



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee  
**Date:** October 13, 2016

**From:** Jane Fernyhough  
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services  
**File:** 11-7000-09-20-229-Vol 01

**Re:** Donation of Bronze Sculpture "The Picnic Basket" by Artist Rhonda Wepler

### Staff Recommendation

That the donation of the proposed bronze sculpture "The Picnic Basket" by artist Rhonda Wepler for installation at Branscombe House, as presented in the staff report from the Director, Arts, Culture & Heritage Services dated October 13, 2016, be endorsed.

Jane Fernyhough  
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services  
 (604-276-4288)

Att. 3

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>  Parks Planning	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>  
<b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>  DW	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>  

## Staff Report

### Origin

On July 27, 2010, Council adopted the updated Public Art Program Policy 8703, which includes policies for the acceptance of private donations or gifts of artworks into the City's public art collection. The Public Art Administrative Procedures Manual provides guidelines for the review and acceptance of donations of public art to the City.

Donations of public art are an invaluable means of adding to the City's public art collection, in the building of the City's public spaces and encouraging citizens to take pride in public cultural expression.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

*Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.*

2.1. *Strong neighbourhoods.*

2.3. *Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.*

2.4. *Vibrant arts, culture and heritage opportunities.*

This report presents for Council consideration a proposed donation by the artist Rhonda Wepler of a bronze sculpture, *The Picnic Basket*, to be installed in a public location near the grounds of Branscombe House.

### Analysis

#### Artist Rhonda Wepler

The inaugural Branscombe House artist-in-residence, celebrated visual artist Rhonda Wepler, is proposing a "legacy" public artwork to remain in Richmond after her residency ends in December 2016. She would like to donate a small bronze sculpture to be sited in a high traffic area in Steveston where people might have picnics. Information on Rhonda's artist-in-residence program is contained in Attachment 1.

#### The Picnic Basket

The artwork will be in the form of a life-sized picnic basket (approx. 19" x 14" x 7") that is overflowing with 50 to 100 life-sized sculptures of small food items such as sushi, dim sum, blueberries and cranberries (Attachment 2). The food items will be cast in bronze directly from sculptures created by Richmond residents that attend free creative activity workshops in the fall, which commenced during the Culture Days weekend, September 30, October 1 and 2, 2016.

The artist describes the work as “a model of Richmond, an abundant bounty and an island . . . reflecting the multicultural aspect of the area and its food.” The idea is for it to be sited as if it were a basket left behind by someone at a picnic.

#### Proposed location

The proposed location of *The Picnic Basket* is in the orchard picnic area, south of the Branscombe House parking lot. In consultation with Parks Planning, the sculpture would be anchored to the new harvest table to be installed in the area (Attachment 3). Installation of the new furniture in the area will commence in early 2017.

#### Procedures for reviewing proposed gifts to the City

The Public Art Program Administrative Procedures Manual provides guidelines for the review and acceptance of private donations. In accordance with these guidelines, this proposed gift was presented to the Public Art Advisory Committee (RPAAC) for discussion on September 20, 2016. RPAAC supported a recommendation to consider the donation of the public artwork *The Picnic Basket* by artist Rhonda Wepler, provided that:

- a) the artwork is assessed on its artistic, environmental, cultural, historical and social merits by an independent review panel before being accepted into the City’s public art inventory;
- b) a suitable site can be identified; and
- c) funds are made available for the ongoing maintenance and conservation of the artwork.

On October 12, 2016, a City appointed review committee composed of Amanda Milne, Richmond artist, Shannon Fitzpatrick, Richmond artist, and Neil McCallum, Richmond teacher, met to consider the proposal. They reviewed the proposal based on the criteria of site, theme, relevance, artistic excellence, physical durability, public safety, environmental sustainability, cost and legal considerations.

The proposal was enthusiastically supported on all criteria. The panel noted the high quality of artistic merit and public popularity of the community artwork by Rhonda Wepler created with community involvement during her tenure as the inaugural Branscombe House artist-in-residence and felt that this additional work by the artist would be an appropriate summation of the project. The panel reviewed the proposed public location for the work and recommends that it be located in the proposed publicly accessible and visible area at the orchard picnic area at Branscombe House.

#### **Financial Impact**

The artist is covering all costs associated with the creation of the work including the bronze and foundry costs. The City would cover the costs of installation, estimated at under \$1,000, and any related installation costs including signage, from funds in the Public Art Reserve. The Public Art Program will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and conservation of the artwork. Funds

would be allocated out of the Public Art Program's annual operating budget. Upon completion, the ownership of the work will be transferred to the City from the artist.

**Conclusion**

Public art animates the built and natural environment with meaning, contributing to a vibrant city in which to live and visit. Gifts of appropriate artworks contribute to and enhance the City's public art collection.

This report presents for Council approval the proposed donation of a bronze sculpture, *The Picnic Basket*, by artist Rhonda Wepler as a gift of thanks to the citizens of Richmond for her warm welcome as artist-in-residence.



Eric Fiss  
Public Art Planner  
(604-247-4612)

- Att. 1: Rhonda Wepler, Artist Background
- 2: Proposed Sculpture, *The Picnic Basket*
- 3: Location at Branscombe House

## **Rhonda Wepler, 2016 Branscombe House Artist-in-Residence**

A celebrated visual artist whose work represents the everyday objects that make up the background of our lives moved into Branscombe House in January 2016 and is providing a year-round program of free public activities and exhibitions around the theme of “details of place.”

**Rhonda Wepler** was selected as the first annual Branscombe House artist-in-residence. During her residency, she will lead free workshops in painting, textiles, sculpture and photography; introduce the community to other visiting artists whom she is inviting to Steveston; and host monthly Open Studio days to provide visitors with a “behind the scenes” look at her own creative process while working on a public sculpture commission.

Born in Winnipeg, the artist has been living and working in San Francisco for the past three years. She holds an undergraduate degree in psychology and fine art from the University of Toronto, and an MFA degree from the University of British Columbia. She makes both collaborative work with Trevor Mahovsky (Toronto) and solo work. She has run community art programs in Canada, England, Scotland, and San Francisco.

Ms. Wepler has exhibited extensively, both nationally and internationally. Her work is represented in public collections including the Vancouver Art Gallery, Hamilton Art Gallery, Musée d’art Contemporain de Montreal, and the National Gallery of Canada. The TransLink-commissioned sculpture Watch Seller (collaborative with Trevor Mahovsky) was recently installed at the Main Street Skytrain station.

At Branscombe House (4900 Steveston Hwy), the Artist-in-Residence resides and works in a studio apartment upstairs. The main floor of Branscombe House remains a space for public programs and available for [rentals](#) (max. capacity 30 persons).

Follow Rhonda Wepler’s residency on her blog, <https://medium.com/@branscombehouse>, and website, <http://rhondaweppler.com/>



Richmond Urban Food Garden Project



*The International Picnic community collaborative mural*



**The Sculpted Feast**



**Mini Richmond Night Market food made of marzipan! Marzipan salmon and octopus! Created by Joey Fok.**

**Proposal for a Public Artwork Donation**  
***The Picnic Basket* by artist Rhonda Wepler**

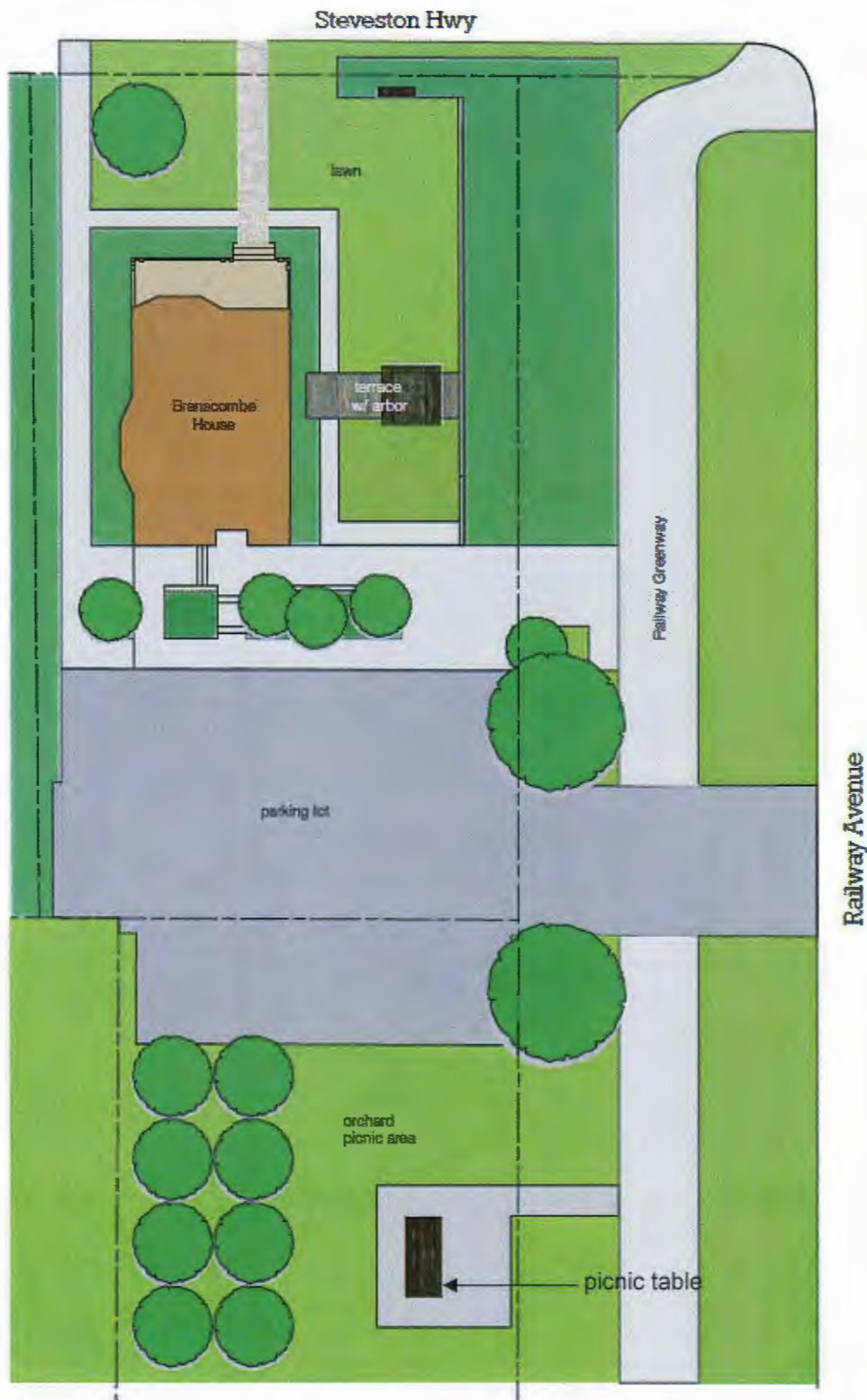


*Artist sketch of the artwork, in the form of a life-sized picnic basket (approx. 19" x 14" x 7") that is overflowing with 50 to 100 life-sized sculptures of small food items such as sushi, dim sum, blueberries and cranberries.*



*Sculpted apple and fly by the artist*

### Community Picnic Table Location at Branscombe House



*The Picnic Basket to be located in the Orchard Picnic Area, south of the parking lot on either the Picnic Table or the Wood Bench*