



Public Art Policy

Policy C001-09

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PART 1 - GENERAL

Division 1 - Context

Policy statement

- 1 The City
 - (a) acknowledges that public art enriches civic experience by making culture visible, accessible and inclusive,
 - (b) envisions public art in the City that fosters belonging, celebrates diverse stories and transforms shared spaces into places of connection, expression and community pride,
 - (c) is committed to implementing a public art program that promotes, enables and sustains the integration of public art as a vital part of the City’s civic planning, and
 - (d) affirms that meaningful and inclusive community engagement is a core principle of its public art program.

Purposes

- 2 The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent, accountable and forward-looking framework for the planning, funding, commissioning, stewardship and evaluation of public art services.

Application

- 3 (1) This policy applies to the following:
 - (a) the civic public art collection;
 - (b) services delivered through the public art program.
- (2) This policy does not apply to signage, monuments, memorials or interior artwork and visual displays not accessioned into the civic public art collection unless expressly directed by the general manager.

Division 2 - Interpretation

Interpretation

- 4 The *Interpretation Bylaw* applies to this policy.

Definitions

- 5 In this policy:
 - “**accession**” means the process of adding an artwork to the City’s civic public art collection;
 - “**City**” has the same meaning as in the *Interpretation Bylaw*;
 - “**civic public art collection**” means the collection of public art owned, commissioned or maintained by the City;

“collection management and conservation” means the ongoing care, conservation and documentation of the civic public art collection to preserve its condition, cultural integrity and accessibility for future generations;

“community-led public art” means public art projects initiated by residents, grassroots groups or community organizations and includes mural projects, storytelling initiatives or installations developed in collaboration with local artists and owners;

“creative placemaking” means a community-centered approach to public space that integrates art, culture and creativity to reflect local identity and foster civic belonging;

“deaccession” means the process of removing a public artwork from the City’s civic public art collection;

“donation” means an artwork offered as a gift to the City by an artist, individual, organization, private developer, private or commercial business or other external agency, entity or body;

“equity-deserving communities” means groups that have historically experienced systemic barriers to participation in public processes, including Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, persons with disabilities and youth;

“general manager” means the City’s general manager of parks, recreation and culture, or their authorized designate;

“interdepartmental public art working group” or “IPAWG” means a cross-departmental City staff team that provides professional and technical input and supports public art planning, implementation and review;

“long-term public art” means public art intended to be displayed for a period of time of 10 years or more;

“owner” means, in respect of real property, the registered owner or the person authorized by the owner, or as otherwise defined under the *Community Charter*.

“public art”

- (a) means original, site-specific or context-responsive creative artworks that are publicly accessible and reflect the cultural, social, historical or environmental character of a place,
- (b) may be artist- or community-led, and
- (c) includes creative artworks that are long-term or temporary, visual or performative, and physical or digital;

“public art program” means the City’s program that supports artistic initiatives and services that fall into one of the following core program streams:

- (a) long-term art acquisition and commission;
- (b) temporary public art;
- (c) collection management and conservation;

“public art project proposal” means a public art proposal and may include the general intent, location, theme, and materials used for the project;

“public art reserve fund” means a designated fund maintained by the City to support public art services, conservation and long-term investments in the public art program;

“staff” has the same meaning as in the *Council Code of Conduct Bylaw*;

“temporary public art” means public art intended to be displayed for a limited duration, typically up to 24 months, and includes performances, projections or other digital creations, murals, seasonal installations or other temporary forms of creative placemaking.

PART 2 – FRAMEWORK FOR THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Guiding principles

- 6** The following principles guide how public art is developed, delivered and experienced in the City:
- (a) community integrity: public art reflects, respects and is responsive to the identities, voices and lived experiences of the City’s diverse communities. Public art is rooted in place and guided by care for collective memory and future vision.
 - (b) collaborative synergy: public art emerges through meaningful partnerships between artists, communities, cultural organizations and the City. Collaboration strengthens relationships and fosters shared ownership and creativity.
 - (c) equity and representation: the public art program prioritizes inclusive practices that recognize, engage and uplift historically underrepresented artists and communities. Equity ensures that public spaces reflect the City’s full diversity and provide accessible and meaningful opportunities for participation.
 - (d) creative risk and innovation: public art encourages experimentation and supports a wide range of artistic practices. Innovation is valued as a driver of cultural vitality and an essential component of a vibrant, evolving City.
 - (e) eco-conscious and ethical practice: artistic processes and materials are chosen with care for environmental sustainability and ethical responsibility. Public art is created with consideration for the land, future generations and all living beings.
 - (f) transparency and accountability: governance and decision-making processes are open, understandable and accountable to the public. The rationale for decisions is communicated clearly to foster public trust and engagement.
 - (g) cultural stewardship: public art is preserved and honoured over time through intentional care, conservation and community-centered practices. Stewardship reflects respect for cultural knowledge, creative intent, and intergenerational responsibility.

Priority outcomes

- 7** The public art program will
- (a) reflect and honour the City’s diverse cultural histories and identities,
 - (b) activate public spaces through artworks that invite engagement, connection and reflection,
 - (c) involve residences meaningfully in shaping and experiencing public art,
 - (d) foster dialogue, relationships and shared public experiences across diverse communities, and
 - (e) support artistic innovation and excellence throughout the City’s public spaces.

PART 3 – SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF LONG-TERM PUBLIC ART

Application of this Part

- 8** This Part applies to
- (a) long-term public art acquisition or commission, and
 - (b) temporary public art with widespread and significant community impact.

Project selection

- 9** (1) The IPAWG will identify and obtain Council’s approval for public art project proposals in the City.

- (2) IPAWG will consider public art project proposals based on the ability of a project to
 - (a) advance the goals and principles outlined in this policy and the public art program plan,
 - (b) provide alignment with City priorities, goals and objectives,
 - (c) introduce diversity in art forms, site types and audience experiences,
 - (d) stimulate high-traffic or under-utilized spaces in the City,
 - (e) achieve accessibility,
 - (f) reflect or evoke historical, social, cultural or environmental significance,
 - (g) offer meaningful engagement with artists and the public, and
 - (h) integrate seamlessly with planning and design schedules to allow for intentional and timely public art development.

Selection panel

- 10 (1) For long-term projects or temporary projects with widespread and significant community impact, the general manager will convene a selection panel to evaluate artist submissions and recommend artists for projects selected under section 9 [*project selection*].
- (2) Staff will review artist submissions prior to the selection panel evaluation process to ensure all proposals are in alignment with the project proposal criteria under section 9 [*project selection*].
- (3) A selection panel will
 - (a) be tailored to reflect the context, technical or site considerations, scope and scale of each project, and
 - (b) include a minimum of 3 non-staff members, comprising cultural sector representation, subject matter experts, community representatives or cultural advisors, and
 - (c) be administered by staff through a non-voting role to ensure alignment with the public art policy and program.
- (4) Members of a selection panel must declare conflicts of interest and adhere to the City's Code of Ethics policies.

Artist selection

- 11 (1) The City will apply an open, inclusive and transparent competitive process to select artists for public art projects selected under section 9 [*project selection*].
- (2) Selection methods will vary by project type and may include open calls, invitational processes or direct commissions.
- (3) All submissions will be evaluated by a selection panel using holistic criteria that prioritize the specific project goals and creative strength, cultural relevance, innovation and equity.
- (4) Projects centered on Indigenous stories, symbols or participation should follow culturally appropriate selection protocols based on cultural inclusion and self-representation in public art principles, with guidance from Indigenous or cultural advisors where possible.
- (5) All selection decisions will be documented in writing, reported and aligned with the City's broader commitments to cultural equity, community inclusion and public accountability.
- (6) Council will provide the final approval of the recommended proposal identified through the selection panel process.

PART 4 – COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Community-led public art on private and non-City owned property

- 12** The City supports community-led public art initiatives on private and non-City owned property through a transparent, streamlined permitting process, which requires
- (a) written consent from the owner,
 - (b) clear project concept and visual mock-ups,
 - (c) basic review to assess public benefit, safety and alignment with City guidelines, and
 - (d) any other information the general manager may require.

Private sector participation in public art

- 13** (1) The City encourages the private sector to contribute to public art initiatives in the City.
- (2) Developers or business owners may contribute by
- (a) commissioning public art as part of their development,
 - (b) supporting temporary public art projects on their property, or
 - (c) supporting City-led initiatives through financial contributions to the public art reserve fund.
- (3) Developers or business owners who contribute will
- (a) receive public recognition through City communications, project signage and official events, and
 - (b) be considered for planning incentives where applicable under municipal frameworks.
- (4) Private sector contribution will involve
- (a) submitting a public art plan and community benefit statement,
 - (b) working with staff to ensuring proposed contributions
 - (i) align with City goals, project context and quality standards, and
 - (ii) meet criterial for public accessibility, safety, cultural sensitivity and long-term durability.

Engagement

- 14** (1) The City will endeavor to, where possible
- (a) embed engagement throughout the lifecycle of public art projects, and
 - (b) strategically design engagement to reduce barriers to participation, strengthen relationships with local communities and ensure public art remains locally resonant, culturally responsive and socially inclusive.
- (2) The City will endeavour to accomplish the following:
- (a) seek community input during the concept development stage to shape proper priorities, themes and siting;
 - (b) use a variety of engagement methods to reach a broad cross-section of the community, including surveys, storytelling events, participatory workshops, pop-up activations, artist talks, exhibitions, and digital platforms;
 - (c) design outreach to intentionally include equity-deserving communities;
 - (d) provide language, cultural and access supports, as needed;
 - (e) publicly share engagement outcomes and integrate community input into artist briefs, project plans and evaluation reports.

Division 1 – Indigenous and Cultural Collaboration

Cultural inclusion and self-representation

- 15** (1) The City will work to ensure that public art projects centered on Indigenous content,

themes, language or representation will follow the below principles.

(2) The City may apply the below principles on a case by case basis to other projects of significant cultural impact.

Direct engagement

- 16 Indigenous nations, elders, artists and cultural groups should be engaged from the earliest stages of project development when Indigenous representation is involved.

Transparent information sharing

- 17 The City will provide accessible information about the project scope, intent, timelines and potential impacts to enable informed participation and consent.

Collaborative decision-making

- 18 Indigenous and cultural communities should be provided opportunities to co-determine how their stories, symbols and histories are represented in public spaces.

Consent and co-development

- 19 Projects that may impact Indigenous or cultural communities should follow culturally appropriate engagement protocols as applicable.

Cultural custodianship

- 20 Indigenous or cultural community-led public artworks may remain under their custodianship rather than being absorbed into the civic public art collection.

Consent-based conservation

- 21 The ongoing conservation, interpretation or deaccessioning of Indigenous or cultural artworks may be undertaken in consultation with the community or artist responsible for the work.

PART 5 – FUNDING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Division 1 – Funding Model

Funding model

- 22 The City will adopt a sustainable and strategic funding model for the public art program that
- (a)
 - (b) provides a transparent and predictable framework for investment,
 - (c) enables consistent, high-quality program delivery while supporting flexibility for innovation, and
 - (d) strengthens community participation, artist growth, and long-term cultural stewardship.

Public art reserve fund

- 23 (1) The public art reserve fund will enable contributions by the City and other sources for the following purposes:
- (a) to accrue funding for long-term public art projects and conservation work;
 - (b) to pay for annual maintenance;
 - (c) to support periodic public art services, including temporary projects, marketing, community engagement, and administrative costs.
- (2) The public art reserve fund will have a maximum contribution of \$500,000 over five years and a maximum annual contribution of \$125,000, unless otherwise approved by Council.

Division 2 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

- 24** (1) The City will implement a robust monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework to ensure the public art program remains transparent, adaptive and accountable to the community.
- (2) The MEL framework will support evidence-informed decision-making and continuous improvement to reinforce public trust and align with the City's commitment to cultural inclusion, innovation and civic impact.

Evaluation report

- 25** (1) The City will develop periodic public art evaluation reports to
- (a) assess the following:
 - (i) progress toward the five priority outcomes referred to in section 7 [*priority outcomes*] of this policy;
 - (ii) the number, diversity and scope of public art projects delivered;
 - (iii) the reach and effectiveness of community engagement activities;
 - (iv) artistic participation and professional development outcomes;
 - (v) maintenance and conservation status of the civic public art collection, and
 - (b) highlight key outcomes, lessons and recommendations.

Public reporting

- 26** The evaluation report referred to in section 25 [*evaluation report*] of this policy should be shared with Council and made publicly accessible.

Review

- 27** The MEL framework should be reviewed every five years.

PART 6 – DOCUMENTATION AND COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Division 1 – Documentation, Maintenance and Conservation

Inventory

- 28** The City will maintain a centralized, digital inventory of all artworks in the civic public art collection, which will
- (a) be updated regularly to inform conservation planning and public access, and
 - (b) include data such as artist name and affiliation, artwork title, site context, materials, installation details, legal agreements, risk assessments, condition reports and cultural protocols, if applicable.

Maintenance and conservation

- 29** The City will maintain and conserve public art by
- (a) using an art conservation and care manual,
 - (b) retaining qualified professionals to assess the condition of the City's public art,
 - (c) prioritizing conservation work based on condition assessments, and
 - (d) utilize the public art reserve fund to save for larger conservation needs.

Artist involvement and consultation

- 30** (1) Artists should be involved and consulted prior to significant conservation decisions unless otherwise indicated in the artist contract.
- (2) Non-invasive routine preventative maintenance may be conducted by the City as per the artist's guidelines and materials.

Division 2 – Relocation and Deaccession

Eligibility

- 31** The City may relocate or deaccession an artwork when
- (a) the site is undergoing redevelopment,
 - (b) the artwork no longer aligns with the priority outcomes as defined in this policy,
 - (c) the context no longer supports the work's intent,
 - (d) the artwork is at the end of its lifespan,
 - (e) the artwork is irreparably harmed or poses a safety risk,
 - (f) the cultural or artistic value of the artwork is compromised or contested, or
 - (g) the artist or donor requests removal.

Evaluation

- 32** Relocation and deaccessioning of long-term artwork or with widespread and significant community impact should
- (a) be reviewed by IPAWG and, if applicable, Council,
 - (b) include consultation with the artist,
 - (c) be assessed by applicable City departments, such as conservation, engineering, legal, and
 - (d) apply FPIC, if applicable.

Approval

- 33** (1) Council will have the final authority to approve deaccession recommendations for long-term artworks and those with widespread community impact and significance.
- (2) The City will make approval decisions to relocate or deaccession an artwork in writing and publicly accessible.

Disposition options

- 34** When the City approves the relocation or deaccession of an artwork, the City may
- (a) relocate the artwork to a more suitable site,
 - (b) return the artwork to the artist or original donor, as applicable,
 - (c) donate the artwork to a museum or cultural institution, or
 - (d) if the actions referred to in subsections (a), (b) or (c) are unavailable, responsibly dispose of the artwork.

PART 7 – DONATIONS

Apply to donate

- 35** A person may donate artwork to the City by completing an application including the following:
- (a) artist biography and artwork description;
 - (b) visuals and dimensions;
 - (c) ownership documentation;
 - (d) condition report, if applicable;
 - (e) proposed location, if known;
 - (f) any other information required by the City.

Review

- 36** (1) Staff will assess applications made under section 35 [*apply to donate*].
- (2) In assessing applications, staff will
- (a) consider the acceptance criteria in section 35 [*acceptance criteria*],
 - (b) consult Indigenous or cultural experts, if applicable,
 - (c) ensure IPAWG considers cultural, spatial, material and maintenance aspects of the application,
 - (d) facilitate a legal and risk management review, and
 - (e) seek Council's approval for donations, if deemed appropriate by the general manager.

Acceptance criteria

- 37** Donations made under section 35 [*apply to donate*] will be considered based on the following:
- (a) creative integrity and cultural resonance (the originality, artistic strength and meaningful alignment with cultural, social or community narratives);
 - (b) site appropriateness and accessibility;
 - (c) condition and durability;
 - (d) long-term maintenance and financial implications;
 - (e) alignment with this policy and related policies and procedures.

Conditions of acceptance

- 38** All donated artwork accepted under this Part is subject to the following conditions:
- (a) donated artwork becomes City property;
 - (b) donors waive the right to dictate site placement, interpretation or ongoing display;
 - (c) the City reserves the right to relocate, conserve or deaccession the work as needed.

PART 8 - ADMINISTRATION

Historical public art

- 39** To ensure consistency in documentation and administration, all existing works in the civic public art collection will be reviewed and assigned to either long-term art acquisition and commission or temporary public art.

Related procedures, guidelines and publications

- 40** The following procedures, guidelines and publications support the implementation of this policy:
- (a) public art program plan, and
 - (b) the City's public art policy recommendations

ADOPTED this December 16, 2025.