



Port Hope Votes

October 26, 2026



2026 Candidate Arts & Culture Survey — Port Hope

Critical Mass is asking every Mayoral and Council candidate in Port Hope's October 26, 2026 municipal election the same questions about how art and culture fit in your platform. All responses will be published in full and unedited so residents can compare them. Critical Mass does not endorse any candidate. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with Port Hope's creative community.

Candidate name: Les Andrews

Running for: ☐ Mayor x ☒ Councilor

Ward: 1

Context & Background:

The arts are a major economic driver of the economy, with a \$131 billion dollar impact nationally. The 2025 *Artworks* report from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Business Data Lab found a \$29 return in economic activity for every federal arts dollar invested. The study also identified that the arts and culture sector growth rate (8%) was double the rate of growth (4%) for the entire economy. Arts and culture creates about 13 jobs per \$1 million of output, more than traditional sectors like oil and gas, manufacturing or agriculture.

Critical Mass recently completed a community survey, where 195 residents rated the arts as essential to a thriving community, scoring them 9.8 out of 10. Funded by a Work-In-Culture grant, we also led more than 82 hours of consultation, with regional and local arts organizations, artists, community partners, elected officials and municipal staff – where the need for stable funding, year-round space, coordinated advocacy and more paid opportunities for working artists were raised. Artists named making a living, exhibition opportunities, and recognition as their biggest challenges, and most also identified the need for an arts council or umbrella arts organization in Port Hope that could offer support.

The Municipality of Port Hope is increasingly incorporating arts and culture into its strategic pillars, including its new Tourism Strategy and the review of its Public Art Policy, with recommendations forthcoming from Critical Mass. Updating its decade-old Cultural Plan and preparing for potential growth from Wesleyville will also require a strong, well-supported arts community. The next Council will play a key role in turning these priorities into funded, actionable commitments.



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Please take a few minutes to complete the 2026 all candidates arts & culture survey.

Part 1: Please rate the following statements:

Please mark one box per statement.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Arts and culture are essential to Port Hope's quality of life and identity.	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Investing in arts and culture helps Port Hope attract and keep workers, families and businesses.	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Arts and culture contributes to residents' health and well-being.	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
The Municipality currently invests enough in arts and culture.	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Port Hope would benefit from an arts council or umbrella arts organization that supports and amplifies the work of local artists and arts organizations.	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
The Municipality should prioritize hiring artists, rather than using generative AI tools as a substitute for human designs which undermine and exploit the local creative economy.	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
The arts are enjoyed by some people, but they don't need public support.	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐



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Part 2: Open questions

Please keep each answer to 100 words or fewer.

1. **Role of the arts.** Do you think art and culture add value to Port Hope? If so, how?
Where do arts and culture fit in your platform?

Diverse forms of the arts appeal to a wide range of individuals, from those immersed in the arts to those that are attracted to materials developed by talented people. I do think it adds value to people's lives.

2. **Health and well-being.** How do you see arts and culture supporting residents' health, especially seniors, youth and/or people facing isolation? How would you support that role?

Arts, if considered as a hobby or recreational pastime, helps stimulate the mind and assist in a positive sense of accomplishment. Anything that makes oneself feel better, contributes to good health.

3. **Economic growth.** As Port Hope prepares for future growth (especially with the potential Wesleyville project), how will arts and culture feature in your plan to attract and keep workers, families and businesses? How would you support arts and culture as an integral part of Port Hope's local economy?

We are blessed by having a world-class entertainment venue, in the Capitol Theatre, that provides a glimpse of what local artists can achieve. Along with multiple events put on by Critical Mass, we are well prepared to offer something for everyone, old and young alike.

4. **Affordability.** What municipal tools and support would you implement to make accessible, year-round arts spaces more affordable?

5. **Stable arts funding:** Do you support predictable, multi-year municipal funding for local arts and cultural organizations? If so, would you maintain, increase, or reduce that investment



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6.

I believe a portion of the yearly budget should be allocated to Arts and Culture in much the same manner and importance as we allocate money to health, sports and recreation. I have no preconceived opinion on amounts.