

**BCBF - Updated Guiding Document V3.4**

**Prepared by**

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**Prepared for**

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May 10, 2007

**ALLIANCE APPROVED**

411 Initiative for Change

Arts & Contemporary  
Studies Student Union

Artsvote

Centre for Integral  
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Manifesto

Mural Routes

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Regent Park Focus Youth  
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Rhythmicru

Spacing Magazine

Style in Progress

The Remix Project

The Gladstone Hotel

The Faculty Of

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Toronto Arts Council  
Foundation

Toronto Youth Cabinet

Urban Arts

Youth Action Network

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – BCBF**

**V 3.4**

The Beautiful City Billboard Fee (BCBF) would see a minimum of six million dollars gathered annually from a fee on billboards. Revenue would be directed into public art, with a priority put on marginalized communities and youth art. According to a Pollara Poll, only 15% of Torontonians are against such a fee.

Through an annual license fee, paid for by the operators of third-party outdoor advertising -- proceeds will be distributed by the Toronto Arts Council. Objectives of the BCBF include:

- Urban beautification & employment for artists
- More funding for tracking & policing billboard advertisers
- Diversifying access to public communication
- Helping move Toronto towards a pedestrian friendly aesthetic
- Promoting community ownership of public spaces

According to a survey conducted for the BCBF Alliance by Pollara in 2005:

- 66% of Torontonians support the idea of charging a fee to billboard advertisers to fund more public art
- 60% of Torontonians think that their city would be more beautiful with fewer billboards
- Only 11% of Canadians overall, and 15% of Torontonians would be against such a fee

Them.ca has been pushing this issue forward since the *Culture Plan for the Creative City* consultations were held in 2003. Since then, the project has commissioned public opinion polls, conducted a postcard campaign, created a popular website, been covered in multiple national and international publications, conducted a media event at the Harbourfront Centre and assembled an alliance of over 27 members. The proposal was accepted for review by Mayor Miller's office on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Municipal Licensing Standards received the proposal on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2006.

The BCBF will help provide the means to renew, map and celebrate urban communities through creative expression.

**Thank you for your time in considering this critical quality of life issue!**



MANIFESTO

them.ca

spacing

MuralRoutes



torontodartscouncil foundation

STYLE IN PROGRESS



regentpark.tv



GLADSTONE HOTEL



ILLEGALSIGNS.CA

**MARK THESE DATES**

AUGUST 14 - AUGUST 17

**Creating a New Municipal Climate: AMO Annual Conference**, Westin Harbor Castle, Toronto, 416-971-9856, ext. 330.

THURSDAY AUGUST 18

**Realigning Fiscal Tools to Create Strong Communities**, Donna Morton, The Centre for Integral Economics, CUI, in co-operation with Ashoka Canada, Metro Hall, Room 313, 7:45 – 9:45 a.m., fax registration to 416-365-0650.

MONDAY AUGUST 22

**East Bayfront Precinct Plan Class Environmental Assessment**, Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation, St. Lawrence Great Hall, 157 King Street East, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., 416-214-1344 ext. 239.

AUGUST 31

**TTC Board**, Committee Room 2, 1:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 7 – SEPTEMBER 10

**FCM National Board of Directors Meeting**, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

SEPTEMBER 20 – SEPTEMBER 21

**Federal Labour Standards Review**, Toronto, for location call 1-866-660-0344.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 26

**Green Roofs Design Introductory Course**, Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, North York Civic Centre, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., 416-971-4494 ext. 221.

SEPTEMBER 26 - SEPTEMBER 27

**The Future of Canada's Infrastructure**, Strategy Institute, Paramount Conference Centre, Vaughan, 416-944-8833.

SEPTEMBER 28 – SEPTEMBER 30

**City Council**, 9:30 a.m.

SEPTEMBER 29 - SEPTEMBER 30

**OPPI Annual Conference**, Connections 2005, Hamilton and Burlington, contact Bill Jansen, Hamilton Planning, 905-516-2424 (ext. 1261) or Rosalind Minaji, Burlington planning, 905-335-7600 (ext. 7809).

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 1

**Creative Places + Spaces?: Risk Revolution Conference**, Toronto, Artscape, contact Eliza-Jane Scott, 416-392-1038, ext. 36.

**Beautiful city billboard campaign looks for municipal support**

A local non-profit group dedicated to urban renewal through the use of art has launched a new project to support the mayor's clean and beautiful city initiative. **Them.ca** has come up with the "The Beautiful City Billboard Fee" campaign, which proposes that billboard companies pay an annual fee with the proceeds used to commission public art. Organizers believe that the project will add a grassroots touch to Toronto's "Year of Creativity 2006" and add a cool \$6 million makeover to the city's visual space.

"Companies engaging in billboard advertising must be held accountable to the public for their access to—and impact on—public space," said curator **Devon Ostrom**. "One solution to this end is a tax, or annual permit fee, where the proceeds would be redirected into public art."

"Typically, we accept advertising in other forums such as magazines, as it is seen to subsidize useful or enjoyable content for the consumer of the message," he said.

Ostrom has proposed to mayor **David Miller**, and hopefully eventually to the Clean and Beautiful City Roundtable, that the project use the existing municipal infrastructure for tracking and

collecting permits for third-party outdoor signage to create an annual payment structure. These funds would be paid into the public art reserve and distributed through public arts councils or ~~directly to community centres.~~

The group tried once before—in 2002—to propose the same idea, but it fell flat.

"When we first came up with the idea the municipal

environment was not very favourable," Ostrom said. "The environment seems much more open and receptive to new ideas now."

According to a recent **Pollara** public opinion poll, a majority of Canadians support the institution of a fee on billboard advertising that

would be redirected into public art. In Toronto, 66 per cent supported the fee and 15 per cent were opposed.

Them.ca has proposed a charge of \$6 per square foot of billboard space per year. On a larger scale, the estimated 5,000 billboards in Toronto could generate six million dollars for public art per year.

"The project would will not only beautify Toronto and create jobs for Canadian artists, but would also serve to promote community ownership and diversify communication in public spaces," said Ostrom. •

**The estimated 5,000 billboards in Toronto could generate six million dollars for public art per year.**

[lead 04/07]

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**SALES/SUBSCRIPTIONS**

(circulation@nrupublishing.com)  
Annual subscription rate is \$299.  
Complimentary trial subscriptions are available.

Advertising rates available upon request.

**NRU - City of Toronto Edition** is not to be redistributed without the written consent of the publisher.

**NRU - City of Toronto Edition** is published 50 times a year by fax or e-mail by NRU Publishing Inc.

**NRU Publishing Inc.**

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Reviewer's Notes:

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Please forward to [devon@them.ca](mailto:devon@them.ca)

## 1. OVERVIEW

The Beautiful City Billboard Fee (BCBF) proposes that the companies investing in billboard advertising be held accountable to the public for their access to - and impact on - public space.

This initiative will require that an annual license fee be paid by third-party outdoor advertisers. Proceeds will be used to commission public art that will benefit and beautify communities and be distributed through arms-length funding councils. Other objectives include creation of employment for artists and diversifying access to, and thus promoting community ownership of public space. According to Pollara, only 11% of Canadians are against such a fee (+/-2.4% 19/20). The BCBF will help provide the means to renew and celebrate urban communities through creative expression.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- a) Beautification of Toronto
- b) Creation of employment for systemically under-employed artists
- c) Diversify access to visual communication in public spaces
- d) Promoting Corporate Citizenship / more funds for tracking & policing billboards
- e) Helping move Toronto towards a pedestrian friendly aesthetic, and
- f) Enhance public ownership and thus community efficacy in common spaces

## 3. RATIONALE

### 3a) Beautification

Although some municipalities have instituted complete bans on billboards,<sup>1</sup> this proposal seeks to balance out some of the harm they cause to beauty of the city.<sup>2</sup> The GTA is often referred to as a 'soulless economic hub'. Projects towards widespread beautification of the city will certainly help promote the perception of Toronto as an aesthetically pleasing city and set a ground-breaking international standard for such issues. The BCBF would primarily be to the benefit of local citizens. As a secondary effect, it would serve to strengthen our tourism industry and to help secure a true place for Toronto as an innovative cultural capital.

### 3b) Creation of Employment for Artists

While the creative process itself can be enjoyable to artists, it is also hard work. However, artists, as cultural innovators, are among the most well educated, yet least remunerated, labour force in Canada.<sup>3</sup> They place in the bottom-half of all occupational categories identified: sculptors, painters and other visual artists earn an average of just over \$18,000 annually.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, 50% of artists hold multiple jobs.<sup>5</sup> Comparatively, Canadian visual artists make 41% less than the average income of all occupations.<sup>6</sup>

The problem of systemic underemployment may get worse as the number of people identified as artists is growing at a rate of three times that of all other occupations.<sup>7</sup> Hypothetically, at a charge of \$6.00 per sq. foot of billboard space per year, five 15'x25' billboards can subsidize one small art piece costing \$10 000.00 (as well as \$1250.00 for administrative and maintenance expenses.) At a macro level, the estimated 5000<sup>8</sup> billboards in Toronto will generate six million dollars for public art per year.

### **3c) Diversifying Access to Visual Communication in Public Spaces**

Access to visual communication in public spaces needs to reflect the creativity and multiplicity that exists in Toronto – less of this and we risk alienating our population from their environment. Public art enriches and contributes to our communities.<sup>9</sup> It improves our quality of life; it can tell us of our past, mirror our present and foreshadow our possible future. Additionally, when produced locally, public art contributes to 'place making' and provides a venue and discussion point for intercultural activity.

Billboard advertising is typically the polar opposite, in its motives, medium and methods. Billboards are predominantly used to achieve corporate objectives, and frequently contain anti-social and misogynistic messages.<sup>10</sup> These messages may threaten the conscious of the community by reinforcing facile notions of humanness.<sup>11</sup> Public art will serve to balance out some of these messages by introducing new and different ideas made by those residing in the community -- expressions which may promote pro-social, spiritual or local awareness. When we speak of diversity here, we do not refer only to visual minorities, but rather variety in the type and capacity of people and organizations that contribute to vibrant and democratic public spaces. It is not enough to have minorities or plus-sized models depicted in the billboard advertisements. What is needed is a diversity of voices with agency to create and communicate their own artistic messages. Most critically, communicate for cultural reasons rather than (and autonomous from the) commercial messages.

### **3d) Promoting Corporate Citizenship**

The majority of Torontonians find billboards ugly and desire fewer of them.<sup>12</sup> Recent publicity regarding illegal activity has also added to the opinion that the industry has repeatedly failed to self-regulate.<sup>13</sup> However, a mess of competitive over-saturation continues to be the norm.<sup>14</sup> This is perpetuated by less intrusive media losing its grasp on the public's consciousness. As a result, outdoor advertising has become even more lucrative and the vicious cycle is amplified.<sup>15</sup>

The net outcome of this is that outdoor operators will eventually degrade rather than add impact to the client's marketing effort. Rather than sporadic goodwill exercises or generating increased viewership via negative controversy,<sup>16</sup> the BCBF will help billboard operators be accountable for some of the damage they cause and act as a first step of good faith in moving towards responsible corporate citizenship.

Responsible corporate citizenship will entail the adoption of a user fee that is dedicated to giving Municipal Licensing and Standards the proper resources to balance the needs of the industry within the wider community. This would include an office that has the full capacity to track, monitor and control outdoor advertising. Accordingly, bylaw enforcement officers who can levy fines for infractions and have the ability to remove consistently illegal encroachment. Responsibility will also be exercised by meeting the wishes of the majority for fewer billboards halfway by accepting a cap on the number and total square footage of third-party outdoor advertisements.

In regards to the BCBF, although it might seem unfavourable to some to have a mandatory rather than a voluntary fee -- it will be better for all parties involved to have the BCBF administered across the board by fair and specialized government bodies to remove the chance of free riders. Furthermore, municipal involvement in gathering the funds and arms length disbursement ensures the art created will be relatively autonomous from censorship (overt or soft) and remain true to each local context. This approach will enable participation from Toronto's professional arts community.

Additionally, the fine or 'pure' arts are a source that many secondary industries such as design draw from for innovation. Digging this 'well' deeper through supporting artists in turn fosters wider development of our city's cultural capital.

### **3e) Helping to Move Towards a Pedestrian Friendly Aesthetic**

The BCBF will assist moving Toronto away from a car based aesthetic (billboards) towards a more pedestrian feel. The vast majority of public art requires people to leave their cars to explore their communities at a more intimate level -- and significantly rewards them for doing so. The vast majority of famous and endearing cities in the world are built for people not cars. Toronto needs to build street life, viewsapes and architecture that celebrate the human experience. Billboards are designed to grab car traffic attention and do nothing to enhance the life of pedestrians. Torontonians want to celebrate their city with each other and the world.

### **3f) Promoting Community Ownership of Public Spaces**

Billboards can undermine the perception of public ownership, while localized art projects can enhance collective efficacy.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the BCBF works as a remedial act – enabling and spurring residents to add to their communities in a decentralized, positive format. Powerful symbolic capital can also be found in enacting this project: proving that our shared spaces cannot be treated poorly for the benefit of private interests.

## **4. REVENUE COLLECTION**

The BCBF would use the emergent municipal infrastructure for tracking and collecting annual permits for third party, outdoor signage. It is also recommended that the fee apply to all third party outdoor signage including street furniture.

## **5. REVENUE DISBURSEMENT**

The primary aim in revenue disbursement is that the art produced be exceptional, critical and singular in engaging the communities where the pieces are situated. To this end, in encouraging new and innovative artistic practices, the term 'public art' is inclusive of all forms of art in the public sphere.

It is inherent to the success of this project that revenue from the fee go directly to the arms-length body, the Toronto Arts Council (TAC) for distribution. This specialist body is uniquely designed to ensure that the funds are distributed fairly, with minimum censorship inherent in jury formation. Furthermore, the TAC provides the greatest assurance that the work chosen will be of high artistic value to the community.

It is not recommended that the TAC take into account where the revenue was gathered but rather the financial need of the ward where the prospective art piece is to be situated. This will prevent any chance of wards rubber-stamping billboards in order to receive public art. This also makes sense because wealthy neighbourhoods have the capacity to properly protect and enact stricter rules on aesthetic design along with the resources to commission art. Poorer neighbourhoods, already run down, can become a spread of advertisements for commuters.

For the majority of cases it is not recommended that billboard structures be used as venues for art installations. Regular, rather than occasional dependence on the physical structures and related support services for exhibition opportunities is likely entail a large degree of self-censorship within the prospective artists to ensure productive and continued relations. (Artists are more vulnerable to this effect because of their low incomes.) Accordingly there have been recent cases of both overt and unwarranted violations towards freedom of expression while using these venues.

The BCBF also encourages the TAC to engage in collaborations with local community centres in distributing the funds. In addition, a strong recommendation that disbursement strategies include a focus on youth arts activities. This rationale is owing to the fact that youth are a main target of advertising efforts because of their disposable incomes. Young people are also key targets in order to build early, and thus lifetime brand loyalty. This practice is questionable as children lack development of their critical capacity. For example, we can see non-art graffiti as a direct reflection of growing-up in a marketing saturated environment. As a learned behaviour, it is no wonder that some youth seek fame in emulating wider actions by compulsively marking the built environment with their own personal logos.

***A possible (but in no means final) disbursement process is outlined below:***

5a) Each year Parks and Recreation would nominate five prospective sites in each ward for public art: community centres, parks etc. These sites would be documented and images uploaded to a central website.

5b) Annually, each ward would be allotted a certain percent of the billboard revenue by the TAC for public art based on need, catchment area and population density ('Need' defined as economic health and related urban decay).

5c) Community centres and municipal agencies would collaborate to disseminate grant information among prospective artists and arts organizations. Municipal agencies could include the Culture Division, the Clean and Beautiful Secretariat the Public Art Advisory, the Planning Department / Urban Design and Parks and Recreation. Ideally, the collaborative relationships created would have both administrative and artistic expertise, as well as contact with the local areas in order to maximize access. For highly marginalized communities it is recommended that artists from the community be the focus of this promotional effort.

5d) After being informed of the granting program, artists would browse the selection of Parks and Recreation nominated sites in each ward using the previously mentioned website (see 5a). This would be in order to gather info about the community to propose site-specific works and significantly speed up the commissioning process. (The process would also be open to applications for non-Parks and Recreation nominated sites.)

5e) On an annual basis, the artist's proposals would be received and reviewed for each ward at the TAC. Portfolio based submissions, where no concept is yet articulated could also be completed for evolutionary, higher quality and/or long-term artist-centric residencies.

5f) Once the favoured application to produce public art (or portfolio, in the case of residences) was chosen by a TAC peer jury, it would then pass on to the respective municipal agencies. In such a way building standards, conservation and capacity issues would be supplemented. The municipal departments would be positioned to focus on assisting in realizing the TAC chosen idea and building the capacity of the applicant. A small percentage of the billboard fee should also be set aside in an endowment for ongoing maintenance of permanent works.

5g) For feedback, tourist / promotional, educational and reporting purposes, each new public work would be documented and published on a website. Here the public could note condition, view artist statements and post comments. Additionally, wards with unused funds could be publicly listed to generate increased artist proposals and foster cross-ward projects. Initially, each listed work may act as an introductory statement for the neighbourhood -- in time it is highly desired that pieces with more depth would be produced.

Once a large number of public art pieces are mapped online, this website will be a critical tool for Torontonians to better learn about their wider communities, plan art walks etc.

## 6. SUMMARY

The BCBF will beautify Toronto, create jobs for artists, promote community ownership and diversify and democratize communication in public space. Furthermore, bolster Toronto's cultural resources and thus wider economy.<sup>18</sup> With your support, people will enjoy more humane surroundings, be encouraged to walk, experience a stronger sense of place and less alienation in forming relations with their built environment.

Them.ca and our growing alliance of supporters look forward to assisting the municipality wherever possible in implementing this critical quality of life issue.

## 7. CREDIT & CONSULTATION LIST

The following individuals were consulted in the creation of this document for their specialization in a variety of fields. They, nor their organizations express endorsement of or disagreement with the concept or methodology and explicitly should not be reported as so.

### **Informal Interviews and Information 2002-2007:**

- William Huffman, Associate Director, Toronto Arts Council
- Dr. Andrew Hunter, Ph.D & Chair, Department of Philosophy, Ryerson University
- Dr. Agnes G. Meinhard, Director, Centre for Voluntary Sector Studies, Professor of Organizational Behaviour Ryerson
- Dr. Andrea Phillips, Assistant Director, Curatorial Dept. Goldsmiths, UK
- Andrew Potter, Writer/Academic, University of Toronto
- Councillor Cliff Jenkins, Councillor, City of Toronto
- Daniel Rechtshaffen, Barrister & Solicitor
- Dan Bergeron, Artistic Director, Pound Magazine
- Dave Meslin, Coordinator, Toronto Public Space Committee
- Dr. Harry Swain, ex. Deputy Minister, Trimbelle Limited
- Heinz Kuck, Graffiti Eradication Program, Toronto Police
- Janna Graham, Community Arts Manager, Art Gallery of Ontario
- Jason Laszlo, Assistant to Joe Pantalone Deputy Mayor of Toronto
- Karin Eaton, Executive Director, Mural Routes.
- Kate Henderson, Intellectual Property and Trademark Lawyer
- Larry King, Policy Planner, City of Toronto
- Lilita Tannis, (Past) Executive Director, UrbanArts Toronto
- Mark Lovewell, Director of Arts and Contemporary Studies, Economics Professor, Ryerson University
- Matt Blackett, Creative Director of Spacing magazine, member of City Beautiful Roundtable
- May Wong, VP, Toronto Community Foundation
- Dr. Mike Burke, Professor, Department of Politics and Public Administration Ryerson University
- Dr. Patrizia Albanese, Professor of Qualitative Research, Ryerson University
- Rita Davies, Culture Division, City of Toronto
- Scott Sullivan, Municipal Licensing & Standards, City of Toronto
- Steve Mann, Professor, University of Toronto
- Suzanne Hawkes, Senior Strategic Counsel, Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society
- Suzanne McCormick, Community Advocate
- Terry Nicholson, Culture Division, City of Toronto

### **Writing, Editing & Research Assistance:**

**Devon Ostrom**, MA Curating, them.ca (Principal Author), **Robin Sokoloski**, Community Arts Director, them.ca, **Jessica Webster** B.A. Hons., MSLS (Master of Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability), **Stephanie D. Perham**, B.A. Political Science, International Relations, SD Perham & Assc, **Julia Che**, Lotus Leaf Communications **Clara Venice Cameron**, BA Philosophy, Musician & **Stacey Sinclair**, Toronto Arts Coalition.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES**

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### **9. SELECT QUOTES AND SUPPORT**

"What a terrific concept. On the one hand it will reduce illegal billboard advertising in the city - a good thing - and on the other it will simultaneously provide a revenue stream for support of public art and art practice. How can you get better than that? We also really like the level of input and participation from the grassroots public. The persistence of the BCBF Alliance under Devon Ostrom is admirable. Best of luck with the project."

- *Claire Hopkinson, Executive Director, Toronto Arts Council*

"This project is truly a fantastic idea. Toronto ArtsVote is thrilled to see projects such as the Beautiful City Billboard Fee proposal engage politicians and community members in positive and productive discussions about public art."

- *Katrina Baran, Co-chair, Toronto ArtsVote.*

"An imaginative proposal that helps beautify this city in two ways: by finding the means to fund innovative public art, and by curtailing the proliferation of unsightly billboard advertising. A project worth pursuing."

- *Mark Lovewell, Director of Arts and Contemporary Studies, Ryerson University*

"I endorse it entirely... It's a wonderful and timely initiative; and ingenious solution to two persistent problems in large urban settings."

- *Andrew Hunter, Ph.D.Chair, Department of Philosophy, Ryerson University*

"I fully endorse the idea..."

- *Dan Bergeron, Artistic Director, Pound Magazine*

"Great initiative. We're behind you all the way. Mural Routes definitely endorses the concept."

- *Karin Eaton, Executive Director, Mural Routes*

"I think this is a very good idea that I am surprised was not thought of a long time ago. Right now, there are too many billboards springing up around Toronto, especially along the Gardiner making Toronto look very cluttered. Less is more, and if the city can get equal revenue for many less billboards than our out there now that would be great. Ideally, there should be no billboards. The DVP benefits from that and looks great for it."

- *Sumeet Dhawan, Toronto*

"What you're up to seems very witty to me. I hope I'm reading you right. It also seems balanced; i.e.: you're not trying to eliminate billboards or wage war on capitalism, which would be a fairly futile undertakings...I have to say I find all the jumble of advertising messages oppressive; on the other hand, I take a lot of delight from some of the advertising achievements of our best copywriters and graphic artists. To me, there's room for advertising in the world in moderation and in balance with other kinds of messages; we don't have that; our 'pure' artists are certainly at a disadvantage when it comes to resources. A reasonable balance between conflicting agendas is what we always hope for. Seeing more of the best work of our best artists in public places would contribute to that. That would also make this city and the world better places to live in."

- *Jim Garrard, Artist / Past Executive Director, Toronto Arts Council*

"This is a great idea! Good luck with everything! I would love to see art in lieu of another advertising billboard! And if I do have to see an ad, it would be nice to know it is somehow going to help out with public art making. Great work!"

- *Syrus Ware, TBTS Manager, AGO*

"The Beautiful City Billboard Fee is an initiative of impressive proportions! It is an excellent means of leveraging funding from the private sector to facilitate the beautification of urban spaces with public art. It also effectively addresses some complex issues in our society, including the gainful employment of artists and local cultural expression. Many great civilizations have endowed their public art and architecture to future generations - the Beautiful City Billboard Fee will hopefully allow us to do the same."

- *Jessica Webster B.A. Hons., Master of Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability*

"The Beautiful City Billboard Fee is a brilliant idea that will allow corporations to demonstrate respect and appreciation for the intelligence and creativity of all citizens. Public spaces must be shared, and the way things stand now, people do not have any real opportunity to respond to the barrage of advertising images that they confront each day. Helping artists contribute to our visual landscapes will build and sustain an understanding of the many contributions they make to our cities: intellectual, cultural, critical and emotional.

- *Milena Placentile, Independent Curator of Contemporary Art (Toronto/Ottawa)*

"I think this is a brilliant idea, one which should have been put into effect a long time ago by our supposedly "forward thinking" politicians."

- *Daryl Wallbank, Toronto*

"excellent initiative .... your innovative idea is brilliant! You are absolutely right ... Public Art definitely enriches and contributes to our communities. Looking forward to your progressive concept being embraced, endorsed and implemented. Please keep at it - there are lots of Toronto neighbourhoods eager to embrace artistic, vibrant, democratic public spaces."

- *Suzanne McCormick, Toronto*

"Commercial visual pollution is only going to get worse unless we do something about it now. Best of luck!"

- *Graham J. Nicholls, Ottawa*

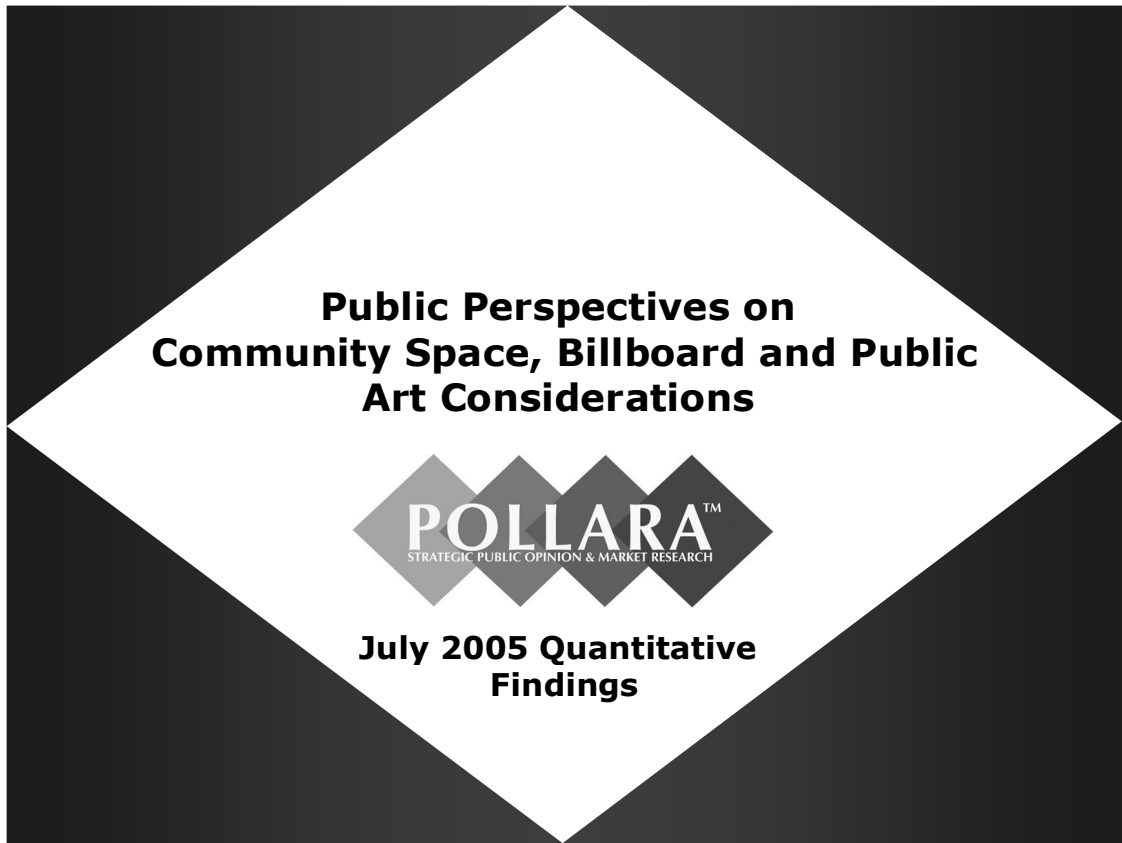
"Economics are determining what is a valid form of public expression, it seems corporations have as much access to public space as they want, while independent expression is repressed."

- *Dave Meslin, Toronto Public Space Committee*

"Access to visual communication in public spaces needs to reflect the creativity and multiplicity that exists in Toronto – less this we alienate our population from their environment. Additionally, when produced locally, public art contributes to 'place making' and can serve to reinforce interculturalism. Billboard advertising is typically the polar opposite, by motive, medium and methods. Billboards also undermine the perception of public ownership, whereas localized projects enhance it: Thus the BCBF works as a remedial act – enabling and spurring people to further add to their communities in a positive format. In concert, the BCBF will assist moving Toronto away from a car based aesthetic (billboards) – towards a more pedestrian feel. The vast majority of public art requires people to leave their cars to explore their communities at a more intimate level -- and significantly rewards them for doing so.

- *Devon Ostrom, them.ca curator*

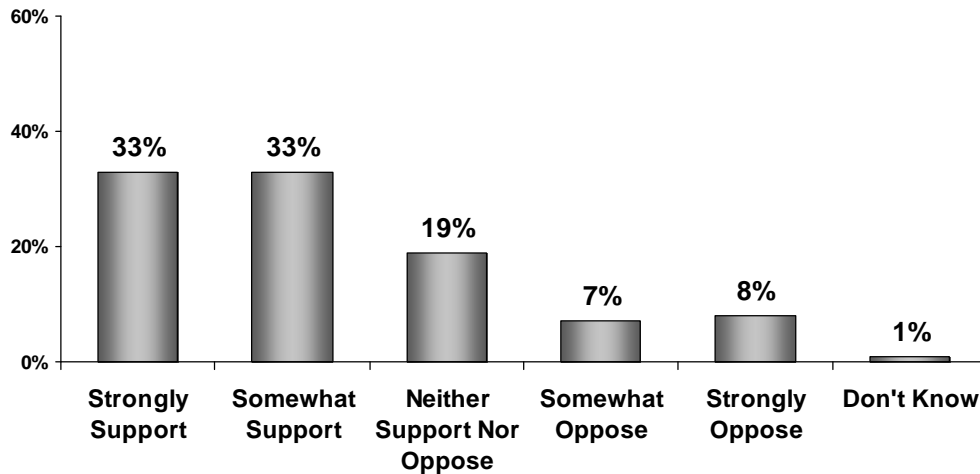
## **10. POLLARA STRATEGIC PUBLIC OPINION & MARKET RESEARCH POLLS**



### **Background and Methodology**

- **Background:** Interest in conducting an initial scan of local, national and provincial perspectives regarding possible policy considerations affecting community spaces, billboard advertising and possibilities for increasing public art.
  
- **Methodology:** Quantitative on-line survey of...
  - 2006 adult general population National respondents – accuracy of within  $\pm 2.2\%$ , nineteen times out of twenty
  - 455 adult general population Ontario respondents – accuracy of within  $\pm 4.6\%$ , nineteen times out of twenty
  - 140 adult general population Toronto respondents – accuracy of within  $\pm 8.3\%$ , nineteen times out of twenty

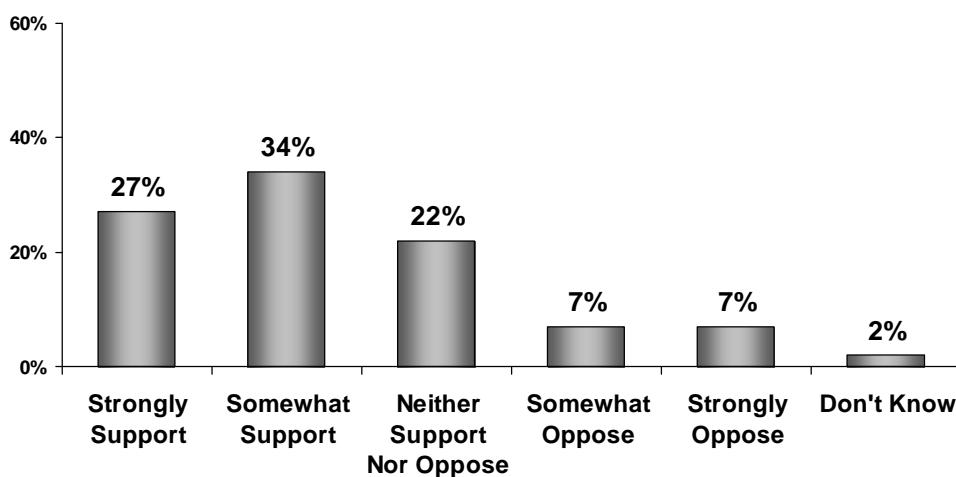
## 66% of Torontonians Support Charging a Fee to Billboard Advertisers to Fund More Public Art



Q: Would you support or oppose your city/community charging a fee to Billboard advertisers that would be used for more public art to beautify the community?

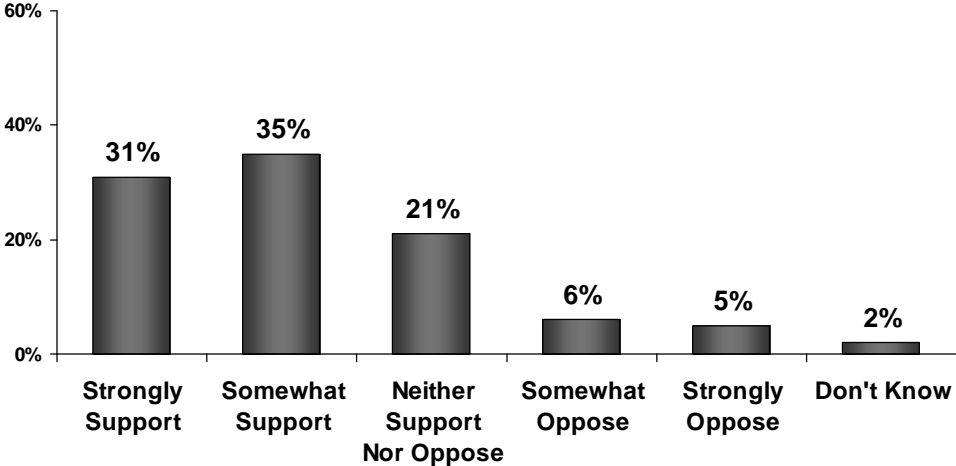
\*Support was very slightly higher among respondents who indicated having some university education

## Support for Charging a Fee to Billboard Advertisers to Fund More Public Art (Ontario)



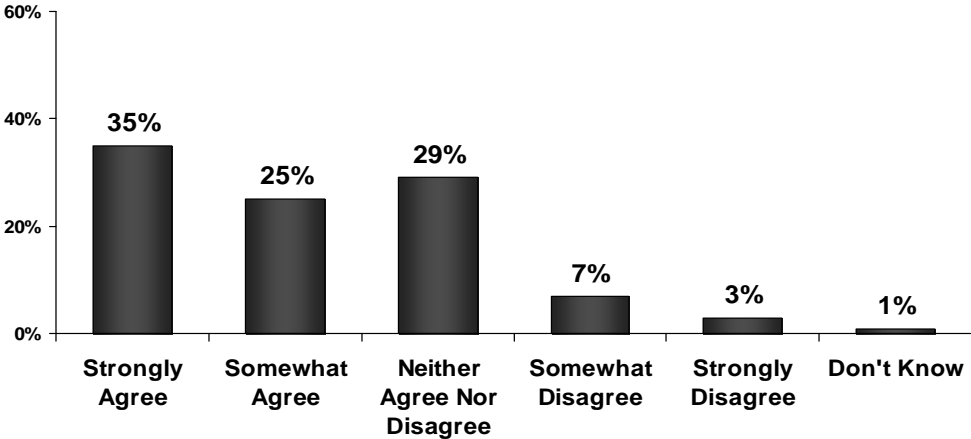
Q: Would you support or oppose your city/community charging a fee to Billboard advertisers that would be used for more public art to beautify the community?

# Support for Charging a Fee to Billboard Advertisers to Fund More Public Art (National)



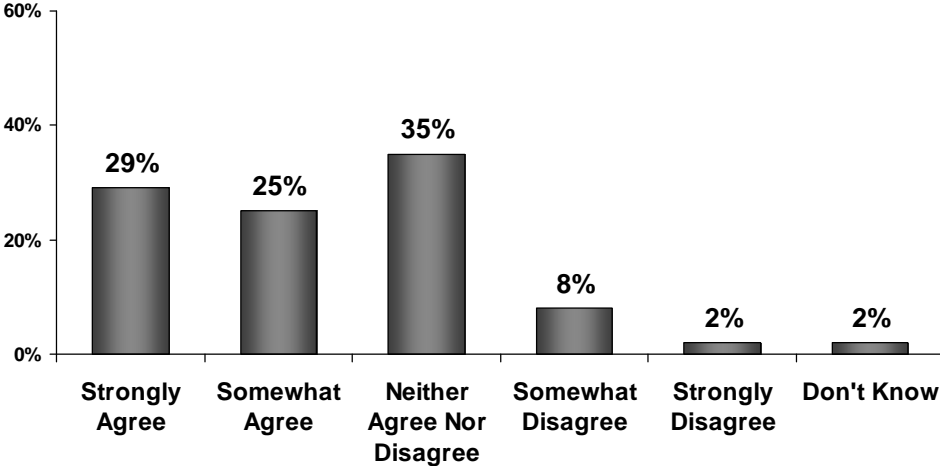
Q: Would you support or oppose your city/community charging a fee to Billboard advertisers that would be used for more public art to beautify the community?

# 60% of Torontonians Clearly Agree That Their City Would Be More Beautiful With Fewer Billboards – Only 10% Disagree



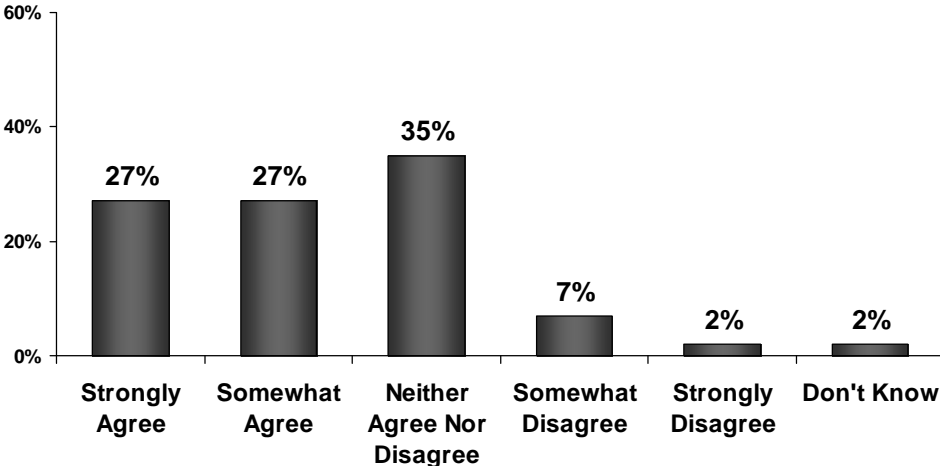
Q: We would now like to ask you some questions about public space in your city/community... Your city/community would be more beautiful if there were fewer billboards.

# City/Community More Beautiful With Fewer Billboards (Ontario)



Q: We would now like to ask you some questions about public space in your city/community... Your city/community would be more beautiful if there were fewer billboards.

# City/Community More Beautiful With Fewer Billboards (National)



Q: We would now like to ask you some questions about public space in your city/community... Your city/community would be more beautiful if there were fewer billboards.

# 11. CAMPAIGN POSTCARD



cut on grey / outside line

fold here and glue on reverse

Dear Councillor \_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor's Name

The BCBF would see a minimum of six million dollars gathered from an annual license fee. Paid by billboard advertisers, revenue would be directed through the Toronto Arts Council into public art -- with a priority put on marginalized communities and youth art. According to a Pollara poll, only 15% of Torontonians are against such a fee.

- Objectives of the Beautiful City Billboard Fee include:
- Urban beautification & employment for artists
  - More funding for tracking & policing billboard advertisers
  - Helping move Toronto towards a pedestrian focused aesthetic
  - Promoting community ownership of public spaces
  - Diversifying access to public communication

As a resident of your ward and potential voter I urge you to support this critical quality of life issue. Thank you for making Toronto a more humane and beautiful city.

signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Add to the BCBF supporters list?

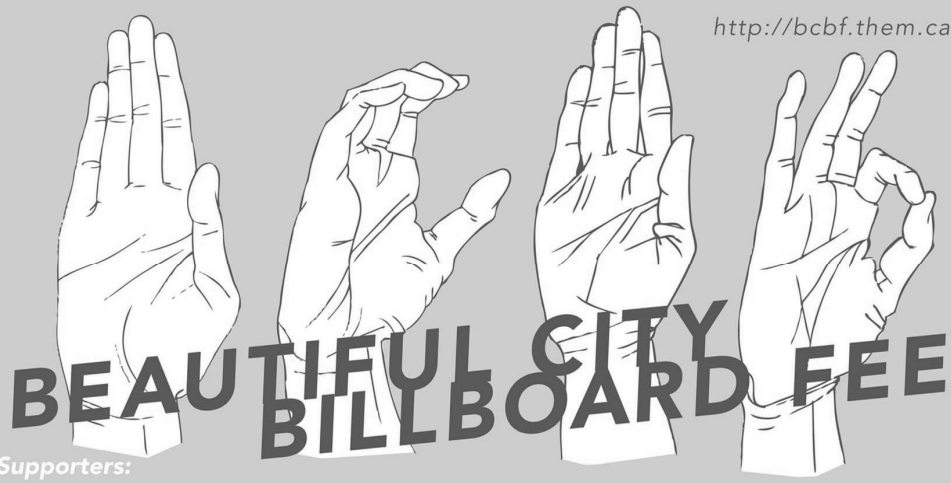
FIND YOUR COUNCILLORS NAME & MORE INFO AT: <http://bcbf.them.ca>

Affix postage here or drop off in person

**MAIL TO:**

Councillor's Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
**BOX #510**  
**422 Parliament St.**  
**Toronto ON, Canada,**  
**M5A 3A0 \***

\* Please note: your information will not be shared with any third-party besides your Councillor. We respect your privacy and commitment and accordingly, will not share your information among the alliance members. Once your postcard is received at our mailbox we will present it to the respective Councillor.



**Supporters:**

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| 411 Initiative for Change<br>Arts & Contemporary<br>Studies Student Union<br>Artsvote<br>Centre for Integral<br>Economics<br>Digital Propaganda<br>Earwaks.com | Grassroots Youth<br>Collaborative<br>Illegalsigns.ca<br>Kate Henderson Intellectual<br>Property & Trademark<br>Lotus Leaf Communications<br>Manifesto<br>Mural Routes | nataliagrosner.com<br>PressPause<br>Regent Park Focus Youth<br>Media Arts Centre<br>Rhythmicru<br>Spacing Magazine<br>Style in Progress<br>The Remix Project | The Gladstone Hotel<br>The Faculty Of<br>them.ca<br>Toronto Arts Council<br>Foundation<br>Toronto Youth Cabinet<br>UrbanArts<br>Youth Action Network |
|--|---|--|--|

cut on grey / outside line

Note: will print well in black & white / grayscale  
 Total activity time: 30 to 130 seconds + postage

thank you for your time and support  
 the bcbf alliance

## 12. SOURCES AND NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Lucrative / Growing Value of Outdoor Advertising and Cities Banning Billboards:

Lianne Stewart, "The Invasion of Eye Candy" Corporate Knights, Vol.1 No.3 Winter 2003 ( Source: <http://www.corporateknights.ca/downloads/CK3.pdf> )

<sup>2</sup> Why Billboards are Ugly: 60% of Torontonians think that their city would be more beautiful with fewer billboards, only 10% Disagree (+/8% 19/20, Pollara 2005). Because they are designed to stick out and be seen with little consideration of their surroundings, the use of repetition, the incorporation of shock and base messages, the mass-produced nature of the medium, the poor condition of many billboards...etc.

<sup>3</sup> Compensation of Artists vs. Education: "The percentage of artists with a university degree, certificate or diploma (41%) is double the rate in the overall labour force (22%)." (Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data, Reported in "Statistical insights on the arts," Vol. 3 No. 1© Hill Strategies Research Inc., Sept. 2004)

<sup>4</sup> Under-Compensation of Artists: (Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data, Reported in "Statistical insights on the arts," Vol. 3 No. 1© Hill Strategies Research Inc., Sept. 2004) Additionally: "In five arts occupations, median earnings are about \$10,000. This means that a typical artisan, craftsperson, dancer, musician, singer, other performer, painter, sculptor or other visual artist earns only about \$10,000." (Source: [http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications\\_e/research/artists\\_artistes\\_canada.htm](http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications_e/research/artists_artistes_canada.htm) )

<sup>5</sup> Underemployment of Artists: "50% of cultural workers hold multiple jobs. Some artists (e.g. the musician who also works full time as a taxi driver)" (Source: "Statistical insights on the arts," Vol. 3 No. 1© Hill Strategies Research Inc., Sept. 2004)

<sup>6</sup> Under-Compensation of Artists: (Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data, Reported in "Statistical insights on the arts," Vol. 3 No. 1© Hill Strategies Research Inc., Sept. 2004)

<sup>7</sup> Under-Compensation of Artists: (Source: "More artists in Canada, but still making less than most: study." CBC Arts, Oct. 2004.)

<sup>8</sup> Number of GTA Billboards: Estimate through Spacing.ca from the Canadian Outdoor Measurement Bureau at an average size of 10'x20.'

<sup>9</sup> Effects of the Art: "Low income neighbourhoods with higher cultural participation are four times more likely than average to have low delinquency rates. Neighbourhoods with an active arts scene are nearly three times more likely to see their poverty rates decline and their population increase." (Source: Stern & Seifert, "Social Impact of the Arts Project" University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work, Ongoing.)

<sup>10</sup> Purposefully Controversial Misogynistic / Antisocial Billboards: Such as are contained the recent Molson's campaign. (Source: "Strange Brew, Taste Police," Toronto Life, July 2005.) These may be amusing to some but damaging to those, especially youth, who have not developed their critical capacity. Please see the BCBF site for more examples of this technique for gaining increased media exposure.

<sup>11</sup> Marketing Techniques: Marketers have long since realized that the population consciously blocks out billboards, they are however stored in the subconscious in good to poor detail. That is until the customer reaches the point of sale. This is a problem as the tendency is for one to adapt by deadening their senses to their surroundings, similar in effect to someone who lives next to a hog farm but cannot smell it anymore.

<sup>12</sup> 60% of Torontonians think that their city would be more beautiful with fewer billboards, only 10% Disagree (+/8% 19/20, Pollara 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Illegal Billboards: (Matt Semansky, "Activist group leads charge to remove illegal signage" Marketing Daily, February 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 Source: <http://www.marketingmag.ca/daily/20070213/topstory.html>) See images and info on illegal billboards here: <http://www.illegalsigns.ca>.

<sup>14</sup> Billboard Clutter: Lowered impact due to 'Billboard clutter' is a generally accepted problem among the clients of outdoor advertisers. (Source: Beckman & Rigby "Foundations of Marketing," Harcourt Canada, 2001 p. 505.)

<sup>15</sup> Please see endnote 1 and 14.

<sup>16</sup> Please see endnote 10.

<sup>17</sup> The Effects of Public Art: Preliminary results of research conducted in Kingston Maximum Security Prison showed that a mural and democratic design process increased the inmate-patients: community efficacy,

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quality of life as well as positive social behaviour. They also went on to create three murals of their own after the project was complete (Source: Ostrom, "R.T.C. Mural Project – Executive Summary" them.ca, 2003, please see: <http://www.them.ca/bcbf/rtc-letstalk-music-2004.doc>)

<sup>18</sup> Economics of Cultural Activity: Please see a collection of works regarding this topic at Richard Florida's website: <http://www.creativeclass.org/library.php?cid=38>