
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C-14-2020

Subject: Niagara Biennial Design Awards - Update and Announcement of Award Winners

Date: November 9, 2020

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Julia van der Laan de Vries, Urban Designer

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the Niagara Biennial and to introduce the Niagara Biennial Design Award Winners Video that will be presented at the November 9th, 2020, Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting. The Awards video will be shown for the first time to members of the Committee and the public, announcing and celebrating winning projects and design achievements in Niagara. Award winners will be watching in anticipation to see if their submission is a winning project.

In spring of 2019, staff launched The Niagara Biennial program – a vehicle that promotes exposure of design achievements in Niagara by bringing together design professionals including architects, landscape architects, urban planners, artists, interior designers, engineers, and many others.

One of the key components of the Biennial is the Niagara Biennial Design Awards. The Awards build upon the success of the former Niagara Community Design Awards, which ran from 2005 to 2016. The new program celebrates the importance of design excellence to spotlight the unique design responses that reflect the varying contexts of our communities.

In the fall of 2019, the design awards program was launched through a campaign to encourage submissions within design categories that included: visionary plans, urban design, architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, outdoor art and student design projects. Eligibility required submissions to be located within the municipal boundaries of Niagara. Additionally, projects were to be completed between January 01, 2016, and December 31, 2019. The deadline for submissions was January 24, 2020. At the closing, 68 submissions representing the various design categories were received. The table below shows the submissions by design category and the number

of submissions from the 10 municipalities that participated. Submissions from Wainfleet and Port Colborne were not received.

Submissions by design category		Submissions by municipality	
Visionary Design	06	Fort Erie	04
Urban Design	05	Grimsby	03
Architecture	25	Lincoln	08
Interior Design	09	Niagara Falls	11
Landscape Architecture	05	Niagara-on-the-Lake	10
Commemorative Landscape	03	Pelham	05
Outdoor Art	11	St. Catharines	16
Student Designs	04	Thorold	05
		Welland	03
		West Lincoln	03

In March, 2020, a jury panel met to evaluate each of the submitted projects. The jurors were: Amy Friend, Gordon Stratford, Ken Greenberg, Linda Irvine and Lois Weinthal. These accomplished panelists brought a wide range of expertise in all of the design categories which informed the selection of winning projects. The Jury chose award winners within each of the design categories and noted other projects for recognition. The Jury also created a new design category called “Commemorative Landscapes” to celebrate a group of unique projects that combined the fields of outdoor art, story telling, memorialization and landscape architecture.

An awards ceremony was scheduled to be held in the spring of 2020, however, the planned ceremony was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Without an in-person ceremony to showcase the winning projects and to bring the members of the design community together in celebration of design in Niagara, staff sought to follow other recognized awards programs that are adapting to the global pandemic. Awards programs continue to promote excellence by delivering announcements using virtual platforms and videos. In this manner, a video was created to announce and recognize the award winners. This video will be presented at the November 9th 2020, meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee. The video will also be posted on the Region’s web site and will be accompanied by the Jury Report, which will provide background about the program including the Jury’s comments on each of the winning projects. Celebration and recognition of the winners will also be promoted through social media and a media release.

The next installment of the Niagara Biennial Design Awards program will celebrate design projects created between 2020 and 2022.

For more information on the Niagara Biennial Design Awards, please go to the Region's web page: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/culture-and-environment/biennial-awards/default.aspx>

Other Pertinent Reports

- PDS-19-2019 The Niagara Biennial Awards Program

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Julia van der Laan de Vries, BA, BLA, OALA
Urban Designer