



City Councillor – Ward 17 • Davenport

Date: February 28th, 2013
To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee
From: Councillor Cesar Palacio
Subject: ED20.5 - 2013 Allocation for Arts and Culture

SUMMARY:

I am very pleased to see that additional funds will be directed to the arts through the Billboard Tax giving a number of worthy recipients and initiatives the opportunity to flourish. However, recognizing that the inspiration behind the Beautiful City movement and billboard tax was directly related to concerns about decreasing funding to community arts, I am surprised that the StreetARToronto (StART) program, which is a central part of the City's Graffiti Management Plan and one of the Mayor's priorities, has been overlooked.

As articulated by BeautifulCity, "diversifying and equalizing access to expression in public spaces is a key objective of the plan. The billboard tax was proposed as a way to increase urban beautification, promote community ownership of public space, solve urban problems and help make this city a more beautiful and prosperous place while developing its cultural potential. Recognizing that StART was established as the official street art program of the City of Toronto with the mandate to support artist-driven projects in prominent and strategic locations, I believe that there is an oversight in excluding this program for this funding.

StART has opened street art to Toronto's creativity community and the public, which in turn has led to increased employment for emerging arts, particularly disenfranchised or marginalized youth. Engaging these artists had resulted not only in an improved streetscape, but provided real alternatives to graffiti vandalism. It has had an extremely successful first year and significantly raised the quality of street art in Toronto. With additional funding, it can move beyond a grant program into a fulsome, initiative that can serve as a platform for Canada's largest street art program and a model for using art and creativity as a tool for community development.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Economic Development Committee recommend:

1. That \$200,000 from the six-million dollar Billboard Tax be allocated to the StART program.

Thank you,

Councillor Cesar Palacio
Davenport- Ward 17



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Chair and Members,
Economic Development Committee

Dear Members,

Please accept the attached communication in my absence as I have previous commitments in my ward that could not be rescheduled. Therefore, I would appreciate it if one of the members or the Chair could take carriage of my motion.

The StreetARToronto (StART) program is, a central part of the City's Graffiti Management Plan, one of the Mayor's priorities and would benefit greatly from a small portion of the 6 million dollar Billboard Tax.

Please support my recommendation as the additional funding can move the StreetARToronto (StART) program beyond a grant program into a fulsome initiative that can serve as a platform for Canada's largest street art program and a model for using art and creativity as a tool for community development.

Thank you,

Councillor Palacio
Davenport- Ward 17