

# SNAPSHOT: Civic Art Collections

Creative City Network of Canada – Intermunicipal Comparative Framework Project

**Civic art, as distinguished from public art, refers to a collection of artwork held in trust by a municipality for the citizens of the community. The collection may be displayed in rotation in galleries, civic offices, or interior public venues. In some municipalities, the civic art policy covers heritage and art museum collections.**

## Legislation, policies, and advisory groups

22 municipalities have policy guiding civic art collections, including donations, gifts, purchases, de-accessioning, and maintenance policy. Ten municipalities have included civic art in their planning process. Fifteen municipalities report legislation on civic art in place or in stages of preparation (see Table 1). Only three municipalities report a civic art committee with Council representation. Thirteen municipalities report policies guiding the acquisition of art for the civic art collection. In five municipalities, the policy covers heritage and art museum collections.

**TABLE 1**  
**Civic art collection legislation, policies, plans, and Council-appointed committees**

	Yes	In proc.	Total	Council members?
Legislation	11	4	15	
Policy	14	8	22	
Cultural Plan/Strategy	4	6	10	
Council-appointed committees, commissions, boards, or advisory groups	6	2	8	3
<i>Local government legislation and/or policies governing civic art address: *</i>				
<i>Acquisition:</i>				
Civic art acquisition	13			
Civic art donations/gifts	14			
Heritage or art museum collections	5			
Maintenance for the civic art collection	10			
De-accessioning items in the civic art collection	9			
Local government has purchased or commissioned a work of art for a civic art collection in last five years	17			

\* Overall, 18 respondents indicated local government legislation and/or policies addressing the civic art topics above.

38 municipalities responded to the *Civic Art Collections* section of the survey.

Data years reflected in this report: 2003–2005

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### DEFINITIONS

#### Civic art collection

(distinguished from public art collection): A collection of artwork held in trust by a municipality for its citizens, which may be displayed in rotation in galleries, civic offices, or interior public venues.

#### Museum collection

(civic owned): A collection owned in trust by a municipality for its residents, which may be managed by a City agency, or by an arm's-length or independent non-profit organization.

**TABLE 2**

**Civic art collection selection/commissioning processes**

	Process used	
<i>Who makes the selection:</i>		
Council is responsible for selection	1	
Council is advised by committee. Council makes selection	6	*
Committee is mandated by Council to be responsible for selection	3	**
Other	28	***
<i>The mandated composition of the selection committee:</i>		
Selection committee is a standing group	6	
Selection committee is project-specific	10	
<i>Other selection committee characteristics:</i>		
Selection committee includes staff	11	
Selection committee includes artist(s)	11	
Selection committee includes neighbourhood representative(s)	6	
Selection committee includes Mayor or Councillor(s)	4	
<i>Formal opportunity for public input on public art submissions/proposals prior to selection:</i>		
No	13	*
Occasionally, for certain projects	2	**
<p>Who makes the selection – Comments:                      * Selection by jury, as per public art process                      ** Committee engages independent jury, then recommends                      *** Other – comments                          Administered by the Collections and Outreach Coordinator                          Individual departments (x2)                          Staff                          Staff and public art advisory committee                          Staff groups rotate annually to select fine art at an annual show for display in civic buildings                          Depends on where the art work is going                          Jury                          Committee: Proponent, councillor, artist, art expert                          Civic collecting institutions have acquisition committees (x2)                          A non-profit art gallery association is responsible for the civic art collection                          This is still in progress and undecided                          No one at this time</p>		
<p>Opportunity for public input – Comments:                      * Public consultation is requested for commissions only                      ** Expect there will be, once program established</p>		
All respondents indicated their municipality has a civic art collection.		

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### Acquisition of civic art

Seventeen municipalities (89% of respondents) have acquired at least one work of art in the previous five years. There is a wide range of responsibility for the selection of civic art, and a variety of models in practice. Most commonly the selection committee is structured to include staff and/or artists. In fewer cases, they are structured to include the Mayor or Councillors, or neighbourhood representatives. In large urban centers, individual institutions have their own acquisition committees, but staff responsibility for decision-making is not limited to large cities or urban centres alone. There is usually no public input concerning acquisitions for a civic art collection (13 of 15 respondents), and only two municipalities report such input for certain projects.

### Maintenance of civic art collections

Ten have programs or funds dedicated to the cost of maintenance of the civic art collection. Ten municipalities have staff dedicated to manage the civic art collection. Ten of the municipalities have the collection inventoried and two of them have the collection online. In one case, the collection has been documented for insurance purposes, but it is not available to the public.

*Snapshot: Public Art* has been updated from the Creative City Network of Canada's *Intermunicipal Comparative Framework Project (Phase One Pilot)* to incorporate additional responses that followed the pilot group of respondents.

The full Phase One Pilot Report is available at [www.creativecity.ca/framework](http://www.creativecity.ca/framework)

Respondents: Banff, AB; Brantford, ON; Camrose, AB; City of Kitchener, ON; City of Windsor, ON; County of Oxford, ON; District of Saanich, BC; Edmonton, BC; Fredericton, NB; Grand Prairie, AB; Halifax Regional Municipality, NS; Hamilton, ON; Highlands, BC; Kelowna, BC; Kingston, ON; Mississauga, ON; Moncton, NB; Nanaimo, BC; New Westminster, BC; North Vancouver (City & District), BC; Ottawa, ON; Port Coquitlam, BC; Port Hope, ON; Port Moody, BC; Portage la Prairie, MB; Prince George, BC; Red Deer, AB; Regina, SK; Richmond, BC; Saskatoon, SK; Sooke, BC; St. Catharines, ON; St. John's, NL; Strathcona County, AB; Toronto, ON; Township of Esquimalt, BC; Vancouver, BC; West Vancouver, BC.

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