

SNAPSHOT: Public Art

Creative City Network of Canada – Intermunicipal Comparative Framework Project

Public art programs make art accessible and visible throughout a municipality. Public art serves as an expression of the community, and public sites provide an important venue for everyone to appreciate artwork outside the traditional museum or gallery setting.

Legislation, policies, and advisory groups

Municipal staff and committees are active in the development of legislation, policies, and plans regarding public art (see Table 1). This is a highly visible aspect of municipal involvement in art-making that is often an initial step in a process of arts policy development for a municipality.

TABLE 1
Public art legislation, policies, plans, and Council-appointed committees

	Yes	In process	Total	Council members?	
Legislation	15	4	19		
Policy	16	9	25		
Cultural Plan/Strategy	7	10	17		
In Official Community Plan	2	1	3		
Council-appointed committees, commissions, boards, or advisory groups	16	2	18	7	39%
<i>Local government legislation and/or policies governing public art address: *</i>					
<i>Acquisition:</i>					
Public art donations/gifts	21				
Civic public art commissions	20				
Private sector public art commissions	13				
Community public art	13				
Public art maintenance	12				
Public art de-accessioning	12				
Local government has commissioned a public art work in last five years	27				
* Overall, 38 respondents indicated local government legislation and/or policies addressing the public art topics above.					

38 municipalities responded to the *Public Art* section of the survey.

Data years reflected in this report: 2003–2005

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Public art acquisition

A municipality acquires public art through various means, and experience indicates that clearly articulated policy developed through a rational process helps to

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avoid contentious issues that might otherwise arise. Twenty-seven municipalities (71%) report actively commissioning public art in the previous five years. Municipalities report a total of 21 policies regarding donations or gifts of public art, 20 regulating civic public art commissions, 13 for private sector art commissions, and 13 for community public art.

Public art committees/commissions

The public art selection committee or commission is a standing body in only four of the 19 municipalities who responded to this question. For the others, the selection bodies are ad hoc or project-specific (see Table 2).

Selection process

The selection process for public art varies considerably between municipalities. In only one municipality do local politicians alone make decisions on the selection of public art. In six municipalities, recommendations are forwarded directly to Council, or to a standing Council committee or commission. Six municipalities mandate a committee or other body to make the actual selection. Further details of the selection process from 23 respondents under “other” include various descriptions of independent panels, task forces, or juries made up of artists, project engineers, architects, and community members or “community representatives, the majority of whom are art experts.”

In 26 communities staff members are involved in the selection process in various capacities. Staff recommend community art projects to a Public Art Commission which then makes the recommendation to Council, or they serve on a task force with community representatives which make recommendations to Council or to a Council-appointed Advisory Committee.

Only two municipalities report that public input, in the form of a public vote or opportunity for comment, is part of the usual selection procedure for public art. An occasional opportunity for public input occurs in one third of the reporting municipalities but there is generally no formal opportunity for public input prior to selection.

Public art programs

Eleven municipalities report an existing or upcoming grant program to support the creation of public art. A **Percent for Art Program**, which generally requires that a pre-determined percentage of the budget for eligible municipally-funded construction projects be spent on artwork for civic facilities, is mandatory in seven municipalities and voluntary in two. Two municipalities report a mandatory private program based on private development costs, with six reporting a voluntary private program.

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DEFINITIONS

Community public art:

Public artworks produced by artists collaborating with communities in response to neighbourhood needs, aspirations, or other community issues, and which may be sponsored by non-arts organizations.

Community art:

Links people and communities with practicing, professional artists. Community art helps targeted communities to collectively express themselves and their unique circumstances, often aiming to create solutions for a community's challenges and problems.

Public art program:

A program to commission, acquire, install, and maintain works of art in any medium for temporary or permanent placement in a prominent indoor or outdoor setting.

TABLE 2
Public art 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	8	
Committee is mandated by Council to be responsible for selection	6	*
Other	23	**
<i>The mandated composition of the selection committee:</i>		
Selection committee is a standing group	6	
Selection committee is project-specific	18	
<i>Other selection committee characteristics:</i>		
Selection committee includes artist(s)	21	
Selection committee includes neighbourhood representative(s)	14	
Selection committee includes staff	14	
Selection committee includes Mayor or Councillor(s)	5	
<i>Formal opportunity for public input on public art submission/proposals prior to selection:</i>		
No	9	
Occasionally, for certain projects	11	*
Usual selection procedure includes a public vote or comments	2	
Other	4	**
<i>Who makes the selection - Comments:</i>		
* Civic Art Collection Committee (a sub-committee)		
** Other comments: "Art Advisory Committee" (now defunct) An independent jury made up of artists, project engineers and architects, and community members Community representatives, majority are art experts If public project: selection made by Committee, then must be approved by Council for approval of funds. If they reject, project does not happen. If private: developer has a seat on selection committee, committee chooses. Community art projects: staff recommend to Public Art Commission, they recommend to Council Juried Selection Committee forwards recommendations to Public Art Committee and Council Jury Jury, subject to approval by Council Project Specific Panels Public Art Advisory Committee and Staff Public Art Committees will be convened as needed Staff and community representative task forces created through the Council-appointed Advisory Committee Standing Committee engages an independent jury to select art, then recommends to Council		
<i>Opportunity for public input - Comments:</i>		
* Occasionally, for certain projects: Community Art Projects Yes, but not mandatory It depends on the size and scope of the project		
** Other: This depends on where the art is to be placed		
All respondents indicated one or more of the options above.		

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Maintenance and de-accessioning policies

Twelve municipalities report related policy and a fund dedicated to the maintenance of public art (see Table 1). Twelve municipalities report having a de-accessioning policy for public artworks.

Administration

Twenty-six municipalities report staff designated to develop and/or administer public art. Ten municipalities report having a hard copy inventory of public art, and eight have developed an online inventory or registry.

TABLE 3 Public art programs				
	Yes		In process/ considering	Total
Acquisition of public art				
Grant program directed to the creation of public art (e.g., a community art program)	9		2	11
<i>Percent for Art policy or program *</i>	<i>Mandatory</i>	<i>Voluntary</i>		
Yes, based on municipal capital expenditures	9	2		11
Yes, based on private development projects	2	6		8
Maintenance of public art				
Program or fund dedicated to the cost of maintenance for public art	12			12
* Percent for Art policy or program: 14 respondents indicated having such a program; 12 responded to the mandatory/voluntary part of the question.				

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

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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