



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: Todd Attridge

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.	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
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?
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?
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?
4. **Access.** How would you improve access to arts and culture across rural and urban wards, including addressing cost, transportation and disability-related barriers?
5. **Affordability.** What municipal tools and support would you implement to make accessible, year-round arts spaces more affordable?
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?
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?
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.

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!

@criticalmassart
criticalmassart.com

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?

I believe arts and culture are essential to Port Hope's character, identity, and future. At their heart, the arts strengthen our shared humanity. They inspire creativity, challenge our thinking, and help us see the world through someone else's eyes. They connect generations, celebrate our differences, and bring people together. Our artists, theatres, galleries, and festivals also strengthen our economy, attract visitors, and make Port Hope a special place to live. Supporting our creative community means recognizing both its cultural and economic contributions while creating opportunities for artists to thrive.

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 and culture bring people together. They give us opportunities to connect, express ourselves, build friendships, and feel that we belong. For seniors, young people, and those experiencing isolation, these connections can make a meaningful difference to their well-being. I believe everyone should have the opportunity to participate, regardless of age, ability, income, or circumstance. As Mayor, I would work with our arts organizations and community partners to identify and remove barriers to participation. That means exploring more accessible venues, affordable programming, and opportunities to bring arts and culture directly to people who may otherwise be left out.

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?

As Port Hope grows, we have an opportunity to make arts and culture part of how we plan our future, not an afterthought. Where and how we develop new neighbourhoods and public spaces should reflect the community we want to become. Arts and culture help attract and retain families, workers, and businesses because people want more than a job. They want a community rich in experiences, creativity, and connection. I

would support considering cultural spaces, public art, and opportunities for local artists in long-term planning, guided by community needs, available resources, and responsible development.

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 believe arts and culture should be accessible to everyone, regardless of where they live, their income, age, or ability. Port Hope is more than our downtown. Our rural communities and hamlets deserve opportunities to experience and participate in the arts without always travelling into town. I would work with existing arts organizations to bring programming into rural communities, explore affordable participation options, and address transportation and accessibility barriers. We have talented artists and dedicated cultural organizations already doing remarkable work. My priority would be to strengthen those partnerships and help more residents share in what they offer.

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

I believe affordable, accessible, year-round creative spaces are important to helping Port Hope's arts community thrive. Before investing in new facilities, I would look at how we can better use spaces we already have, including municipal buildings, community facilities, and underused private spaces. I'd work with arts organizations to explore shared spaces, affordable rental arrangements, and partnerships that reduce operating costs.

I'd also review municipal facility fees and pursue provincial, federal, and private funding opportunities. My goal is to create more opportunities for artists to work, exhibit, teach, and earn a living without placing unnecessary costs on 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 predictable, multi-year funding for arts and cultural organizations that demonstrate clear benefits to our community. Organizations seeking municipal support should have a plan that aligns with the Municipality's priorities, with measurable goals and transparent reporting. For smaller organizations, those requirements should reflect their capacity. When we invest residential tax dollars, we have a responsibility to demonstrate their value. That doesn't mean every benefit must be financial. Cultural enrichment, community connection, accessibility, and opportunities for artists are equally important outcomes. Funding decisions should reflect these benefits, demonstrated results, and the Municipality's financial capacity.

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?

Yes. I would support the arts community in establishing an independent, community-led arts council that brings artists and cultural organizations together, strengthens their collective voice, and helps them access funding and shared resources. I would advocate for municipal support through affordable meeting spaces, staff collaboration, and consideration of start-up assistance tied to a clear plan and available resources. I also believe artists deserve fair compensation for their work. I would support using professional standards, including CARFAC guidelines, when the Municipality commissions or exhibits artwork. The arts council should be community-led and focused on delivering lasting benefits.

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.

The arts community can count on me to advocate for initiatives that strengthen our cultural identity, create opportunities for artists, and deliver meaningful community benefits.

In my first year, I would bring forward a motion directing staff, subject to Council approval, to report on the implementation of Port Hope's *Collaborating on Culture* plan. I want to know what's been accomplished, what remains outstanding, what resources are needed, and how we'll measure success. We've already listened to our cultural

community and developed a plan. Now we need to demonstrate how we're delivering on those commitments.