



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: Norm Orviss

Running for: ☐ Mayor ☒ Councillor

Ward:

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.

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



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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.	X	☐	☐	☐	☐
Investing in arts and culture helps Port Hope attract and keep workers, families and businesses.	X	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arts and culture contributes to residents' health and well-being.	X	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Municipality currently invests enough in arts and culture.	☐	☐	X	☐	☐
Port Hope would benefit from an arts council or umbrella arts organization that supports and amplifies the work of local artists and arts organizations.	☐	X	☐	☐	☐
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.	X	☐	☐	☐	☐
The arts are enjoyed by some people, but they don't need public support.	☐	☐	☐	X	☐



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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? The arts absolutely add to the culture of Port Hope and also contributes to our Tourism Budget as people flock to the Capitol and other venues. The arts fits
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? I believe arts and culture can make a meaningful contribution to residents' well-being by creating opportunities for connection, participation, and creative expression. This can be especially valuable for seniors, youth, and people experiencing isolation.
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? I see arts and culture as one of several factors that can help make Port Hope an attractive and welcoming place to live, work, and invest. As the community grows, I would be open to considering how cultural amenities, events, and partnerships could complement broader economic-development efforts. Any municipal support should be developed collaboratively, reflect community priorities, and remain financially responsible.
4. **Access.** How would you improve access to arts and culture across rural and urban wards, including addressing cost, transportation and disability-related barriers? I recognize that cost, transportation, and accessibility can make it difficult for some residents to participate in arts and cultural activities. I would be open to working with community organizations, service providers, and residents in both rural and urban wards to identify practical ways to reduce these barriers. Options could be considered gradually and in keeping with community priorities, available resources, and the municipality's broader responsibilities.
5. **Affordability.** What municipal tools and support would you implement to make accessible, year-round arts spaces more affordable? I recognize the value of accessible, year-round spaces for arts and cultural activities. I would be open to reviewing practical options—such as partnerships, shared-use arrangements, or making better use of existing municipal facilities—to see where



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the municipality could help. Any approach would need to consider community demand, operating costs, available resources, and fairness to taxpayers.

6. **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, and why? I support the principle of predictable, multi-year funding because it can help local arts and cultural organizations plan more effectively and pursue additional funding opportunities. At the same time, funding levels should be reviewed through the municipality's regular budget process and considered alongside other community priorities and available resources. My preference would be to maintain a stable level of support while remaining open to future adjustments when there is a clear need and demonstrated community benefit.
7. **Advocacy.** Would you support the creation of a local arts council to help artists and cultural organizations access funding, share resources, and pay artists professional (CARFAC) fees? What Municipal support would you advocate for? I would be open to exploring the creation of a local arts council if there is broad interest and a clearly defined role that complements existing organizations. Such a body could potentially help artists and cultural groups coordinate resources, identify funding opportunities, and promote professional practices, including appropriate compensation for artists.
8. **Commitment to the arts.** If elected, can the arts community count on you to advocate for it at Council? Name one concrete action you would take in your first year. If elected I would be a support for the arts community and in the first year would put forward a motion for the creation of an Arts Council.

Please return by Friday, October 16, 2026 to info@criticalmassart.com.

Responses will be posted on the Critical Mass website and social media sites before election day.

Thank you kindly for taking part!

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criticalmassart.com