

Overview of the Current Public Art Program

Introduction

The Public Art Program, within the division of Culture in Recreation, is committed to acquiring great public art that impacts Calgary's urban landscape and transforms the way Calgarians see, think and experience the city around them. The Vision is: Great Art; Great City.

The Public Art Program is guided by the Public Art Policy, which was approved by Council in 2004 and amended in 2009. The Policy provides a foundation for the effective development, management and stewardship of public art throughout Calgary by:

- articulating a clear definition of public art for the City of Calgary;
- providing leadership and guiding principles that ensure consistent implementation of the policy across the corporation;
- clarifying funding strategies and mechanisms;
- outlining a management framework that identifies consistent processes, roles and responsibilities;
- ensuring sound stewardship of all public art assets held in trust for the citizens of Calgary.

The purpose of the Public Art Policy, and the Program that it guides, is to:

- contribute to a visually rich environment;
- attract creative businesses and workers;
- provide art opportunities that are freely accessible to all;
- contribute to Calgary's diverse cultural character and celebrate its living heritage;
- support the growth of a culturally informed public.

History

Calgary's investment in public art began in the 1800s with the start of a Civic Art Collection. That Collection now numbers over 1,000 paintings, sculptures and other works of art valued at some \$5 million in total – all of them created by Calgary-based artists. The Collection is now part of the Public Art Collection which is maintained with professional expertise by the Public Art Program. Works from the Collection are exhibited in 60+ public buildings throughout the city.

In 1984 the City began encouraging developers to place sculptures in the downtown area, or to contribute to a fund that would enable the City to do so. Now many developers choose to provide public art in exchange for bonus density – and the Public Art Program is called upon to provide expert consultation on these projects, working with companies like Brookfield, Manulife and EnCana on significant public art projects.

In 1996, issues around the need for a Council-approved Public Art Policy arose (including procedures to guide Administration in accepting or declining art donations, commissions, purchases and the installation of artwork in public spaces.)

Administration requested that the Calgary Allied Arts Foundation (CAAF) address both the issue of donations and the development of a Public Art Policy. In 1998, they initiated a comprehensive investigation of issues surrounding the development and implementation of municipal public art programs across North America. This process included broad spectrum workshops, as well as a questionnaire targeted at key City and private stakeholders.

On May 27, 2003, Council approved the fundamental principle of a Public Art Policy whereby one percent of all of the City's capital Upgrade and Growth projects over \$1 million would be

designated for the commission, purchase and installation of public art. (CPS2003-38, 2003 May 27)

In 2008, at a Special Meeting of Council held on November 17, Council directed Administration to undertake a review of the Public Art Policy including the Program, Policy, Guidelines and funding mechanism and report back through the SPC on Community and Protective Services no later than June 2009.

Extensive engagement with both internal and external stakeholders was conducted in order to ensure the Public Art Policy and Program is operationally sound, sustainable, and responsive to the changing times, public interest and The City's commitment to enhance the lives of citizens. Five community forums, one in each quadrant as well as in the Centre City, were held to encourage and solicit citizens' thoughts and perspective on future public art initiatives in their community and throughout the city.

As a result, it was determined that the key components of the existing Public Art Policy were reflective of industry best practices, and that its intent and mission remained valid and relevant. Therefore, the bulk of the amendments made to the Policy were operational clarifications in order to better enable the Corporation to implement the policy as it was originally intended.

These amendments included:

- clarification of the 1% capital funding mechanism;
- clarification for the Public Art Policy to address the newly defined Public Art Collection to include the Civic Art Collection and all visual art assets held in trust by The City;
- confirmation of the role and responsibility of the Public Art Program in implementing the Public Art Policy.

The amended Public Art Policy was unanimously approved by Council on July 13, 2009.

Governance

The Public Art Program is part of the Culture Division of Recreation, which is a Business Unit of the Community Services and Protective Services Department (CS&PS). As such it is managed and accountable through Administration, and to Council through the Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Community and Protective Services.

In addition, citizen oversight for the Public Art Program is provided by the Public Art Board. Appointed by Council, this nine member citizen advisory committee is made up of one representative from Calgary Arts Development Authority, two Calgary-based visual artists and six citizens-at-large. Their role is to provide expert community input on public art, and to:

- Promote awareness and understanding of the importance of high-quality public art.
- Recommend and advise on public art policies, guidelines, plans and issues
- Review all public art project plans to ensure established criteria are met.
- Review all acquisitions and donations of public art according to established criteria.
- Act as a resource to City Council and to its boards, agencies and the administration
- Support Public Art staff in carrying out the Mission of the Public Art Policy.
- Prepare an Annual Report to Council.

Funding

The Public Art Policy provides a sustainable and responsive funding strategy for the acquisition, creation, implementation, administration and management of public art.

The 'percent for public art' is calculated at 1% of the total capital project costs (restricted and unrestricted funding sources) for City capital budget projects over \$1 million, recognizing that certain funding restrictions may limit overall available funds. Eligible capital projects include all upgrade (U) and growth (G) budget items over \$1 million. Ineligible costs include land purchase, rolling stock, portable equipment (furniture, computers, etc.), maintenance (M) and service (S) budgets.

There are three considerations related to the expenditure of the 'percent for public art' allocation:

- 90% of the restricted funds remain with the initiating Department for the development of public art on the capital project site – they are not transferred to the Public Art Program;
- 10% of those funds are transferred to the Public Art Reserve to be kept for lifecycle maintenance;
- 100% of the unrestricted capital funds are transferred to the Public Art Reserve Fund;
- Administration may choose to pool unrestricted funds for use at alternate sites, should funding sources allow.

Funds that remain with the Commissioning Departments are intended to cover the costs of:

- planning, design, fabrication, installation and purchase of public art for new and existing public spaces, facilities and infrastructure.

Funds transferred to the Public Art Reserve are intended to cover the costs of:

- timely maintenance and conservation of the Public Art Collection, in order to preserve these assets;
- public art programs and projects that ensure that a diversity of public art opportunities occur in communities throughout Calgary that are accessible to citizens and visitors.

See Attachment 4

The amount that is allocated to the Public Art Reserve equals \$1.2 million annually. As of December 31, 2013, the amount in the Public Art Reserve stood at \$2.6 million. The amount needed to be spent on maintenance and conservation is estimated to be \$22 million.

Finally, the Culture Division of Recreation has an annual base budget of \$500 thousand for Public Art which is used to pay for salaries and business services such as IT and communications.

Public Art Program Work

The work of the Public Art Program includes:

- **capital project management**
- **consultation**
- **commissioning temporary and small-scale work**
- **collection management**
- **maintenance**
- **cultural community development**
- **artist education**

- **public programming**

Capital Projects

Nearly half of all the work undertaken by Public Art staff is to co-ordinate the art projects that are attached to the capital projects undertaken by all of the City's business units. Once a project has been identified as eligible for public art (over \$1 million and designated Upgrade or Growth) the commissioning business unit should be in touch, requiring a Public Art Project Co-ordinator to develop a plan for the art that will be attached, whether it is to an LRT station, a bridge, a park, a fire hall, or a recreation centre.

The Public Art process for commissioning works of art that are considered integrated to the capital project and permanently placed is a multi-step process, with these key milestones:

- Budget identification and project planning
- Artist selection
- Determining the concept / design for the artwork that best matches the peculiarities of each site
- Fabricating / constructing the art
- Maintaining and conserving it for the future

Appendix 1 spells this out in some detail.

As a result, since 2004 when the Public Art Policy was approved by Council, it has led to the creation of 45 permanent pieces of art located in 11 wards throughout The City.

In addition, staff provide consulting services to civic partners as well as to private developers who have chosen to opt for public art in their bonus density agreements with the City.

UEP Public Art Plan

In 2006 Utilities and Environmental Protection (UEP) decided to create its own UEP Public Art Plan. Through this Plan, UEP decided to take a different approach with its 1% of capital funds for public art. Instead of a project by project approach, the Plan sought to focus UEP's attentions on a few key projects – something it was able to do because the Department can pool its capital funds.

One of the most remarkable outcomes of the Public Art Policy, the UEP Public Art Plan is believed to be the first of its kind in North America. It was founded on the principle that public art, in collaboration with other disciplines, can create remarkable places that encourage stewardship of the environment. The Plan supports the Public Art Program's vision of guiding the evolution of a distinct and vibrant artistic character for the city's public places. UEP has undertaken a visionary adventure of integrating public art and utility infrastructure to promote understanding of our surrounding watersheds, while contributing to the ever-growing collection of outstanding art in our city. The award-winning program includes both permanent and temporary projects.

Programming

While co-ordinating the commissioning of art for the City's major capital projects is a key focus of the Public Art Program it is not the only one. In addition to managing every public art project

from the initiation of a business unit's capital project through installation of the artwork, the Program also provides citizens with:

- community cultural development events that engage artists and community working together on temporary art pieces, murals, etc.
- educational opportunities for artists to develop their public art practice
- artist talks for citizens to learn more deeply about the works in the collection
- exhibits of the Civic Art Collection in 60+ sites throughout the city
- art creation programs such as the Painted Utility Boxes and the Centre City Banners, both of which employ many local artists.

Maintenance and Conservation

With a Collection numbering over 1,000 works, an important part of the Program's work is the maintenance and conservation of this City asset. A key focus of the Public Art Reserve is to ensure that there are funds to pay for the complete lifecycle maintenance requirements of art, and a small portion of the restricted funds for individual projects supports this asset protection.

Conservation requires specialized expertise to ensure that damaged works are properly salvaged. During the flood, for instance, all the work displayed in City Hall had to be taken down and removed to the storage facility, while each of the outdoor works in the flood-affected zones were checked carefully for any damage, and repaired immediately.

Public Participation and Communication

The Public Art Program maintains its own website on Calgary.ca, as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts. Some 2,000 people have signed up to be on the Program's mailing list, receiving bulletins about everything from RFPs to bulletins about events and installations.

Throughout the course of the creation of a work of art there are a number of different opportunities for public participation: every selection jury is different and is composed of a mix of community members and arts professionals; capital projects offer community information sessions, affording the opportunity for the artists to be introduced, along with the architects and others on the design team; many artists conduct their own community engagements, in an attempt to gather as much input from the citizens into their designs.

A proactive Communications Strategy has been developed to raise awareness of The City's commitment to Public Art and increase understanding of how Public Art enriches our city and promotes Calgary's economic and business environment. Using social media tools, as well as timely media releases, the communications strategy enables the Program to introduce artists and their work to the public as the pieces are being conceived, fabricated and installed.

Conclusion

In the 10 years since Calgary adopted the Public Art Policy, the Public Art Program has gained a positive reputation across North America. In 2010 the temporary exhibition, Celebration of the Bow, was nominated Best Public Art Project in North America by the Americans for the Arts; more recently the Creative Cities Network of Canada has invited the artists in residence at UEP's Watershed+ to provide the keynote address and in April 2014, the City of Saskatoon adopted a Public Art Policy which is modelled after Calgary's.

In Calgary the Policy has:

- Created 45 new original public artworks to date from commitments totalling \$30 million;
- Employed a total of 45 artists in the creation of permanent, integrated public art pieces, including local (14), national (12), US (14) and, international (5) artists;
- Supported capacity building for local artists by providing opportunities to design banners and paint utility boxes, to showcase their work in temporary exhibits, participate as artists-in-residence and take advantage of training and mentorship opportunities
- Introduced the public to art through a variety of community cultural development events that enabled artists to work with citizens on projects that were meaningful to their own communities.

Along the way, businesses in town have developed expertise in the fabrication of public art which has enabled them to compete – and win – jobs in cities from Singapore to Munich, and Calgary based artists have had the opportunity to develop a public art practice. To date, 72% of the artists employed for all projects through the Public Art Program have been local and a number have gone on to showcase their art elsewhere.

In its first decade, the Public Art Program has contributed significantly toward achieving the targeted Social Goals of Aesthetic Enjoyment and Creative Self-expression in imagine Calgary's 100 year Plan:

- *# 86: By 2036, 95% of Calgarians report that they have a range of opportunities for the aesthetic enjoyment of nature, arts and culture*
- *# 87: By 2016, 90% of Calgarians report that they have opportunities to express their unique gifts and talents.*
- *# 88: By 2021, 90% of Calgarians report that Calgary is a city that promotes creative freedom.*
- *# 89: By 2026, 90% of Calgarians report that participation in creative activities is an important part of their lives.*

Appendix 1 - THE CITY OF CALGARY PUBLIC ART COMMISSIONING PROCESS

STEP	DESCRIPTION	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	COMMUNICATION
1	Identification of Funds, Project Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Art Board review of Project Plan Community engagement sessions by commissioning business units includes PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Art Board
2	Artist Solicitation, Evaluation & Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection panel of Calgarians Technical and Design Team (non-voting) support selection panel deliberations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Ward Councilor Senior Management. Artists - Industry listservs, web Public (Web, Social media, Direct emails - 2000+)
3	Determine Artwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artist seeks input from community/ determines concept Original selection panel is reconvened to approve concept. Concept released to public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Ward Councilor Senior Management Public (Web, Social media, Direct emails - 2000+ bulletin)
4	Fabrication, Installation Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event to introduce artwork to the public and celebrate the community's input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Ward Councilor Senior Management. Public (Web, Social media, Blog stories) Invitations if appropriate Media release .
5	Maintenance & Conservation		