

Staff Memorandum



To: Mayor A. Nuttall and Members of Council

Subject and Ward(s): Seeds To Sow Temporary Exhibition Of Public Art – Program Report

Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025

Department Head Approval: S. Schlichter, Director, Economic and Creative Development

Executive Management Approval: B. Araniyasundaran, P. Eng, PMP, General Manager, Infrastructure and Growth Management

CAO Approval: M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update concerning updated information on the impact of *Seeds to Sow*, a temporary exhibition of public art. A summary Impact Report is included as Appendix "A" to this memorandum.

Background

Seeds to Sow was the first large-scale exhibition of temporary site-specific public art organized by the City of Barrie and was on display September 28 to November 8, 2024. The exhibition featured 6 artists and displayed 6 unique art installations as well as a satellite exhibition at the MacLaren Art Centre. Thanks to support from Invest Barrie, the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund (OCAF) and seventeen local sponsors, this exhibition and its programs were free to the public and marketed to audiences within Barrie and beyond, targeting the Barrie-Toronto corridor and the GTA.

Led by staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department with support from Corporate Facilities and Parks Planning, staff worked closely and collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to ensure the free and accessible family-friendly event was a success.

Seeds To Sow Sponsorship & Budget

Council Motion 23-G-122 supported the proposed project budget of \$150,000 with \$75,000 being drawn from the Public Art Reserve and a further \$75,000 to be fundraised by the Barrie Public Art Committee.

A total of \$77,300 in grants, cash and in-kind sponsorship was committed to *Seeds to Sow*. Additionally, a satellite exhibition for this expansive event was included in partnership with the MacLaren Art Centre. An additional \$6,500 was fundraised to support this satellite exhibition in the Carnegie Room.

Key cost drivers of the budget include artist fees, curator fees, artist accommodations, marketing/advertising, and security. The *Seeds to Sow* exhibition was executed within budget.

Event Impact

Tourism Barrie utilized Environics Analytics Mobilescapes data technology to determine the number of unique attendees, both tourists and residents, who attended *Seeds to Sow*. Six of the seven sites were geo-fenced with the exclusion of the Downtown Public Library.

A total of 53,972 unique visitors enjoyed the event over the six weeks. 69,195 (78%) were from within a 40km radius and 11,874 (22%) were from outside a 40km radius, designating them official “tourists”.

Tourism Barrie input this data into Destinations International’s Event Impact Calculator to ascertain the economic impact. Destinations International’s Event Impact Calculator is the leading economic impact calculator software in North America, utilized by over 350 destination organizations. Because of its extensive use and adoption, it provides industry-wide standards and credible data analysis for events.

The Direct Economic Impact (the sum of visitors’ impact on an event) is calculated to be \$1,359,949 and the Total Economic Impact (the sum including indirect, B2B supply chain, and induced income spent in the local economy) totaled \$2,226,509.

Hosting an event of this size and duration with the support of local partners presented an opportunity for the city to showcase itself as a progressive destination for visitors seeking arts and cultural activities. A successful and well-executed site-responsive exhibition like *Seeds to Sow* also instills a deep sense of civic pride among Barrie residents who had the opportunity to experience the city, its landscape, history and future, from a new perspective.

Active participation in the exhibition was offered through opportunities to volunteer, receive mentorship and education about public art, and attend a variety of programs organized by the City and our local partners. Nineteen volunteer docents contributed forty hours of their time over five weekends. Programs included:

- public performance
- public and private guided tours
- guided school tours
- Culture Days partner programs

Marketing Impact

The City’s marketing efforts were bolstered by the \$15,000 contribution from the OCAF grant. This financial contribution allowed for the development of a robust marketing plan and reach audiences within Barrie and Simcoe County and beyond. Due to the nature of the exhibition and the profile of the artists involved, the initiative was marketed heavily in the GTA and through selected print ads targeted at demographics and communities of interest across Canada. Efforts in the GTA included a Metroland campaign, a GO Transit and Union Station campaign, as well as print and radio ads.

The City of Barrie's social media efforts specific to *Seeds to Sow* earned 214,694 impressions, 51,528 engagements, and an engagement rate of 24% (industry standard for municipal government is around 1.5% - 3.2%). For context, the Barrie Airshow earned an engagement rate of 8.2% in 2024.

Hosting *Seeds to Sow* aligned with Council's strategic priority of "Thriving Community" and its goals of continuing to support a vibrant downtown through activations and foster growth in arts and culture.

Appendix:

Appendix A – Impact Report

Memo Author:

Carol-Ann Ryan, Public Art Coordinator, Economic and Creative Development

File #: ECDM5-25

Appendix A



Seeds to Sow – Exhibition Development Timeline

- **May 2023** – BPAC approved a large-scale temporary public art project
- **June 2023** - Staff Report approved by City Council
- **Q3 2023** - Project curator selected
- **Q1 2024** – Artists selected
- **September 28, 2024** - *Seeds to Sow* public opening



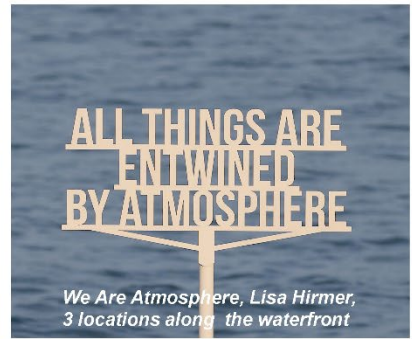
Their horizon was mountain, their distance reveals,
by Derek Liddington, MacLaren Art Centre, 2024



Germinate – Green Man, Ted Fullerton, Allandale Station Park



Unchartered Waters (Kempfenfelt Bay), Lou Sheppard, Lion's Pavillion



We Are Atmosphere, Lisa Hirmer, 3 locations along the waterfront



In Your Place, Amy Bagshaw, Barrie Public Library, Downtown



A New UFO? Adrian Blackwell, Barrie City Hall



East and South Composition, Native Art Department International, Will Dwyer Park

Seeds to Sow – September 27 to November 8, 2024

6 artists and 6 unique temporary public art installations

Germinate – Green Man, Ted Fullerton

Unchartered Waters (Kempfenfelt Bay), Lou Sheppard

We Are Atmosphere, Lisa Hirmer

In Your Place, Amy Bagshaw

A New UFO? Adrian Blackwell

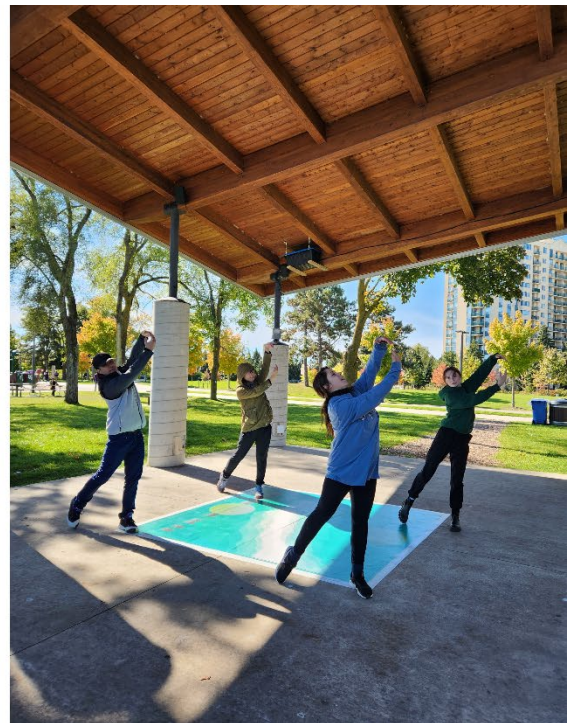
East and South Composition, Native Art Department International

1 satellite exhibition at the MacLaren Art Centre, first time the Carnegie Room had painted walls

Their horizon was mountain, their distance reveals, Derek Liddington

PROGRAMMING

- 1 public opening at the Sandbox Centre
- 1 public performance (by Lou Sheppard)
- 7 private guided tours
- 4 guided public and school tours
- 2 City of Barrie / Culture Days public programs in partnership with Spare Room
- 3 Culture Days partner programs:
 - MacLaren Art Centre –
Seeds of Barrie's Past with Sheresha McIntyre
 - Barrie Film Festival –
So Surreal: Behind the Masks film screening
 - Simcoe Contemporary Dancers -
Discover, Draw, Dance workshop



SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

Impressions (Total times content was displayed/seen)

- **214,694**

Engagements (Total number of actions taken including reactions, comments, shares, 3-sec video plays, and clicks)

- **51,528**

Engagement rate (Total number of actions taken, divided by impressions)

- **24%** - industry standard for municipal government is around 1.5% - 3.2%

Stats pulled on December 5, 2024. Includes organic Creative Barrie X, Facebook, and Instagram posts, and paid City of Barrie Google display ads and Creative Barrie Meta ads (Instagram, Facebook, third party)

WEB PAGE VISITS

Views: 8,660

Google's current definition of "Views": The number of pageviews on a website and screenviews on an app.





Digital billboard ad in Union Station.



MEDIA AND PRESS OPPORTUNITIES:

Rogers TV – *City on the Move with Arif Kahn*: One-hour TV interview

Classical FM: Ten-minute radio interview

CTV: Short interview for nightly news

Art+Publics Newsletter

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- 19 volunteer docents were stationed at outdoor installations on weekends, October 5 to November 3, engaging visitors for a total 40 hours
- The docents distributed exhibition brochures that included a map of the installation sites
 - The brochures were also available at partner sites throughout Barrie including the MacLaren Art Centre and the Barrie Public Library
- The docents spoke visitors about the outdoor installations and documented some visitor feedback



VISITOR EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

- Through a partnership with Tourism Barrie, we used Environics Analytics Mobilescapes and geofencing technology to track individuals exposed to the installations along the exhibition route.
- Total visitors was **155,740** (3,708 / day)
- Total unique visitors was **53,972** (1,285 / day)
 - 78% were residents living within 1-40 KM
 - 22% were visiting from 40+KM ("tourists")
- Direct Economic Impact: **\$1,359,949**
- Total Economic Impact: **\$2,226,509**

VISITOR-DOCENT ENGAGEMENT

- A family from Milton, looking for a weekend activity in Barrie, were pleasantly surprised to find Seeds to Sow. The volunteer stationed at 'Uncharted Waters (Kempfenfelt Bay)' by Lou Sheppard engaged the family of three in the interactive session. They were so surprised this was at no charge, and their son, who was an active four-year-old boy, had so much fun sketching his art with his parents, followed by learning a choreographed dance with the Simcoe Contemporary Dancers.
- A local grandmother, accompanied by her adult granddaughter and partner from Halifax, was so impressed with the waterfront walk that they couldn't help but praise the initiative. They even requested contact information to share this experience with their community in Halifax. The granddaughter, a lawyer involved in public art, was particularly impressed, noting that despite her frequent visits to Barrie, she had never seen such a vibrant artistic and cultural presence.

VISITOR FEEDBACK

"We need more of this."

Nick F. (Moved to Barrie one and a half years ago.)

"Why is it up for only six weeks? I really like nature as the canvas. They are quite impactful and is great for people who may not listen to words and can enjoy the visual. I am originally from Toronto and there is so many buildings and stuff going on so when I do see public art it makes me ask myself what did I just see, and what does it mean. These pieces along the waterfront make a huge difference, not so overwhelming. Even after Lisa Hirmer's sign is gone, her message will stay with me."

Karen W. (from Barrie)

"Seeing the artwork was surprising and delightful and made me step back to the beginning, the idea of life and culture. I hope the seeds planted in us will also work on the city to plant more like this."

Hector O.



