

KINGSTON VOTES 2026:
Candidate Survey on the Arts and Culture in Kingston

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How do you see the role of arts and culture in Kingston?

I believe arts and culture are essential to Kingston's identity, economy and overall quality of life. They tell the stories of who we are, celebrate our diversity, preserve our history and create spaces where people can connect, learn and feel a sense of belonging. Kingston has a rich cultural history, and our artists, musicians, performers, festivals and cultural organizations contribute to making our city a vibrant place to live and visit. They also support local businesses, attract tourism and create employment. The Kingston Arts Council's reported return of $11.88 in revenue for every dollar invested through the City of Kingston Arts Fund demonstrates that supporting the arts is not simply an expense, but an investment in our local economy.

I believe we sometimes underestimate the role of arts and culture in community wellbeing. Creative expression can support mental health, bring generations together, provide opportunities for young people and help build bridges between communities with different backgrounds and experiences.

As Kingston continues to grow, we need to ensure that arts and culture remain accessible to everyone, not just those who can afford to participate. This means supporting local artists and organizations, protecting affordable creative spaces, encouraging cultural programming in neighbourhoods and ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented. The arts and culture sectors are not an extra or a luxury, they are part of the social and economic infrastructure of a healthy, connected community. As we plan Kingston's future, arts and culture need to be part of that conversation, not an afterthought.



What role should the City of Kingston play in supporting a sustainable arts and culture sector?

I believe the City of Kingston has an important role to play in supporting a sustainable arts and culture sector, not only through funding, but by creating opportunities for collaboration, accessibility and greater visibility of arts and culture throughout our community. The revised City of Kingston Arts Fund framework for 2026 is a positive step, particularly in recognizing the different needs of artists and arts organizations. I would like to see us build on this framework, evaluate its impact and ensure that funding remains accessible to emerging artists, smaller organizations and historically underrepresented communities. Predictable funding is important, but so is helping organizations become sustainable over the long term.

I also see significant opportunities for partnerships. Kingston is fortunate to have institutions such as Queen's University and St. Lawrence College, established arts organizations and a wealth of local creative talent. Could we work more closely together to showcase student and emerging artists, expand artist-in-residence opportunities and bring their work into public spaces? I have seen firsthand what these collaborations can accomplish. A Judith Brown art installation was featured on the exterior of my building through a partnership involving the artist, the City and Queen's University. It brought art into an everyday space where people could experience it simply by walking through the neighbourhood. I would love to see more of this throughout Kingston, on buildings, in parks, along walking trails, in community gathering places and in neighbourhoods beyond downtown. We could also explore partnerships with local businesses and property owners to create more opportunities for public art.

When we speak about arts and culture, I think it is equally important to recognize that culture extends beyond traditional artistic expression. It includes our histories, languages, traditions, celebrations, food, music and the diverse identities that make up our community. As Kingston grows and becomes more diverse, we should be asking whether our residents see themselves and their cultures reflected in the spaces we share. I would like to see more opportunities for Indigenous-led cultural initiatives, multicultural festivals, community storytelling and cultural exchanges that bring people together. This is not about everyone becoming the same, but about creating shared spaces where different cultures are welcomed, respected and celebrated. Cultural



integration should foster understanding and belonging while allowing communities to maintain their distinct identities.

The City can play an important role in facilitating these connections, identifying underused spaces, simplifying processes where appropriate and encouraging partnerships between artists, cultural organizations, businesses, educational institutions and community groups.

I also believe arts and culture should be considered in how we plan our neighbourhoods, develop public infrastructure and support tourism and economic development. We should measure the success of our investments not only through economic returns, but also through participation, accessibility, opportunities for artists and the sense of belonging they help create.

If elected, are there any actions you would take to help strengthen Kingston's arts and culture sector?

If elected, I would like to focus on strengthening Kingston's arts and culture sector through sustainable funding, meaningful partnerships, greater accessibility and opportunities to bring arts and culture into our everyday spaces. My priorities would include:

1. Supporting sustainable and accessible funding: I would support the continued implementation and evaluation of the revised City of Kingston Arts Fund framework, including the new Creation & Development Grants. I would want to understand whether funding is reaching emerging artists, smaller organizations and underrepresented communities, and whether it is keeping pace with the needs of the sector. I would also advocate for transparent reporting on the social and economic impact of these investments.

2. Building stronger partnerships: I would encourage greater collaboration between the City, Queen's University, St. Lawrence College, the Kingston Arts Council, local businesses and community organizations. We have tremendous artistic talent in Kingston, including students and emerging artists who would benefit from opportunities to showcase their work. I would like to explore more artist-in-residence programs,



mentorship opportunities and partnerships that connect artists with businesses and public spaces.
3. Expanding public art throughout Kingston. I would advocate for building on the City's existing Public Art Master Plan and finding opportunities to incorporate art into neighbourhood improvements, parks, community centres, trails and public infrastructure. My experience with the Judith Brown installation on the exterior of my spa demonstrated how successful partnerships can bring art into everyday spaces. I would like to see more opportunities like this, including outside the downtown core. We could explore a program that connects interested property owners with local artists to create murals and temporary installations.

4. Making creative spaces more accessible: Rising costs and limited access to affordable venues can make it difficult for artists and cultural organizations to thrive. I would like the City to explore how existing municipal facilities, libraries, community centres and other underused spaces could be made available for exhibitions, rehearsals, performances and cultural programming. Making better use of what we already have could create opportunities without always requiring significant new infrastructure.

5. Supporting cultural representation and inclusion: I would advocate for more opportunities to celebrate Kingston's diverse cultures through Indigenous-led initiatives, multicultural programming, storytelling, performances and community events. I believe that residents should see their histories, traditions and identities reflected in our shared public spaces. This also means looking at how we can reduce financial and physical barriers to participating in arts and cultural activities, particularly for youth and families.

6. Listening to the sector and measuring outcomes: I would want regular engagement with artists, cultural organizations and residents to understand the challenges they face. I believe we need measurable outcomes, not just in tourism revenue and economic activity, but also in access, participation, employment opportunities and community wellbeing. This information should help guide future municipal decisions.

As a business owner, educator and long-time community volunteer, I recognize that successful initiatives often come from bringing people and organizations together around a shared goal. I would approach arts and culture in the same way, looking for



opportunities to connect people, leverage existing resources and remove unnecessary barriers. The goal would be to help create a Kingston where our artists and cultural organizations can thrive, where our diverse communities see themselves represented, and where arts and culture are woven throughout the city as part of everyday life.

Additional Comments

N/A