

RESPONSE BY: BOLA OTARAKI, COUNCILLOR CANDIDATE, WARD 2 MARKHAM

COMMUNITY / PROMOTION / ACCESS:

What will you do to ensure the general public has greater access to experience and enjoy the arts in your municipality?

1. I will ensure the Arts activities are given maximum publicity and advertising space when an event is occurring
2. I will support the private sector partnering with the arts and culture organisations to lend their support to the arts
3. I will foster relationships that work within the Council and the general public through Community Town Halls and outdoor activities

What is one small concrete example of supporting the arts that you can do on a monthly basis?

One concrete monthly example is to have a monthly “Artist Showcase” whereby we, as Council promote an Artist, or Art Facility with Media coverage of the Artist/Facilities great work. We can sponsor in whatever way that Artist/Facilities work during that month

With many jobs being developed in media arts related fields, what are your plans to ensure talent stays in the region instead of moving to innovative hubs like Waterloo, Vancouver and Silicon Valley?

1. Talent stays where it is recognised, supported and allowed to thrive, develop, do well and prosper.
2. By supporting the local Artists with opportunities to connect with more established Artists through Mentorship programs, job opportunities and “Buddy” programs, the Artists will know they are part of the Community and bond and grow as global leaders of the Art

How will you contribute to growth of the arts in the future for the next generation of artists?

1. Mentoring programs
2. New Artist of the Month programs
3. Artist Showcase through Media programs
4. Exchange programs

INTRINSIC VALUE:

What municipal arts and culture events/programming do you attend and support, and have you purchased work created by local artists?

1. I appreciate Art of every kind (sculpting, Paintings, Interior décor, Film, and Literary Art). I am an avid collector of interesting pieces of art both locally as well as internationally and attend plays, movies and art galleries as time permits

PLATFORM:

In your list of the ten top priorities of your platform, where would supporting the arts place on your list? Why there?

1. Supporting the art is intrinsic in a lot of my top priorities and goes hand in hand with the Economic and Infrastructure development of Markham one of my top 3 priorities

Arts and culture are a barometer of the health of a community, town, or city. How will you profile/give a place to arts and culture in your municipal structure, strategic planning, marketing and reporting of achievements?

The monthly Showcase of local art is one way with Events, Media coverage (including Social Media coverage) of local and international talent

What kind of municipal policy would you propose to encourage artists to be able to work and live in your municipality?

1. If there is no Mentoring program in place yet, I will encourage a Mentoring program where more established Artists can be partnered to learn and grow by buddying up with up and coming artists.
2. Also, a Monthly showcase of an earlier, less known artist will boost that Artist/Facilities profile

SPACE:

How will you ensure that artists in your municipality receive affordable space to create and showcase their work?

1. Through mutually beneficial private sector partnerships where we can engage Corporations, and as part of their Social Responsibility, are encouraged to give back
2. One of my Priorities is ensuring Affordable, decent housing and facilities for the vulnerable. This includes Seniors, Youth, and those who are in need of support. There will be partnerships with local artists to showcase their work in these projects

What would it take for a cultural centre to be created in Markham - an affordable space for creating, collaborating and presenting visual and performing arts?

1. It would need a strong advocate like myself partnering with others who are passionate about making it happen. When we work together with a strong voice, we can see results. Your needs matter! I want to be the voice to let your needs as part of the Markham family be met.

How do you envision the inclusion of local art in the public realm?

New and existing Infrastructure will incorporate local art in the public realm. Tenders will constantly be made and there should be an active pipeline of art ready to be incorporated in the ongoing projects in the public realm

EDUCATION:

Where do you see arts education fitting into your electoral platform - in school programming, health programs and/or community programs?

Absolutely in all these programs! Knowledge is power. We must engage and educate to empower the Markham residents. Private sector partnerships are key with a strong voice in Council.

FUNDING:

Do you believe that it's vital to have municipal granting programs to fund local artists and arts organizations to create and present work in your municipality? If so, how will you advocate for this funding?

Yes, absolutely! It is vital to have Granting programs to fund local artists and art organisations. Funding from the Municipal government will be vying for use with other Municipal programs however Private sector grants that are vetted in consultation with the Community add to the pool of funds at the disposal of the Government. Corporate grants and partnerships are key to advance. By supporting partnerships that work, we can build our community by working together and developing grants and funding through the Social Responsibility divisions of the Corporate organisations in our Community

There is a noticeable gap between arts spaces (studio, exhibition, performing, etc.) for emerging and professional artists in York Region, making it challenging for artists to stay in the area while growing their professions. What do you think the municipality's role is in funding spaces for emerging to mid-career artists?

The Municipality's role is to create an awareness of this gap and broker the partnerships and gather the support to bridge these gaps.

We should cultivate, encourage, grow and benefit from local talent.

Will you implement a municipal budget for arts-based funding for artists living and working in Markham? If so, how? If not, why not?

My responsibility will be to ensure your tax dollars are put to good use and also ensure fiscal responsibility in the allocation of the Municipal budget. With careful examination, any gaps in funding for the Arts will be covered and, new partnerships with the private sector to inject/increase Arts-based funding will be explored

Your Needs Matter! As your Markham Ward 2 Councillor, I will be taking your needs into consideration and working to ensure the City of Markham continues to be a top promoter of local Art and Art Talent.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide responses to your needs.

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