



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
From: Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
Re: **Business Case: Art Gallery Curator**

Date: January 31, 2006
File: 11-7142-01/2006-Vol 01

Staff Recommendation

That Council receive this report for information.

K Sparrow

Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
(4129)

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Budgets		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		<i>[Signature]</i>	
REVIEWED BY TAG		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

At the Council meeting of January 24, 2006 City Council made the following referral:

That staff report to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee with a business case for the 'Curator – Art Gallery' position.

This report outlines the business case for this additional level request.

Background

The current position of Director/Curator of the Art Gallery has become unmanageable for one person.

In its formative years the Richmond Art Gallery (RAG) was largely volunteer driven and managed by a Director. Exhibitions were selected and hung by the Exhibition Committee, a group of volunteers under the direction of the Director. Gradually the curatorial mandate gained maturity and profile, and public and media interest expanded. The RAG came to be recognized as a gallery where emerging artists might find a foothold, mid-career and senior artists might receive acknowledgement of their achievements, and that collaboration with other institutions was possible.

As the gallery grew both in size and profile a Gallery Assistant and a Cultural Programmer were added. The Gallery Assistant is responsible for the administrative business of the art gallery. She arranges for transportation of exhibits; liaises with artists on administrative details; coordinates all promotional materials; manages budgets; prepares artists contracts and any insurance related issues; maintains databases of artists, galleries, media; coordinates all maintenance in the gallery; and assists with special events such as openings and volunteer recognition. The Cultural Programmer is responsible for the development, facilitation, promotion and documentation of educational programming including interactive area, artist talks, workshops, tours, studio visits, summer camps, didactic panels to accompany art work, openings; school partnerships and outreach; community outreach; supervision of staff and volunteers; and promotions of all programs.

In 1998, upon the retirement of the Director who also had responsibilities for the administration of the Cultural Centre, the position was modified to that of Director/Curator of the RAG and the administration of the Cultural Centre was reassigned. The past decade has seen an evolution in the Gallery's curatorial practice and growth in the exhibition publications. The curatorial side of the Director/Curator position took greater responsibility for the research and management of the shows and the Permanent Collection, while still continuing work with the Exhibition Committee and managing the Gateway Theatre and City Hall Galleria exhibitions. A part time Preparatory now works with the Exhibition Committee to install the shows, further contributing to the growing stature of the RAG.

The size of the exhibition space at the Richmond Art Gallery (it is a large exhibition space which can be programmed with up to four exhibitions running consecutively) and the increasing

qualitative improvement has necessitated a need for two positions. Similar public galleries the size and stature of the RAG typically have a Director which fulfills the following functions:

- manage the operation of the gallery;
- conduct fundraising, including grants and sponsorship research;
- work collaboratively with other city departments;
- oversee public relations and program publicity;
- work with the Board to set policy, conduct fundraising, manage governance and finance;
- and,
- supervise staff.

Additionally, a public gallery the size and stature of the RAG would have at least one Curator which fulfills the following functions:

- research, prepare and manage the exhibitions;
- liaise with artists and the arts community;
- work with a community advisory committee to review applications for exhibition and to establish the annual exhibition agenda;
- develop, coordinate and write essays for yearly publications and exhibition specific catalogues;
- work with the Cultural Programmer to evolve educational and audience development programs;
- manage the City's permanent art collection and to place artworks in public buildings;
- and,
- facilitate other outreach opportunities.

Operating funding from external sources such as the Canada Council for the Arts (Department of Canadian Heritage) and British Columbia Arts Council is essential to maintain the operation of the RAG at its current level. This funding is dependant upon maintaining the established quality of the exhibitions including the production of exhibition catalogues and related programming. The development production of these exhibitions and catalogues is dependant upon funding from other sources such as foundation grants, corporate and private sponsorship and donations. Maintaining the current program and all associated responsibilities has become larger than one Director/Curator position can reasonably handle.

Analysis

Decision Criteria

- Maintain current, ongoing funding and increase funding from external sources
- Maintain the high quality of professionally developed exhibitions and related programs
- Continue to provide quality outreach opportunities for local artists at the City Hall and Gateway Theatre
- Improve customer service
- Enhance the tourism potential resulting in indirect economic benefits to the community
- Maintain and utilize the City of Richmond's art collection in a professional manner

Options

1. Hire a full-time Curator
2. Hire a Curatorial Assistant
3. Hire a part-time Curator
4. Provide the Richmond Art Gallery Association with a grant to hire Guest Curators
5. Status Quo

Analysis of Options**1. Full-time Curator (recommended)**

Hiring a full-time curator meets all of the decision criteria listed above. It would allow the Director to spend more time on managing the gallery, working with the Board, and increase efforts in fundraising and raising the profile of the gallery through networking and publicity. The curator would take over the curatorial functions of the gallery spending more time working with artists and the arts community; producing exhibition catalogues and publications and managing the City's permanent collection. They would also manage the outreach exhibitions at City Hall and Gateway Theatre and collaborate with other groups on exhibitions such as the Finn Slough Exhibit (at the Cultural Centre) and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery exhibit. All these outcomes will enhance the tourism potential of the Gallery activities.

Financial –

Capital – Desk, computer, network drop etc.	\$10,000
Annual Operating	
– p.g. 24 (same as Museum Curator)	\$53,350
	<u>\$12,800</u> (fringe)
	\$66,150

2. Curatorial Assistant

The Richmond Art Gallery Association currently has a part time position of curatorial assistant funded by a short term, non-renewable grant from the Canadian Museum Association. This is a more junior, entry level position than a curator. The Director/Curator would continue to give artistic direction to the exhibition programming however, the curatorial assistant would carry out the curatorial functions under that direction freeing time for the Director/Curator to spend more time on the administration of the Gallery. The Assistant would manage the permanent collection and work with outside groups on exhibitions. The Director/Curator would still spend a part of her time setting curatorial direction, working with the Exhibition Committee, and providing supervision to the Assistant.

Financial –

Capital – Desk, computer, network drop etc.	\$10,000
Ongoing – p.g. 15	\$34,100
	<u>8,185</u> (fringe)
	\$42,285

3. Part-time Curator

Hiring a part-time Curator would meet some of the decision criteria laid out. A part time curator would allow the Director to spend more time managing the gallery, working with Board and increase efforts in fundraising and raising the profile of the gallery. The curator would take over much of the curatorial functions of the gallery and manage the outreach exhibitions at City Hall and Gateway Theatre. The permanent collection would still be managed by the Director.

Financial –

Capital – Desk, computer, network drop etc.	\$10,000
Ongoing – p.g. 24 (same as Museum Curator)	
(\$ 28.87 /hr x 56 hrs/pay period x 26)	\$42,035
	<u>\$10,090 (fringe)</u>
	\$51,125

4. Provide the Richmond Art Gallery Association with a grant to hire Guest Curators

The gallery produces 15 to 24 exhibitions each year so the Director/Curator would still be responsible for a percentage of the shows in the gallery and all the outreach exhibitions. The Director/Curator would still make overall curatorial decisions and give curatorial direction as well as spend time hiring and managing the Guest Curators. Guest Curators will not become part of staff team and it would be difficult for the volunteer Exhibition Committee to work with rotating guest curators which change for each show. The Permanent Collection would remain under managed.

Financial –

Capital – Desk, computer, network drop etc.	\$10,000
Ongoing Grant – 10 exhibitions/year @\$5,000	\$50,000

5. Status Quo

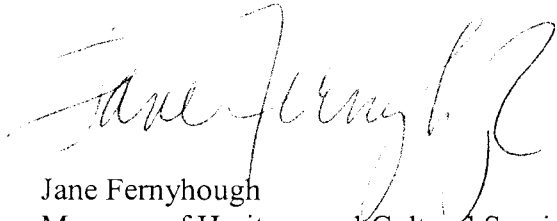
No cost implications although staff will continue to have more work than one person can do in allotted work week. The permanent collection will continue to be under managed and under utilized.

Financial Impact

No financial impact at this time to the recommendation. During the 2006 budget process, Council asked for further information on a variety of additional level requests. If this Committee wishes to further pursue this item, staff suggest a referral to the Finance Committee occur so the item may be considered together with the other items.

Conclusion

As the Richmond Art Gallery has matured and increased its profile in the community and the region the workload of the combined functions of director and curator has become more than one person can manage. Separating the two distinct functions will ensure that Richmond has an art gallery has the capacity to maintain and grow the quality and profile that the community can be proud of and that will attract visitors from the region and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Fernyhough', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jane Fernyhough
Manager of Heritage and Cultural Services
(4288)