

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

Matt McTaggart, District 12 - Pittsburgh
Website: mattmctaggart.ca
Email: matt@mattmctaggart.ca

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

Kingston's arts and culture sector creates immense tangible and intangible benefits for the city. First is the direct economic benefit generated by artists, artisans, and the local ecosystem that supports cultural creation. The arts drive prosperity by producing good, meaningful work that improves the material conditions for a far wider range of people than is widely appreciated.

Of course, the products of creative work are more visible than its processes and enrich our lives in innumerable immaterial ways. Kingston's cultural wealth is the perfect complement to our region's natural beauty, each contributing to our exceptional quality of life.

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

I'd like Kingston to lean further into its identity as a catalyst for creative work. According to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, arts and culture generate $29 in economic activity per dollar of federal support. That extreme return indicates severe underinvestment such that modest additional investment should produce significant value for the city. Besides supporting cash grants, Kingston can help by increasing the number of easily accessible, small to medium scale studio, workshop, practice, and show spaces. We should help to nurture innovation by ensuring that the high risk of failure is offset by a low cost of failure.



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

Yes. I will advocate for additional publicly owned or subsidized art spaces across the city. Wider availability of classes, production studios, practice and performance halls, etc. will distribute the economic and cultural dividends of the arts more evenly for residents.

Visual and performance arts have been the strategic focus for investment, but I will also explore opportunities and venues for functional craft. Each uplifts the other, and vibrant, idiosyncratic markets create anchors that drive traffic into fine art spaces.
I will continue the city's support for the newly implemented City of Kingston Arts Fund framework as required, and support regular artist prosperity surveys to monitor whether the program changes ameliorate some of the financial impediments cited in the project report.

Lastly, I will work hard to bring down the cost of living for all residents. Access to stable housing will be a particular priority. Material security is necessary for sustaining artistic and cultural creation.

Additional Comments

Thank you for doing the hard, skilled work of perception, reflection, refinement, expression, recitation, and all other artistic acts that we rely on day-to-day and that help to make Kingston the deeply human city it is.