

DATE OF MEETING OCTOBER 5, 2020

AUTHORED BY JULIE BEVAN, MANAGER, CULTURE & EVENTS

SUBJECT ART IN PUBLIC SPACES WORKING GROUP

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To highlight issues related to the City's current public art program, and to recommend that the Committee endorse the creation of an Art in Public Spaces Working Group to provide advice to Staff and Council related to art in public spaces. |

Recommendation

That the Governance Priority Committee direct Council to endorse the creation of an Art in Public Spaces Working Group to be facilitated by Culture & Events Staff.

BACKGROUND

The City's *Community Plan for Public Art* was adopted in May 2010. The plan began as a legacy project under the Cultural Capital of Canada Program and was developed through a community process involving artists, arts managers, neighbourhood representatives and members of the public. It identifies Nanaimo's vision for public art, and goals and priorities for implementing public art projects. The plan also includes guidelines and tool kits for artists and decision-makers, so that projects are developed in a manner that is inclusive, fair and creative.

At the time the plan was adopted, the City's structure included three Council-appointed bodies who would participate in public art processes in different ways: a Public Art Review Panel; Cultural Committee; and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission. These bodies held various roles and responsibilities and would advise Staff and make recommendations for approval to Council.

Since the *Community Plan for Public Art* was adopted, governance structures have shifted and the Committee and Commission are no longer in place. Various Review Panels have been struck on an ad-hoc basis to assess submissions to Calls to Artists and to make recommendations on temporary and permanent artworks through Staff for final approval by Council.

Now, the City has an opportunity to evolve its public art programs. With demonstrated community interest in new kinds of projects, and opportunities for collaboration—across City-departments, with community organizations and the private sector—and new Staff members with experience facilitating and interpreting public art, the City is well-positioned to further develop a program that contributes to pride of place and community identity.

This year, Staff have begun to review existing process, have sought feedback from artists who have participated in the City's program, and are researching to learn from examples of best practice from other Canadian municipalities.

Based on the 2010 plan, and looking ahead to a number of potential projects, Staff are recommending that an Art in Public Spaces Working Group be assembled. The group would leverage the strengths and expertise of Nanaimo's diverse art community and create opportunity for engagement and participation.

The group would be supported by Culture & Events Staff, and would ideally consider programs and policy over a longer-term, rather than evaluate individual projects, to help inform a trajectory for the City's program and collection. Such a working group will capitalize on local expertise, and ensure that programs are well aligned with corporate strategic priorities, deploy City resources effectively, and create impact for Nanaimo residents and visitors.

A number of issues related to the City's public art program require analysis, discussion and decision-making. These issues, which the Working Group may discuss, include:

- Public art funded by commercial developers and private entities
- Commissions associated with City capital projects
- A program for assessment and maintenance of artworks in the City's collection
- Enhanced documentation and interpretation of City's existing public art collection
- Insurance and risk related to the temporary public art program
- Compensation for artists
- Public art projects with partner organizations (i.e. Hub City Walls, Nanaimo Art Gallery)
- Donations of artwork to the City's collection

OPTIONS

1. That the Governance Priority Committee direct Council to endorse the creation of an Art in Public Spaces Working Group.
 - The advantages of this option: Creating a mechanism for community input and outside expertise on City public art programs.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Staff time will be required to develop the Guidelines and facilitate the Working Group.
2. That Council provide alternative direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Staff recommend that the Governance Priority Committee direct Council to endorse the creation of an Art in Public Spaces Working Group to be facilitated by Culture & Events Staff.
- The Art in Public Spaces Working Group is an opportunity for community members to inform processes related to the City's art programs. The Working Group will provide advice and act as a resource to Council and Staff on topics related to public art in Nanaimo; raise awareness and understanding of the value of art in public places; and advise on strategies, programs and policies.

Submitted by:

Julie Bevan
Manager, Culture & Events

Concurrence by:

Lynn Wark
Director, Recreation & Culture

Richard Harding
General Manager, Parks, Recreation &
Culture