

edmonton



public art

Art in the Park:
*An overview of implementing
Public Art in Parks and
Municipalities*

Alberta Recreation and
Parks Association

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What is public art?

Public art is an original artwork located in the public realm which is free and accessible to all.

There are three main types of public art:

- permanent
- transitory
- community-based

Permanent public art can be integrated, discreet (independent of its site or context) or functional. Mediums can include sculpture, installation, painting, or other artistic mediums.

Transitory public art is exhibited temporarily and it can include the mediums of light, sound, graffiti, virtual or interactive arts.

Community-based public art is co-produced by an artist and a community group. It can address social issues, celebrate heritage or culture, or beautify neighbourhoods. It can include mural arts, sculpture, and other mediums.



Permanent Public Art

Permanent public art can be integrated, discreet (independent of its site or context) or functional.

Mediums can include sculpture, installation, painting, or other artistic mediums.

Permanent doesn't mean eternity; usually it means an artwork lifespan of 15 to 20 years with conservation and maintenance.



Transitory Public Art

Transitory public art is exhibited temporarily and it can include the mediums of light, sound, graffiti, virtual or interactive arts.



Community Public Art

Community-based public art is co-produced by an artist and a community group. The community group is involved in either the research or art concept, or the production of the artwork.

It can address social issues, celebrate heritage or culture, or beautify neighborhoods. It can include mural arts, sculpture, and other mediums.



Public Art Benefits

*How can Public Art impact your community?
Why should (and how can you convince) your
municipality to invest in public art?*

Public art is considered to be a key component to the attractiveness and identity of a community, and a component of good urban design.

It demonstrates the character of communities.

Investment in the arts strengthens the local economy.

Support for the arts is a reflection of a progressive municipality.

History of Garden Art

- Ancient civilizations have purposefully designed parks and gardens around the world, including Ancient Egypt, India, Sri Lanka, Greece & Japan
- Mainly for the upper class, often cultural elements in gardens related to religion or royalty
- Objects, colours, and textures in gardens and parks had specific references and meaning
- Around the mid 1800's parks and gardens were highly controlled into patterns and motifs, and included the promenade, especially in France, Italy, and Britain
- Artworks, primarily sculptures, were placed at focal points in park and garden sites



Art in the Civic Environment

- As municipalities began consciously creating urban design plans, they began organizing placement of public amenities, parks, plazas, and transportation routes
- Modern urban design moved city structures from wheel shape
- Environment influences behaviors was a discovery of the Renaissance (14th-16th Century)
- Wanted to create beauty in the environment
- The first Percent for Art program in North America started in Philadelphia in 1959



Percent for Art Policies

Percent for Art is the percentage of capital budget that is allocated to qualifying projects for the procurement of public art.

Cities across North America have municipal percent for art programs based on annual capital budget expenditures (typically 1 or 2% is standard).

For example, Edmonton developed a Percent for Art policy in 1991 and revised it in 2007.

An Art Council or Public Art Department typically administrates the Percent for Art policy and provides advice and services about public art to the Municipality.

Public artworks accessioned by the municipality are an asset as part of the city's civic art collection (or equivalent).

Land Art Movement

- In the 1960s-1970s artists began rejecting the “white cube” of a gallery and making art in the outdoors
- Natural processes were inspiration for art
- Artists regularly do permanent and short term artworks in parks, amenity spaces, unclaimed civic areas
- Or produce art in park environments and bring documentation to exhibit in galleries



Ways to Include Art or Culture in Parks

- Commission an artwork for a park space
- Receive a gift of art
- Have a curator design an art plan for a park
- Create temporary art exhibitions in parks
- Artist on a park design team
- Writers or artists to design park didactic material signage, park programming, or brochures
- Short term art, theatre, music or other events
- Community Art event with an artist facilitator

What can a Park be?

- Artists can help in imagining what a park can be.
- Non-traditional sites like parkades, rooftops, alleyways, sewage treatment plants, waterways, industrial or non-"green" parks etc.
- Mixed use is usually successful: combine naturalized spaces, recreation, culture, with programming for a dynamic park site

Status of Public Art

How to understand the current status of public art the site area?

Review from a variety of perspectives, both subjective and objective:

Local and Regional

1. Assess key points historically
2. Community members with art interest/knowledge
3. Community members without art interest
4. Local Artists (both Senior and Emerging)
5. Future Audiences (Youth or “Disconnected”)
6. Compare with development in other sectors
7. Assess visuality of the community from a curatorial perspective

Regional

1. Compare history of administrative development
2. Compare administrative organizational structure
3. Assess needs of art communities and audiences

International

1. Compare with cities of similar population
2. Compare with cities of similar economy
3. Review new types of art, artmaking, exhibitions, types of art venues



How?

Long term plan to guide public art development

1. Preparation

Internal needs assessment

External stakeholder consultation

2. Make some key recommendations:

Address your current art assets

Create an archive and collection record

Discover where your resources are

Approve Policy and Procedures
(How do we accept a gift? Who picks the art?)



Public Art Committee

Who should guide and provide support for public art?

A Public Art Committee is an advisory body comprised of, but not limited to, such individuals as artists, curators, architects, landscape architects, developers, civil engineers and community representatives.

A Public Art Committee serves as leaders and stewards of Public Art programming; and can assist with the following:

- develop a vision and objective for Public Art programs
- periodically review a public art collection
- advise on de-accession of public art
- make recommendations/ establish expectations in regards to public art



How to get the Good Art

*A great artwork opportunity +
Appropriate artwork site locations +
Good artists +
Great proposals +
Fair and knowledgeable jurors +
An engaged community =*

Great Public Art

Create a good opportunity for the artists
(ex. Good site location, appropriate budget)

Make sure artists have an opportunity to
apply

Acquisition Process: committee or jury

Education and outreach of the art

Conservation and maintenance



Themes in Environmental Art

- Ecoventions / Ecoart
- Memory of landscape
- Habitat architecture
- Living walls/ roofs/ buildings
- Entropy / Decay
- Interactive / bio-art
- Elements like water, garbage, habitats
- Using new technologies like GPS
to share culture through images, sound

Outdoor art gallery

Public art can serve as a signifier of an area, community or city, and provide an interesting, beautiful, and challenging environment for its citizens and visitors.

A dynamic outdoor gallery of public art will inspire and engage communities, while celebrating a cultural past and future.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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