



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: _____ Vicki Mink _____

Running for: ☐ Mayor ☒ Councillor

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.	☐	☒ 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?

Absolutely. Arts and culture complement tourism through attractions such as the Capitol Theatre and the Studio Tour. They enhance residents' wellbeing through events, beautification, and opportunities for creative expression, while supporting artists, artisans, and local businesses. Art also helps showcase what makes Port Hope special, including our heritage, landscapes, salmon, and unique character.

Where do arts and culture fit in your platform?

Although arts and culture were not specifically identified as a separate platform item, they are reflected in my commitment to protecting what makes Port Hope unique and preserving its character. The arts are so important to me and an important part of our community, alongside many other valued priorities. Unfortunately I couldn't highlight them all in my 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?

Arts and culture can support well-being by creating opportunities for connection, participation, and a sense of belonging, particularly for seniors, youth, and those experiencing isolation. I believe everyone should have an opportunity to participate, whether as a creator, observer, or contributor.

When Council provided funding to the Capitol Theatre, I advocated for the experience to be accessible to everyone. That included advocating for pay-what-you-can pricing on rehearsal nights. We also continue to support Critical Mass through grants, while the Art Festival offers free opportunities to experience and participate in art. I have also seen how residents of all ages, including seniors, can contribute to cultural projects simply by sharing their stories and experiences. For example, I connected resident artist Jay Dart with a senior farming couple.



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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?

Arts and culture contribute to Port Hope's economy by supporting tourism, local businesses, employment, and the quality of life that attracts workers and families. As we prepare for future growth, including the potential Wesleyville project, we should ensure that our community's unique character remains part of that growth.

I believe there is an opportunity to strengthen the connection between arts, culture, tourism, and education, including potential partnerships with Loyalist College. I would also like to evaluate whether arts and culture have the greatest opportunities to grow within Parks, Recreation and Culture, Tourism, or a coordinated approach across both. Our goal should be to build on Port Hope's existing strengths, create opportunities for local talent and businesses, and ensure that arts and culture remain an integral part of our 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?

I believe access means ensuring that cost, location, or disability does not unnecessarily prevent someone from participating in arts and culture. The Studio Tour already connects people and creative work across our community, while pay-what-you-can rehearsal nights at the Capitol Theatre help reduce financial barriers.

Through my work on the Accessibility Committee, we discussed opportunities to offer event organizers accessibility training similar to that provided to municipal staff. I would like to see that opportunity explored further. I also believe we should look at how rural residents can participate more easily, recognizing that transportation and distance present different challenges outside our urban areas. My approach would be to build on existing initiatives, listen to residents and organizers, and identify practical ways to make participation more inclusive.

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

Municipal grants are one way to support arts organizations, but I would also look at opportunities to make better use of existing community spaces and facilities throughout the year. Partnerships between the municipality, arts organizations, educational institutions, and



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other community groups may help share operating costs and resources. I would also consider whether existing municipal spaces can be made available at affordable rates, with accessibility built into the process. My approach would be to work with local arts organizations to understand their needs, evaluate practical options, and direct municipal support where it can have the greatest community benefit while remaining mindful of 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 recognize the value that arts and cultural organizations bring to Port Hope, and I support municipal investment in them. However, residents are also telling me that property taxes are too high, and Council has a responsibility to carefully review all spending priorities. I would support evaluating the current grant program, including whether predictable, multi-year funding is practical and sustainable. I would not commit to maintaining or increasing funding without first reviewing the financial implications alongside other community needs. My responsibility is to consider the value of these investments while respecting that residents have different priorities and that every tax dollar must be carefully considered.

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 very interested in being part of these conversations. Arts and culture are personally important to me, and I would welcome the opportunity to explore how a local arts council could help artists and cultural organizations collaborate, share resources, and access funding. I would want to understand existing gaps and whether a new organization is the best approach. I would also be interested in exploring partnerships and funding opportunities through private sources, foundations, and upper levels of government, rather than relying solely on municipal tax dollars. Municipal support could include helping build those connections, sharing resources, and considering appropriate in-kind or financial support. I also recognize the importance of fair compensation for professional artists and would welcome discussion about how to support that goal sustainably.

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.

I believe I have always advocated for the arts and will continue to do so. During my 2018–2022 term, I felt particularly engaged through my participation in important community processes. I



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attend Critical Mass events, have participated in the Art Festival as an artist, and in 2020, I was nearly cast in a Capitol Theatre production before COVID interrupted those plans! These experiences reflect my personal interest in and connection to the arts community.

I make myself available when asked to participate, and I welcome those opportunities. In my first year, I would make a point of meeting with local arts and cultural representatives to hear their priorities, understand their challenges, and explore practical ways the Town can support their work. I am approachable, willing to listen, and ready to be involved.

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