

23 March 2015

Mayor Lisa Helps
City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC
V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing as Chair of the City of Victoria's Art in Public Places Committee concerning the reports of consideration being given to eliminate the public art component of the new Johnson Street bridge.

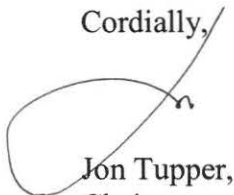
The Committee's work is guided by the Art in Public Places policy. That policy was passed by Council in 2010 and calls for up to 1% of all capital budgets to be dedicated to public art. This follows what is the custom in many municipalities around the world. The initial budget for the public art component for the bridge was \$350,000 roughly .55% of the original budget.

What is troubling is that at the early stages of this project consideration is now being given to eliminating the public art entirely. This will not only be discouraging to the Art in Public Places Committee but the entire arts community. The arts promote and enhance cultural development fostering creative cities and learning communities. The arts employ about 8,200 people locally and generate approximately \$170 million in economic activity. They improve the regions ability to attract skilled workers and provide a competitive advantage as a "destination city" for cultural tourism. Public art in Victoria helps to distinguish our unique identity and are a primary means of public dialogue.

I am deeply disappointed that the current Council is considering a move that will send a clear signal that Victoria places a low priority on the arts. On behalf of the Art in Public Places Committee I would encourage Council to show that it acknowledges the role that the arts play in creating community capacity by making a principles-based decision that acknowledges and supports Council's current Art in Public Places Policy.

While bridges may be beautiful pieces of engineered infrastructure they are not works of art.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Tupper', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Jon Tupper,
Chair
Art in Public Places Committee
jntppr@gmail.com

cc: ProArt Alliance