



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of June 27, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** May 9, 2019
From: Kerri Moore, Head of Business and Community Relations
Subject: Johnson Street Bridge and Bastion Square Public Art Report

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Decline proceeding with the Orca Project in Triangle Island.
2. Approve the Welcome Pole request from Bastion Square Revitalization Association funded by the funds held in trust for the Bastion Square Revitalization Association.
3. Direct staff to hold a new design competition funded from the \$250,000 public art budget within the Johnson Street Bridge project.
4. Direct staff to relocate Commerce Canoe to Triangle Island.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update to Council based on new information received regarding public art for Triangle Island and Bastion Square. Staff are proposing new solutions for Council's consideration to advance and maximize public art opportunities in key downtown locations while finding cost efficiencies and completion of these projects in a timely manner. Several emerging issues and opportunities informed the recommendations in this report.

On December 14, 2017, Council approved the Orca project designed by the City's Artist in Residence Luke Ramsey and Indigenous Artist in Residence Lindsay Delaronde for Triangle Island. The steel from the old Johnson Street Bridge was provided to the artists as an option for consideration, however, the steel did not fit the artistic vision proposed by the artists.

The total budget for the Orca Project is \$250,000 funded from the Johnson Street Bridge project. Upon approving the design concept, the next step is a detailed cost analysis to ensure the project is feasible. Staff received multiple cost estimates from qualified professionals to estimate the fabrication and installation of the Orca artwork. All estimates exceeded the approved \$250,000 budget in the magnitude of \$100,000 to \$200,000 over budget.

During the cost analysis phase for the Orca project two emerging issues arose.

First, in January 2018, a petition with 800 signatures supported the creative re-use of steel from the former Johnson Street Bridge and a request to hold a new design competition. The petition and design jam hosted by the Victoria Design Nerds also recommended engaging the community through participatory design jams, reviews and other fun and creative ways to involve the public in the project.

At the 24 May, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council directed staff to report back with opportunities, implications, and a potential budget of holding a design contest to creatively re-use the steel in the public realm. Council referred this motion to staff as well as to the Art in Public Places Committee (AIPP). There was strong support from the Committee for a legacy project related to the 'Blue Bridge' and interest in further public art integration in and around the bridge site. Opening the competition to one or multiple sites and considerations for playful, interactive, digital, and multi-sensory experiences were recommended by the AIPP.

Secondly, the Bastion Square Revitalization Association (BSRA), engaged the City regarding the opportunity to host a carving shed in the Square during the summer market, with the desire to raise a Welcome Pole at the end of the market season. Preliminary analysis indicated this would likely require relocation of the Commerce Canoe designed by Illarion Gallant in 2007.

Based on the feasibility analysis of the Orca Project, the desire by a community group to hold a new design competition, and the request to raise a new Welcome Pole and relocation of Commerce Canoe, staff recommend a creative approach that satisfies the City's goal to enliven and beautify the public realm, while being prudent with the financial implications of these decisions.

PURPOSE

To update and seek Council direction based on new information received regarding public art for Triangle Island and Bastion Square.

BACKGROUND

Orca Project in Triangle Island

At the April 13, 2017 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council approved awarding the commission to the City of Victoria's Artist in Residence Luke Ramsey and Indigenous Artist in Residence Lindsay Delaronde, as the artists for this project, with a project budget of up to \$250,000 currently allocated within the Johnson Street Bridge project budget. The triangle green at the intersection of Pandora Avenue, and Johnson and Wharf Streets was selected as the site to base the design concept. The Orca concept was approved by Council at the Committee of the Whole meeting on December 14, 2017.

Based on the initial design concept received by the artist Luke Ramsey, the next phase of the project was to undertake a more detailed cost analysis to ensure the project was feasible. Staff recently received three Class D cost estimates from third-party firms with all estimates projecting the Orca Project would exceed current budget of \$250,000. The Class D Estimates did not include an artist fees, audio visual component or a contingency to complete the project. Staff project a total budget of just under \$500,000 with a higher contingency factor based on the current design concept. More detailed design and construction drawings are needed to provide a more accurate cost estimate.

The design and implementation of the proposed Orca artwork and the landscaping elements within Triangle Island were integrated and interconnected. As such the construction of the plaza and installation of landscaping in Triangle Island is waiting for the final direction on the public art. Should the public art for Triangle Island change, the landscape design would be required to be updated to reflect, showcase and integrate with the new public art piece. It is important that the design of the landscaping and artwork be seamlessly integrated from the outset to achieve a cohesive, singular open space design for this prominent location. Funding of \$291,000 is available to complete the civil work and construction of the Triangle Island plaza currently allocated within the Johnson Street Bridge project budget. This is above and beyond the \$250,000 public art budget line for the Johnson Street project.



Site Concept: Orca Project

Bastion Square Welcome Pole Request and Relocation of Commerce Canoe



Over the last few months, the Bastion Square Revitalization Association (BSRA) has been in discussion with the City and stakeholders regarding a pole carving project and a request for a new Welcome Pole installation in Bastion Square. The goal of the project is to provide an opportunity for visitors and residents to learn more about the Lekwungen People and local traditions and customs, and the significance of this site to local First Nations.

The Pole would be carved throughout the summer during the Bastion Square Summer Market season by Tom LaFortune and members of his family. Tom is a member of the Tsawout First Nation who has connections to several families whose ancestral lands are in the southern part of what is known as Vancouver Island. He finished his first carving when he was 11 years old. In the years that followed, Tom has carved masks, rattles, paddles, dishes, talking sticks, single figures and countless totem poles. Today his work is distinguished by its fluidity and refined use of colour.

The design envisioned by the carver Tom LaFortune tries to bring together a shared past. Victoria today is home to all of us. Tom's design incorporates both the traditions of his people and a representation of those who came more recently. It is about cross-culture, sharing, and becoming one. As in times past, the central figure is the village elder with his talking stick facing the sea who will give future visitors, on behalf of all of us, a welcome to Victoria. The pole would be sited near the entrance of Bastion Square at Wharf Street where the Commerce Canoe is currently located.

The BSRA has received verbal confirmation from the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations of their support for this project.

The letter also requests a relocation of Illarion Gallant's Commerce Canoe from Bastion Square to another site to make space for the Welcome Pole near the entrance at Wharf Street.

Creatively Re-Use Steel Design Competition

A petition was circulated to support the creative re-use of the steel from the Johnson Street Bridge. Over eight hundred signatures supported the idea. The Victoria Design Nerds hosted a design jam to further discussion regarding re-use of the steel within the public realm and specifically discussed Upcycled Urbanism, and how we might memorialize the Johnson Street Bridge by honouring the past and looking to the future in a contemporary way. Twenty five participants, from heritage planners, urban designers, architects, artists and members of the public participated in break-out sessions and rapid jam sessions to generate possible ideas. In summary, the following ideas were proposed:

- Walking tour podcast for storytelling
- Counterweight viewing platform with Blue Bridge railings
- Interactive sculpture with lights, music and green space
- Projecting art, facts and images onto the new bridge
- Laser sculpture hologram of the old bridge
- Beams along a pathway connected to an app telling the story of place
- Memorial benches, picnic tables, planters, light structures, frames.

At the 24 May, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council directed staff to report back with opportunities, implications, and a potential budget of holding a design contest to creatively re-use the steel in the public realm. Council referred this motion to staff as well as to the Art in Public Places Committee (AIPP).

The AIPP Committee recommended an Open Call to Artist or Design Competition with a total budget allocation of \$125,000. Opening the competition to one or multiple sites with considerations for playful, interactive, digital, and multi-sensory experiences, should be encouraged within the competition parameters. There was also a desire and recommendation by the Committee to actively engage the design community and the public at large in the design competition whether through participatory design jams, reviewing and voting on submissions, as well as other fun and creative ways to engage the public in this project.

Further details and information about the Nerd Jam session are attached to this report.



Design Nerd Jam Engagement Summary Excerpt

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Orca Project in Triangle Island

Based on third party Class D cost estimates, the Orca project, will require additional funding or a complete redesign and reduced scoping by the artists to meet the current budget of \$250,000 to move this project towards completion. To complete the remaining hard and soft landscaping for Triangle Island, a decision on public art is required to ensure the above and below ground civil work aligns with the installation and expression of the public art. If a new competition or redesign of the Orca project is proposed for this site, it will delay the entire Triangle Island project until summer and possibly fall of 2020 with cost escalations for materials and labour due to further delay.

To date, the only funding expense for Orca Project is completion of the Class D Cost Estimates. All artist fees to date have been expended from the Artist in Resident budgets. Both Luke Ramsey and Lindsay Delaronde have completed their residencies with the City. Any additional work undertaken by the artists to complete this project would need to be added to the Orca project budget.

Public Art in Bastion Square: Welcome Pole Request and relocation of 'Commerce Canoe'

Based on discussions with the BSRA board, staff are supportive of the proposal to install a Welcome Pole in Bastion Square to honour the Lekwungen people at this significant highly visible location.

The Welcome Pole would be funded from the Bastion Square Public Market Fund. The funding is held in trust towards revitalization of the Square and can include structural improvements and public art considerations. These funds are generated from vendors' fees collected from the Bastion Square Public Market. Currently the City holds \$242,500 in trust. The Welcome Pole would be fully funded from the trust.

In discussion with City staff, the BSRA Board, and the artist Illarion Gallant, the recommendation is to relocate 'Commerce Canoe' due to the close proximity of two artistic vertical elements within the Square. This is to ensure the Welcome Pole is the visual focus in this area. Staff propose moving 'Commerce Canoe' to Triangle Island as the preferred location based on the scale, material use and thematics of the artwork and how it will integrate well into the transitory nature of Triangle Island and its location adjacent to harbour. This would also expedite completion of Triangle Island.



Concept Rendering showing Commerce Canoe at Triangle Island.



Concept Rendering showing Commerce Canoe at Triangle Island

Creatively Re-Use Steel Design Competition

There is strong community support to commemorate the old 'Blue Bridge'. A petition and community design jam session encourages Council to consider a new design competition and consider allowing artists and designers to use the steel from the old Johnson Street Bridge.

As per the staff report by the Engineering and Public Works Department on May 24, 2018, re-use of the steel components for a design competition or directly to an interested party such as artists and designers to create public art, may potentially introduce risks of liability to the City related to the hazards associated with the steel condition and lead paint coatings. A full disclosure of the hazard types in order to quantify any risks could impose additional costs to the City in order to complete hazard and condition assessments of the structure prior to transferring the material.

The City would need to develop a unique selection process and complete a formal condition and risk assessment which would require additional time and administrative effort to complete.

As stated in the May 24, 2018 staff report, the rail bridge steel has significant surface corrosion and is coated in lead-paint, which represents health hazards that will need to be responsibly managed through the disposal process. No detailed estimate or bid process has established a cost to remediate the steel and remove the lead paint, however, a rough estimate of \$20,000 depending on the method of removal, can be assumed. If the City were to direct the steel to a specific interested group, it would likely impose a requirement on the City to develop a unique selection process, and complete a formal condition and risk assessment on the structure, at the cost of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 (an estimate of contractor and staff administrative costs). Transfer of the material directly to an interested party (for public art or other use) may potentially introduce risks of liability to the City related to the hazards associated with the steel condition and lead paint coatings

If Council chose to undertake a Design Competition and re-use the steel, staff would recommend that artist and design teams would need to detail how they would re-use the steel to ensure the City can conduct a thorough assessment and technical review to minimize any liability and risk to the City.

The Art in Public Places Committee recommended \$125,000 to host a Design Competition. This does not include any costs associated with disposal, remediation and administration costs including possible structural assessments that may be required for the steel. The estimate for this work is \$30,000. The total budget to issue a new Design Competition and provide steel from the old Johnson Street Bridge would be \$155,000.

Art in Public Places Committee Recommendation

Staff have had several meetings and correspondence with the AIPP Committee members on this project. Staff provided a full debrief on the public art considerations for Triangle Island and the Welcome Pole proposal. Based on information received, the Art in Public Places Committee recommend the following for Council consideration:

- To not complete the Orca Project and support a new design competition to commemorate the Old Blue Bridge and its history.
- Move the Commerce Canoe piece from Bastion Square to Triangle Island and complete the landscaping details
- Accept and approve Welcome Pole for Bastion Square.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

OPTION 1 (RECOMMENDED):

That Council:

1. Decline proceeding with the Orca Project in Triangle Island.
2. Approve the Welcome Pole request from Bastion Square Revitalization Association funded by the funds held in trust for the Bastion Square Revitalization Association.
3. Direct staff to hold a new design competition funded from the \$250,000 public art budget within the Johnson Street Bridge project.
4. Direct staff to relocate Commerce Canoe to Triangle Island.

This option will allow for cost and time efficiencies by reallocating budget from the Orca project to a new design competition aligning with community input and using existing public art in the City's public art collection to resolve site limitations and constraints within the Triangle Island site.

OPTION 2:

1. Approve additional funding to complete the Orca project in Triangle Island.
2. Approve the Welcome Pole request from Bastion Square Revitalization Association funded by the funds held in trust for the Bastion Square Revitalization Association.
3. Direct staff to report back on site options, detailed feasibility assessment and cost estimate to re-site 'Commerce Canoe' artwork to a new location.
4. As part of the 2020 Financial Plan process, consider allocating \$155,000 to hold a new design competition to commemorate the old 'Blue Bridge' and re-use of the steel.

Additional funding from the Public Art Reserve Fund would be required to complete the Orca project and host a new Design Competition. Allocating additional public art funding from the Reserve would limit future opportunities to complete public art projects such as the Artist in Resident Program, Commute Bus Shelter, and Commercial Alley. The fund would be nearly depleted if this option is chosen.

OPTION 3:

1. Request a revised design concept and scope for the Orca project to meet budget of \$250,000.
2. Approve the Welcome Pole request from Bastion Square Revitalization Association funded by the funds held in trust for the Bastion Square Revitalization Association.
3. Direct staff to report back on site options, detailed feasibility assessment and cost estimate to re-site 'Commerce Canoe' artwork to a new location.

- As part of the 2020 Financial Plan process, consider allocating \$155,000 to hold a design competition to commemorate the old 'Blue Bridge' and re-use of the steel.

Requesting a redesigned design concept may require the artist to consider less durable, aesthetically palatable material choices as well as a significant reduction on size and scope of the sculpture which could greatly impact the overall design and aesthetic of Triangle Island. This may not meet Council or the public's expectations for this scope of competition. Council would need to approve a redesigned Orca artwork which could delay completion of Triangle Island until 2020 or beyond.

An additional \$155,000 would be required from the Public Art Reserve to fund a new Design Competition.

Accessibility Impact Statement

Consultation with the Accessibility Working Group would be included in the project plan to ensure it meets accessibility standards. Art in Public Places Committee and Design Jam participants strongly encouraged the new design competition parameters include a multi-sensory experience for all users.

Impacts to Financial Plan

No impacts to the Financial Plan based on the staff recommendation and keeping within Johnson Street Bridge project budgets for public art and Triangle Island. Currently the Public Art Reserve Fund has \$382,000 for future public art projects. If Option 2 or 3 is selected, the total draw from Reserves would be near depleted to fund future public art projects throughout the city.

2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan

The Triangle Island and Bastion Square Public Art initiative is consistent with achieving outcomes for the following objectives in the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Objective #5: Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City
- Strategic Objective #8: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Section 8: Placemaking

8 (L) That heritage and cultural values are identified, celebrated, and retained through community engagement.

8.37 Support a wide range of opportunities for permanent and temporary art in public and public-private spaces

14.2 Continue to enhance the Urban Core through public realm improvements for pedestrian comfort and enjoyment, such as plantings, lighting, street furniture and art in public places

Section 16: Arts and Culture

16 (A) Victoria is a place where artists are able to thrive and where people from all walks of life enjoy formal and informal opportunities to create and enjoy the arts, culture and entertainment activities

16 (C) That cultural diversity and cultural heritage are celebrated and sustained.

16 (D) That the arts are accessible to a broad diversity of people and groups.

16 (F) That art in public places is supported and enabled as a public good and an expression of community identity.

16 (G) That creativity and cultural development are fostered through public dialogue and lifelong learning.

16.6 Encourage broad access to arts and culture facilities, events and activities for people of all ages, incomes, backgrounds and lifestyles.

16.7 Encourage education, training and informal learning opportunities in the arts, design and culture.

16.13 Encourage and enable community-led public art programs with support from City staff and professional artists.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the feasibility of the Orca project, a desire by the community for a new design competition to commemorate the old Bridge, a Welcome Pole request and site considerations within Bastion Square, staff recommend a creative approach to public art installations that satisfy the City's goals to enliven and beautify the public realm at the same time being prudent with the financial implications of these decisions.

Respectfully submitted,



Nichola Reddington
Senior Cultural Planner



Kerri Moore
Head of Business and Community Relations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


June 17, 2019

List of Attachments

Appendix A: Design Nerd Jam Engagement Summary

Appendix B: Proposal from Bastion Square Revitalization Association