



COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SERVICES – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 24 September 2024

Subject: Public Art Policy Update

Directorate: Community Services

Issue:

The Community and Corporate Services Standing Committee is being asked to recommend that Council repeal Public Art Policy P-01/2008 and approve the new Public Art Policy MED-08-C, as presented.

Policy / Council Direction:

Administration is proposing to rescind the current Public Art Policy approved on February 19, 2008 (Resolution # 2008-C-055) which has been in use since 2008. This update will improve planning and broaden the scope of Public Art in alignment with Council's focus areas:

- *Four season opportunities for recreation and social connection through events, arts and culture are highly valued by our community and enhance residents' quality of life.*
- *Community facilities and amenities are needed to meet the demands of Airdrie's growing population.*
- *A revitalized downtown will be a place people want to gather, visit and be, where residents meet and connect socially.*

Background:

Public Art provides Airdrie residents with the opportunity to connect with each other to create a vibrant community, encourages healthy dialog and a strong sense of place. Public Art can turn spaces into places, however, without a strong policy to provide overarching guidance, the outcomes may not result in a positive Public Art experience for the community.

The current Public Art Policy does not include any Guiding Principles or identified Core Values to assist Council in making investment decisions to Public Art. Additionally, the current Public Art Policy does not identify key roles and responsibilities for Council,

Administration, and key community stakeholders. The defining characteristic of the current Public Art Policy was developed to assist with the process of acquiring donated Public Artwork. However, as the community has matured, the scope of Public Art has also evolved.

More inclusive and new artforms such as Temporary Public Art installations, Visual Art Exhibitions and other meaningful art expressions are on the horizon, particularly the newly planned Inspire Multi-Use Facility. The proposed Public Art Policy is a tool to guide the development and implementation of the Public Art Program focusing on community and social outcomes.

Municipal Public Art Research

The following mid-sized cities were reviewed to help guide the revision of the Public Art Policy: Lethbridge, Red Deer, Saskatoon, St Albert, Strathcona County, Creative Cities Network, and CARFAC *Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens* Alberta. Calgary and Edmonton were also cross referenced but due to the size and scope of their individual Public Art programs they were not considered a directly comparable community.

Summary of Key Findings from Municipal Public Art Research

Public Art Funding

Across all comparable municipalities, variations of the percentage for public art on municipal capital projects were common practice. The benchmark percentage contributed to Public Art is 1%. How the 1% formula is applied to capital projects varies greatly from one municipality to another. Some communities apply 1% to all capital projects while others select projects based on their perceived public benefit. Having a defined formula for funding Public Art offers a greater amount of consistency and predictability in all stages of Public Art planning and delivery.

Community Involvement and Participation

With regards to the selection of artwork, location, maintenance, conservation, decommissioning and dispersal, the common theme was that these types of decisions were almost exclusively made with the support of an arts and culture themed community committee or an ad hoc arts and culture committee. This is a key component to all successful Public Art Programs reviewed as it allows for the community to not only interact but also participate with Public Art Planning.

Public Art Management

It was common practice across all comparable communities that regardless of the delivery model of Public Art Programming, either by the Municipality or by a third-party arts organization, the municipality always remained actively involved in the funding, selection process and stewards of Public Art.

Summary of Key Proposed Revisions to the Current Public Art Policy

Based on our review of municipal policies and practices on Public Art, the following key changes are being proposed:

- *A set of Public Art Guiding Principles* to allow the City of Airdrie to continue to develop and implement a comprehensive Public Art Program.
- *Made in Airdrie Public Art Program* that includes Permanent, Temporary Public Art installations, Visual Art Exhibitions and other meaningful art expressions and experiences in public spaces.
- *A sustainable and predictable source of funding for future Public Art Program.*
- The funding formula is 1% of construction budget of eligible capital projects allocated to Permanent Public Art projects.
- The City of Airdrie will annually fund Rotating Art Exhibitions at the Inspire Multi-Use Facility through the operating budget to a maximum of \$50,000 per calendar year.
- Temporary Public Art will also be funded through the operating budget to a maximum of \$25,000 per calendar year.

The above revisions to the Public Art Policy will ensure that the City of Airdrie invests and prioritizes the Public Art Program to provide Airdrie residents the opportunity to connect with each other in a community that encourages healthy dialog and creates a strong sense of place.

Administration Recommendation:

Administration recommends that the Community and Corporate Services Standing Committee recommend to Council repeal Public Art Policy P-01/2008 and approve the Public Art Policy MED-08-C as presented.

Alternatives/Implications:

- 1) The Community and Corporate Standing Committee could choose to ask specific questions and have Administration bring back Public Art Policy information from other comparable communities to help with decision making.
 - Depending on the information, administration would return to The Community and Corporate Standing Committee and Council with new information.
 - This option may delay the planning for the Art Exhibit Space in Inspire and grand opening activities as well as other Temporary Art planning in 2025.

2) The Community and Corporate Standing Committee could choose to not endorse the Public Art Policy and keep the existing Public Art Policy as is.

- The current Public Art Policy does not support the planned Temporary Public Art and the Art Exhibition Space at Inspire, the new Multi-Use Facility.
- As the Community Services Advisory Board is no longer active, the current Public Art Policy is missing a key approval body for future Public Art Projects.
- This option does not offer Council the ability to approve key principles and guidelines to help shape new Public Art investments.

Budget Implication

Annually, eligible Public Art Projects will be presented to Council with business cases under the approved 1% on identified capital projects based on the 10-year capital plan. Rotating Art Exhibitions and Temporary Public Art Projects will be included in the operating budget for Council's consideration.

Communications and Engagement:

Corporate Communications will be notified should the Public Art Policy be endorsed by Council to ensure clear and concise messaging is developed to update Airdrie residents about these proposed improvements and the overarching Public Art Program.

Recommendation:

That the Community and Corporate Services Standing Committee recommends to Council to repeal Public Art Policy P-01/2008 and approve the Public Art Policy MED-08-C as presented.

Michael McAllister

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| Staff Presenter: | Michael McAllister |
| External Presenter: | N/A |
| Department: | Culture and Heritage |
| Reviewed by: | Clay Aragon |
| Attachments: | #1: Proposed 2024 Public Art Policy #2: 2008 Public Art Policy |