



## **Township of North Kawartha**

280 Burleigh Street, PO Box 550, Apsley, ON K0L 1A0  
Tel: 705-656-4445 | 1-800-755-6931 | Fax: 705-656-4446  
[www.northkawartha.ca](http://www.northkawartha.ca)

### **Report to Council**

To: Mayor and Council Members  
From: Edward Hilton, Economic Development Officer  
Date: July 28, 2025  
Subject: Support for the Road Cuts Public Art Mural Project on County Road 620

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#### **Recommendation:**

That Council support the proposed Road Cuts mural project on County Road 620, subject to meeting Township and County requirements for insurance, waivers, and traffic safety; and further, that staff be directed to continue working with the County of Peterborough, the Art Gallery of Peterborough, and the artist to facilitate this initiative under existing protocols.

#### **Background:**

The Road Cuts project is a temporary, site-specific public artwork that will be installed directly on a rockface along County Road 620 using natural pigments and ecological materials. The mural is part of a broader artistic initiative in partnership with the Art Gallery of Peterborough, culminating in a solo exhibition titled *Precambria*, to be held at the gallery in January 2026. The project location is a visible roadside rock cut along County Road 620, in the approximate location shown on the map below. As the road is under County jurisdiction, the County of Peterborough is the approval authority for any permits. However, as the work is located within the Township's boundaries and as the project has unique requirements, support from both levels of government is desirable.



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The location was selected for both accessibility and geological significance. The installation is scheduled for some time between mid-August and September 2025, pending weather conditions.

The artist, Cole Swanson, is recognized for his ecologically focused work with natural minerals and pigments, and this project reflects over twenty years of research into mineral-based pigment-making and environmental art practices. His approach involves harvesting mineral fragments from the blasted rockface and transforming them into a palette of ochres and earth-based paints that are safe, biodegradable, and even beneficial to local microflora.



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### **Analysis:**

This project presents a unique opportunity to support local arts and culture, environmental dialogue, and placemaking in the North Kawartha area. It will be documented and shared through photography and videography, increasing regional visibility.

The proposed mural is being considered under the framework of a special event by both the Township and the County. Staff from both jurisdictions have been in communication and are jointly coordinating the requirements for review and approval.

Due to the site's proximity to an active roadway, community members will not be permitted to participate directly in the painting process. However, members of the public may view the completed mural after installation from a safe distance, and the Township is supportive of future outreach opportunities through events or programming in appropriate venues (e.g., the library or art gallery).

Materials used for the mural are non-permanent and designed to biodegrade safely over time. The pigments are derived from local minerals and bound with organic materials such as gum arabic, honey, and clove oil. The mural is expected to gradually fade with exposure to natural weather conditions.

### **Financial Implications:**

The Township is not contributing direct funding. Staff are supporting the project through permitting coordination and in-kind support.

### **Strategic and/or Other Plans:**

Strategic Plan, Environment 1. Promote responsible environmental stewardship

Strategic Plan, Environment 2. Protect the human environment

### **In Consultation With:**

Alana Solman, CAO

Jason Post, Public Works Manager

Karen Lynch, Manager, Strategic/Shared Services & Government Relations  
(Peterborough County)



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**Attachment:**

Artist Statement: Precambria by Cole Swanson

Antennae Issue 45 Autumn 2018: Matter Matters: Surfaces