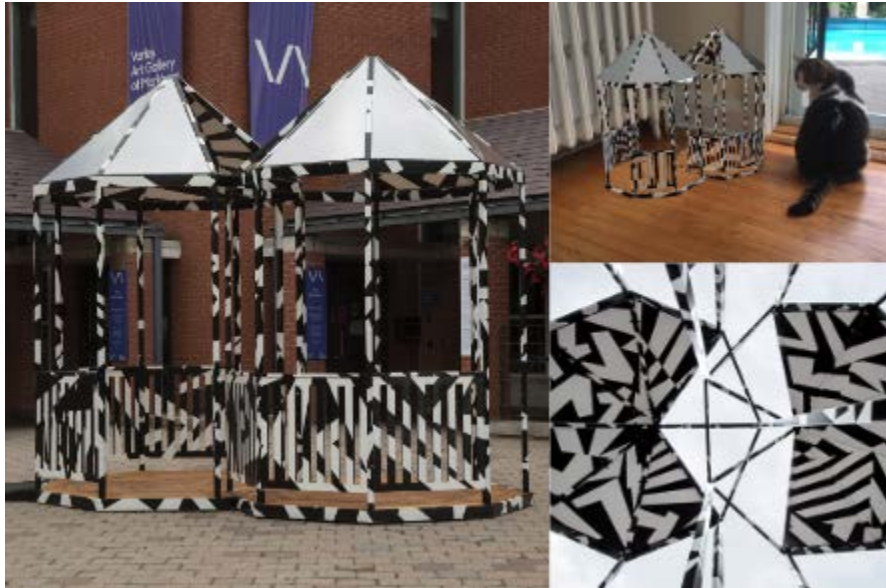
The artwork was completed in tandem with a larger construction schedule. The project was first tendered as a park, with the marble and limestone sculptural elements being installed towards the end.

Materials

Stone sections of varying heights, serve as tables and seats, forming the letters "M,O,T,H" when viewed from above.

Budget

~\$450,000 (2006)

TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART***Double Gazebo, Native Art Department International, 2021***

Double Gazebo (Markham) was commissioned by the City of Markham in 2021 as a temporary public artwork presented in partnership with the Varley Art Gallery of Markham. The work was produced by Native Art Department International (NADI), a long term collaboration between Maria Hupfield and Jason Lujan. The sculpture, presented in the Varley Art Gallery of Markham's courtyard, consisted of two intersected structures modelled after the traditional gazebo. The work explores broader themes of 'social spaces and exchange, interaction and land use'. Installed in public space, *Double Gazebo* offers partial shelter for visitors - the construction of an indoor/outdoor space fostering 'an interaction between the concept of space and occupation'. Referencing the well-known historical gazebo installed only a few blocks down on Main Street, NADI's work intentionally defies what preconceived notions of art and design elements are expected. They question not only what is expected of the artwork, but of themselves as Indigenous artists, calling into question the notion of 'categorised aesthetics'. In conjunction with the physical structure, NADI programmed a series of online activations, *Walk East for Sun Rise Walk West for Sunset*. Each activation employed a different theme – "With ARs, With Artists, With Movement, With Sound, With Star Knowledge". The online presentation was conceptually related to the work while simultaneously addressing the need for social distancing during COVID-19.

Process

The City commissioned NADI to create a temporary installation in partnership with the Varley Art Gallery of Markham.

Timeline

The temporary public artwork was installed from June 26 - November 28, 2021, with online activations programmed for the 1st of every month (July - November).

Materials

Two intersected structures modelled on a traditional gazebo (11 feet in height). The installation offered partial shelter while simultaneously acting as a platform for shared experiences. Online activations included multimedia components including AR.

Budget

\$30,000

The Evolution of God, Adrián Villar Rojas, 2014-2015

The Evolution of God was the second artwork developed and commissioned by the High Line for the Rail Yards, the last section of the park to be developed and open to the public. A series of 13 concrete and clay abstract sculptures were conceived of and built by Adrián Villar Rojas and left to disintegrate, converse with, and ultimately return to nature - mimicking the process of decay the High Line experienced before its revitalization. The post-industrial looking concrete sculptures were scattered along the trail, each one punctuating the natural landscape with its own unique composition of materials. A mix of natural (dirt and seeds to encourage decay throughout the seasons, contributing to the wild landscape of the High Line, etc) and less

perishable items (bones, old sneakers, rope, oyster shells, etc) were mixed into the concrete giving each two (2) tonne cement cube a unique appearance designed to crumble over time.

Process

Commission for the High Line at the, then newly opened, Rail Yards spread along the pathway.

Timeline

Installation of the works occurred over five (5) weeks from July - August with a crew of fourteen (14) people. The works were designed to be installed for roughly a year giving way to new living sculptures each season.

Materials

Thirteen (13) - 46 x 46 x 46 two (2) tonne cement cubes embedded with rope, shoes, seeds, clothing, etc. The materials were chosen to crumble over time, a process exacerbated by exposure to seasonal weather, while increasingly incorporating organic materials (seeds, grass, etc).

Budget

~\$200,000 USD (2014)

Augmented Reality in the Village of Islington, Arts Etobicoke, 2021



Commissioned by Arts Etobicoke, as part of a year-long grant with ArtWorxTO, *Augmented Reality in the Village of Islington* was a year-long project designed to combine Augmented Reality (AR) technology with the power of storytelling. In collaboration with four leading artists, Philip Cote, Susan Blight, Collette Murray, and Luke Garwood, the goal of the project was to share local

stories from the community. Told through the lens of the commissioned artists, the works emphasised New Canadian and Indigenous voices. Using the preexisting historical murals by John Kuna as a base, AR technology was used to overlay the mural with a new narrative, one that more accurately reflects those that live and work in the community. The project also engaged community artists Ashley Beerdat, Karun Ramani, Shabnam Afrand, Aitak Sorahitalab, Natalie Very B, and Akshata Naik.

Process

The work was commissioned by Arts Etobicoke from a year-long grant as part of ArtWorxTO. A large incentive for the work was to diversify the narrative and create a more accurate representation of the Islington community.

Timeline

The collaboration on the project spanned over one (1) year.

Materials

AR technology using the 'Large App' was used to overlay a new narrative on the existing historic murals painted by John Kuna. "Art is Here" stickers were positioned on the sidewalk to highlight the opportunity for art.

Budget

\$100,000 (2021)

Ogimaa Mikana, Susan Blight and Hayden King, 2013



Ogimaa Mikana, is a collaborative project between Susan Blight and Hayden King dedicated to the reclamation of space through the restoration of Anishinaabemowin place-names. Blight and

King research the history of the place and what the Anishnaabe have called it, renaming it as an act of centering their language and “asserting that Anishnaabe people are here”. Executed in an extremely visual way, the project started in 2013 along Queen Street where they renamed Toronto street signs ‘Ogimaa Mikana’ for the women leaders of the Idle No More movement. Stickers recreating the Toronto signs were made by artist Julia Hepburn and placed over the English ones. Through the Ontario Arts Council, the project received funding for a later installation that included billboards and eventually expanded to North Bay, Thunder Bay, Barrie and Peterborough. The project was so warmly received that in 2016 an official collaboration with the City of Toronto was forged and official street signs bearing both languages were issued in the Dupont area by the Castle Business Improvement Area.

Process

Acts to restore the erasure of Anishinaabemowin place-names, including stickers over street signs, plaques and billboards. The project received funding from the Ontario Arts Council for the billboard campaign and in 2016, through community support, a collaboration with the City of Toronto.

Timeline

The project started in 2013 along a small section of Queen Street and has expanded to billboards in the GTA, Peterborough, Barrie, North Bay and Thunder Bay. The official collaboration with the City of Toronto and Ogimaa Mikana was established in 2016.

Materials

Temporary stickers placed over existing signs and plaques. Later iterations included billboards and official street signs. billboards, official street signs.

Budget

Unknown

Appendix B:

Main Street Unionville Public Art Program Community Workshop

Synthesis Report 12.08.2022

Following the completion of the draft Public Art Direction report, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd planned a one hour virtual community engagement session with the public titled *Main Street Unionville Public Art Program Community Workshop*. In collaboration with the City of Markham, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd led active outreach to communities, through promotions, and communications. The session was facilitated on December 7, 2022.

This document synthesizes our conversations with participants and presents key takeaways.

By The Numbers

30/30	20	68
Total sign-ups for the workshop	Total attendees	Total number of responses during session

The agenda of the session was as follows:

Introductions + Goals for Today	4 mins
Icebreaker Activity	4 mins
Overview of Research + Process	2 mins
Public Art at Main Street Unionville	13 mins
Activity: Inspiration for Public Art	27 mins
Final Thoughts and Wrap-up	10 mins

The goals for the session were:

- To share our findings and an approach for public art at Main Street Unionville
- To present some of the siting opportunities for public art

- To listen and learn from community members about themes and stories that can be explored through public art
- To discuss what types of arts experiences resonated with the community

Format and Facilitation Approach:

The session engaged the public by creating a dialogue on the future of public art at Unionville, using the interactive tool Mentimeter. We built in ample time for thoughtful discussion around Unionville's identities, stories, and themes to be explored through public art.

We had two facilitators for the workshop, one leading the facilitation, the second focused on note taking. Additionally, we created moments for the Director of the Varley Art Gallery to share information about the direction for public art at this site. We created share-back opportunities throughout the workshop, encouraging participants to 'unmute' their microphones and expand on their answers creating more depth in their responses.

Overwhelmingly, the participants were very interested, brainstormed thoughtful comments and asked questions throughout the session.

Icebreaker:

The icebreaker activity was an opportunity for participants to test out the facilitation tool Mentimeter and input their answers. It was also designed to learn more about who was participating in the session and how they describe Unionville.

The prompts included:

- ***Tell us about yourself***
 - I live in Unionville - 31%
 - I work in Unionville - 23%
 - I live in Markham - 23%
 - I live in the GTA - 23%

In three words: If Unionville were a person, how would you describe them?

Using the word cloud tool in Mentimeter, The more popular a word is, the larger it appears in the image word cloud, allowing for trending words to stand out. Overall, the tone of the description

of Unionville was positive with words including: *beautiful, historic, quaint, diverse and charming.*

In three words: If Unionville were a person, how would you describe them?

Mentimeter



Wordcloud example of Mentimeter icebreaker activity.

Presentation:

We then presented our research to date and the public art direction that has been defined. This presentation provided an update to community members on the overall process, and created an opportunity for questions.

Community comments re: Public Art Siting Opportunities:

Most of the comments and questions we received about the presentation were around the siting priorities as we've defined them. There was overall, general support for what was presented but there were some sites that participants felt need further consideration including:

- Twogood Pond Park
- The southern end of Main Street (near rail, recycling depot, etc.)
- The Varley courtyard

"[The recycling depot] doesn't really fit into Unionville, there's nothing really aesthetic or historic about it... I think [it could be] a great entranceway"

"At the other end of Unionville is the Varley Gallery and Toogood Pond, those two sites would be a nice bracketing of Old Unionville"

"The Planing Mill is a little isolated on the street and doesn't do well commercially... We should be considering the commercial part of the street as equal to the other parts of the street"

We then resumed the interactive portion of the session with Mentimeter prompts to explore Unionville identity and the potential for storytelling through public art.

Prompts and responses included:

1. Tell us about your Unionville. What are some of your favourite spots along and/or adjacent to Main Street?

- Toogood Pond (7)
- Tony Murphy Park (5)
- Rouge Trail/Trail System (5)
- Striver Mill (4)
- Train Station (2)
- Unionville Library (2)
- Old Firehall (Confectionary) (2)
- Millennium Bandstand and surrounding park (2)
- Top of the Stairs (1)
- Varley Gallery (1)
- Gazebo at Planing Mill (1)

2. What do you wish people knew about Unionville?

- History of the Community and Architecture (4)
- Proximity to Rouge Valley Trail System (including destination for cyclists) (4)
- Varley Art Gallery (2)
- Toogood Pond (2)
- Events (including Jazz festival, LunarFest, Unionville Festival, Breakfast with Santa) (2)
- Indigenous history (before Berczy settlement) (1)
- Future vision (1)
- Good food (1)
- Famous people that grew up closeby (1)
- Art history (1)

3. Based on these sites, what themes, stories and/or histories would you like to see explored with public art?

We have organized the responses into the following categories:

Histories (5)

- Specific people, esp women, minority, indigenous, reflected in the art

- *Natural history (Bruce Creek and Rouge River)*
- *History of the railway*
- *How was Main Street developed in the past?*
- *History, pre settler, settler and more recent*

Diversity + Important Issues (5)

- *Indigenous Connections*
- *Diversity of Unionville*
- *Changing Demographics*
- *Contemporary and current art to reflect newcomers to Unionville*
- *It would be great if the works encourage dialogue and ask viewers to consider important issues*

Natural landscape and adjacent green spaces (3)

- *Information on natural context, flora and fauna*
- *Play off the green space of the Rouge River*
Natural environment

Additional public art suggestions (3)

- *Public art should be about whatever the artist wants and not connected necessarily to Unionville history*
- *Combination of traditional and contemporary*
- *More interactive/temporary art at Millenium bandstand/park site*

Key Takeaways

We have considered the learnings and conversations in the session and have articulated key takeaways to reflect what we heard from community members. It is suggested that these takeaways inform how the commissions are defined and impact future artist briefs for public art commissions at Main Street Unionville.

1. **Showcase diverse voices and create links across past, present and future narratives**

While Unionville remains an attraction because of its heritage designation and history, there was an acknowledgement that there are multiple stories and histories that can be highlighted through public art. In particular, stories of newcomers, minority groups, women, and Indigenous perspectives were brought up. There were conversations around the changing demographics of Unionville residents.

Within this sentiment, it became apparent there was a desire to present ideas across time periods. Participants mentioned pre-settler histories, the balance of contemporary art and heritage, as well as visions for Unionville in the future. There is a possibility for artistic approaches to consider time in a less 'linear' manner.

63% of suggested themes for public art were focused on various histories, diversity and important issues.

In conversation we heard:

"A combination between traditional and contemporary"	"[Themes of] Indigenous connections, early settlers, the current diversity of Unionville"	"[Wish people knew about] the native connection to the land, before the Berczy settlement"
"I am in favour of more contemporary and current art to reflect the newcomers to Unionville"	"Changing demographics over time; Indigenous, colonial, contemporary, etc"	"I think public art should be about whatever the artist wants and not connected necessarily to Unionville history"

2. **Consider themes of the natural environment**

Overwhelmingly, we heard across multiple prompts, a love for Unionville's natural spaces and their environments. The numerous greenspaces along Main Street Unionville, including Toogood Pond Park, Tony Murphy Park, and the Rouge Trail System, were

highlighted as favourite areas and flagged as areas often dwarfed by the area's man made history.

We heard interest in learning about the natural history as well as species of flora and fauna that reside in the spaces. There was support of the direction as defined which articulates possibilities for the natural landscape to be highlighted and for themes about nature to be explored.

59% of participants' favourite spots in Unionville were greenspaces adjacent to Main Street

In conversation we heard:

"Toogood Pond is a jewel and more people should come for a visit"	"For the path connecting to the ravine, would be great to have local animals shown with info about them"	"How close the trail system is"
"Natural history related to Bruce Creek and Rouge River"	"The wider natural context, flora and fauna"	"Play off the greenspace"

3. Re-think sites of interest that often go overlooked

The locations of Toogood Pond Park, the southern end of Main Street (the recycling depot and the area by the train station) as well as parking lots (across from the Varley and a Rouge Valley Trail opening) were brought up as sites of interest for public art. The areas were brought up in a desire to create movement across the length of Main Street, to drive business to under-utilized areas (Unionville Planing Mill), and help encourage beautification of the area (the recycling depot and parking lots).

Overall, there was a lot of interest in redevelopment to increase functionality and aesthetics of all these spaces.

In conversation we heard:

"A parking lot by the Varley, looks really temporary and not pleasing to look at, would love to see it redesigned and it's adjacent to the lovely pond"	"I love sitting on the deck of the Pavillion/Snack Shop by the pond but I feel it's a waste of space. What can we do with that area to make it more attractive and used more?"	"More public art in the parking area between Main Street and the Rouge Valley Trail"
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4. Create experiences through temporary programming

We heard a strong desire around temporary programming and art projects that engage the community, particularly through live performance. There were numerous comments about 'activating' spaces and engaging with the community. There was interest in working with the local community (both artists and in the public art selection process).

In conversation we heard:

<i>"Community engagement through dance"</i>	"More interactive, temporary art at Millennium Bandstand/park site. In winter would be a great site for light installation so people can continue to come to street"	<i>"Art that somehow includes community engagement/contributions"</i>
<i>"What about incorporating the live arts?"</i>	"I like the mural that was recently added to the Varley. I'd love to see more projects like this!"	<i>"Activate Varley courtyard more with art to invite people into the gallery space"</i>