



## **COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** 4 March 2025

**Subject:** Public Art Policy 2025 Update

**Directorate:** Community Services

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### **Issue:**

Administration is asking Council endorse the new Public Art Policy MED-08-C as presented and repeal Public Art Policy P-01/2008.

### **Policy / Council Direction:**

Administration is proposing to rescind the current Public Art Policy approved on February 19, 2008 (Resolution number 2008-C-055) which has been in use since 2008. This update will improve public art planning and allow the community to experience a wider range of art in public places. The new Public Art Policy will contain principles that guide the process in proactively acquiring public art so that residents have the opportunity to experience and appreciate art. Public art is a vital element in the cultural fabric of Airdrie that recognizes the City's history, identity and culture

### **Background:**

Public Art provides Airdrie residents the opportunity to connect with each other to create a vibrant community, encourage 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.

As Airdrie continues to evolve, there is a need for a more transparent and proactive approach on how the City plans and procures public art. Public art is embraced when art experts, community stakeholders and residents have the opportunity to provide input in the different stages of public art acquisition.

The new proposed Public Art Policy has expanded the categories of public art to include not just permanent public art but more diverse artforms such as Temporary Public Art installations, Visual Art Exhibitions and other meaningful art expressions that are being planned for the newly planned Inspire Multi-Use Facility and will be supported in this policy. The proposed Public Art Policy is an enhanced tool to guide the development and

implementation of the Public Art Program and offer artists the opportunity to highlight key social issues through their work, allowing Airdrie residents to experience art in different forms and environments.

### **Municipal Public Art Research**

The following mid-sized cities who have experience and shared learnings in administering public art policies were reviewed to help inform 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 comparable communities for the purpose of this research. For a summary of the Public Art municipal research see *Attachment 2*.

### **Key Components of the New 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 predictable approach to planning future Permanent Public Art Projects through council approved and eligible capital projects.*
- A consistent, planned funding process for large scale and small-scale art exhibitions and high visibility Temporary Art projects.

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 continues to create a strong sense of place.

### **Council Committee Routed Through:**

Administration presented a draft version of this policy to the Corporate and Community Services Committee on September 24, 2024. Below are some of the main themes capturing their feedback and recommendations for Administration to consider:

## **Funding and Donation Process (Legacy, Developer or Individual) for Public Art Projects**

Council can approve all public artwork or financial donation valued at \$100,000 or greater and the Corporate and Community Services Standing Committee can approve all public art or financial donation valued at under \$100,000.

## **Equitable Artist Selection and Inclusion of Local and Amateur Artists**

Using the City of Airdrie Procurement Policy as a guide, we will ensure that local and amateur artists are aware of future public art opportunities.

## **Infrastructure eligibility for public art extends to future bridgework**

Administration added vehicular bridges to the list of eligible projects for Councils consideration. Initially Administration did not include these projects as the staff and financial resources to commit to these projects can sometimes outweigh their overall public benefit. Administration will highlight these projects as part of the 10-year Capital plan and provide the project justification for Council's consideration if there is desire to place public art on vehicular bridges.

## **Making sure to connect with the Airdrie Arts Council**

Administration had several meetings with the Airdrie Arts Council where the proposed Public Art Policy was reviewed. Administration asked how they wish to be involved in the public art process (representation at ad hoc committee, technical review, etc.). They indicated playing a connector role with artists in the community. While the Arts Council is still establishing itself as an organization, their specific role within the proposed Public Art Policy remains to be determined; however, Administration is committed to keeping the lines of communication open and finding ways to work together on current and future projects.

## **Administration Recommendation:**

Administration recommends that Council endorses the new Public Art Policy MED-08-C as presented and repeals Public Art Policy P-01/2008.

## **Alternatives/Implications:**

Council could choose to ask specific questions and have Administration bring back Public Art Policy information from other comparable communities to help with their decision making.

- Depending on the information, Administration would return to Council with new information and a revised policy.
- This option may delay the planning for the Art Exhibit Space at Inspire and grand opening activities as well as other art in public places planning in 2025 and beyond.

**Budget Implication**

Annually, eligible Public Art Projects will be presented to Council with business cases under the guide of 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 annually.

**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 Council endorses the new Public Art Policy MED-08-C as presented and repeals Public Art Policy P-01/2008.

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Staff Presenter:	Michael McAllister
External Presenter:	N/A
Department:	Culture & Heritage
Reviewed by:	Clay Aragon
Attachments:	#1: Proposed Public Art Policy MED-08-C #2: Summary of Key Findings from Municipal Public Art Research