CALGARY’S PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN
What is Calgary’s Public Art Master Plan?

- A vision for building on the creative legacy of this dynamic city.
- A complement to existing policies and strategies for enhancing Calgary as a great place to make a living – and a great place to make a life.
- A companion to management processes and procedures that ensure accountability, transparency and the best use of resources.
- A tool to guide the consideration of public art in development and construction.

Why create this plan?

- Through the Public Art Policy, approved in 2004, The City of Calgary seeks to contribute to:
  » A visually rich environment.
  » Attracting creative businesses and workers.
  » Art opportunities that are freely accessible to all.
  » Our diverse cultural character and celebrating our living heritage.
  » The growth of a culturally informed public.

- In 2014 City Council approved the following revisions to the Public Art Policy that was introduced a decade ago:
  » Increasing citizen participation on selection panels.
  » Expanding the ability to create functional art.
  » Changing the funding formula for capital projects that exceed $50 million.
  » Providing an opportunity for pooling funds, including private donations.

- This Plan is intended to:
  » Maximize the potential of public art in Calgary.
  » Provide an overarching vision to help shape the specific plans developed by The City’s business units, individual developers and other partners.
  » Help shape Calgary’s approach to art for the next 10 years.
What Calgarians told us is important

Through independent research conducted by Ipsos, Calgarians told us that they support a public art program that is financially accountable, inclusive of citizen input and supports local artists.

• 81% agreed that “Calgary’s public art contributes to making our city a great place to live and visit.”
• 81% agreed that “Public art is an important part of our city’s transit stations, along our rivers, in parks, roads and public facilities.”
• 79% agreed that “Calgary public art is important to showcase our city both nationally and internationally.”

87% agreed that “It’s important to have public art in Calgary.”

- Independent citizen research 2015
The Public Art Program’s Mission is to guide the evolution of a distinct and vibrant artistic character for the city’s public places.

The Mandate is to lead, facilitate and support the acquisition and stewardship of public art.

The Public Art Program is responsible for:

- Implementing the Public Art Policy
- Managing the Public Art Collection
- Collaborating with civic partners, private developers and community members doing public art.
- Providing public programming and community development initiatives around art.

The Council-appointed citizens on the Public Art Board and the staff of the program are committed to:

- Sustainable Funding and Responsible Management
- Community Input and Engagement
- Open and Transparent Processes
- Inclusiveness and Accessibility
- A Diversity of Opportunities for a Diversity of Artists
- Supporting Artists and their Intellectual Property
- Building Capacity in the Local Arts Community
- Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration
- Stewardship of the Collection

“A Great City deserves Great Art.”
“Public art enlivens a city for those who live here and those who visit.”

- Independent citizen research 2015
Calgarians recognize that art has the power to propel a city towards greatness; to inspire and transform how we see, think and experience the community around us.

Through independent research conducted by Ipsos in 2015, 87 per cent of Calgarians said it is important to have public art in Calgary. They went further: 81 per cent said that a city without public art is “boring,” “bland,” “lifeless” and “incomplete.” Additionally, eight in 10 said that public art is an important part of our city’s transit stations, along our rivers, in parks, roads and public facilities. However, Calgarians do not feel they know enough about the vision for public art. That is what this Public Art Master Plan addresses.

In 2004, Calgary joined the ranks of leading cities around the world when City Council adopted the Public Art Policy. The Public Art Program was created to lead The City’s efforts in guiding the evolution of a distinct and vibrant artistic character for our public places. The policy ensures that all City departments constructing major capital projects invest one per cent of the first $50 million, and half a per cent of the portion over $50 million, up to a maximum of $4 million per project, in public art. Developers and corporations are also encouraged to provide art for public spaces, especially in areas of high density.

Public art has the capacity to reflect, challenge and enrich how we see our city and the world. Over the past 10 years, Calgarians have seen great examples of public art come to life in 13 City wards. In 2014, the Public Art Program began an intensive policy and program review. The master plan provides the direction and will guide The City’s investment in public art for the next 10 years. The plan has been developed by The City’s Public Art Team, in consultation with Calgarians and guided by the citizens and artists appointed by Council to the Public Art Board. The intent is to establish a cohesive vision. In doing so, it provides an overarching direction helping lead the development of specific project plans developed by City departments as well as developers and other partners. The plan is built on the foundation of previous successes and speaks to an opportunity to accomplish great things.

**It has five distinct goals:**

- To build a sense of community through art.
- To increase Calgarians’ participation in art.
- To provide greater opportunities for artists.
- To build a collection for citizens and visitors alike.
- To embrace collaboration between all who commission art for the public realm.
BUILDING COMMUNITY
Our rich heritage in art had its beginnings here 12,000 years ago. It began with the Blackfoot people who settled on a site deeply carved by the Bow and Elbow rivers. In 1884, Calgary was established on these lands and newcomers began a new chapter in our artistic history.

Today, Calgary is evolving. We are a young, highly educated, culturally diverse city that includes people from across the world. More than 120 languages are spoken here. This representation of different traditions, ideas, and cultures creates varied energy that contributes to this thriving city. When it comes to public art, our expectations, too, are changing. We are proud of the art we see, most visibly in the downtown core. We also want more pieces placed in our neighbourhoods and at significant points in the city.
To meet these needs, the Master Plan will guide our actions to:

- Respond to the needs of communities and provide opportunities that develop our artists and engage our citizenry.
- Ensure public art is considered and discussed with the community at the earliest stages of all City-built construction projects, from parks to LRT stations, fire halls and recreation centres.
- Continue to implement public art as a key component of the Centre City Plan. Downtown is a significant destination for citizens and visitors and we will work with partners in the private sector to ensure dynamic pieces are added to The City’s collection.
- Place art in every quadrant of the city at sites chosen to provide the greatest impact for Calgarians.
- Ensure that public art acknowledges the historical, social and physical context of each site.
- Work with community associations and other grassroots organizations to consider art as an important part of neighbourhood improvement and community development, where all public spaces are seen as potential places for creative expression.
- Facilitate art projects based on ideas, place and history and not just where infrastructure is built.
- Encourage developers and corporate citizens outside of the downtown core to consider public art in their developments. Just as new communities consider the need for green space, schools and fire halls, we will request that art be considered as a way to shape a community’s identity.
- Communicate effectively to Calgarians to help them understand the development and relevance of each artwork that affects their daily lives.
INVITATION TO CALGARIANS

Cloud presented by Nuit Blanche*

-Caitlind r.c. Brown and Wayne Garrett
Great art is not produced in isolation. The Public Art Master Plan encourages Calgarians to feel a sense of ownership and to take the opportunity to participate by sharing their knowledge, expertise and passion about their place.

The Master Plan urges Calgarians to be “part of your art” by:

• Attending community meetings to discuss new City projects. The goal is to ensure that when The City hosts information sessions that touch on the public art aspect of a new project, like a park, fire hall or transit station, Calgarians will have a chance to discuss it.

• Serving on selection panels. Beyond the expert advice of arts professionals, selection panels require community expertise. Each public art project – permanent or temporary – will have a specific selection panel made up of three arts professionals, one City staff person and three community members.

• Participating in artist-led activities. A guiding principle in Calgary’s approach to public art ensures that artists have a chance to hear and learn from the community as they begin to shape their work. Every project will include opportunities where citizens can interact with artists.

• Continuing the dialogue over the lifetime of the project by participating in online activities, educational programming and public events.

• Staying connected with The City’s growing collection through social media.

1. Bow Passage Overlook – Lorna Jordan
2. Fire Hydrant Water Fountain – Watershed+ lead artist Sans façon

Stay connected: facebook.com/YYCArtsCulture | Twitter.com@YYCArtsCulture | visit Calgary.ca/Culture | or email us at publicart@calgary.ca
“82% local, 8% national & 10% international”
- artists hired by The City of Calgary in 2014
When we provide opportunities for the public to encounter art, we set out to do two key things: enrich people’s lives and give voice to artists. The Public Art Master Plan respects the role of artists in shaping our community and responds to them by providing opportunities that invest in their practices, foster their development and encourage them to create art that will stimulate civic dialogue.

To help us attract and develop artists who are excited about creating art for Calgary, the Master Plan commits to:

- Developing a diversity of opportunities for public art that support a broad spectrum of artists, approaches, and disciplines. This includes smaller-scale work, temporary projects and initiatives as well as permanent, integrated work.
- Implementing processes and procedures that empower artists, emphasize the importance of art and set artists up for success.
- Responding to artist-led projects, approaches and ideas.

1. Round About and Back Again – Dave and Jenn
2. Rotifier – Bee Kingdom
3. Utilities and Environmental Protection lab staff demonstration at the Bee Kingdom studio
Helping local artists take their art to the world. We are aware of Calgarians’ strong desire to use a significant portion of our public art budgets to support local artists and tradespeople. We will work to help build capacity through mentorships, programs, education and smaller projects to allow artists with varying degrees of experience and backgrounds to create public art. This will enable them to compete on larger scale projects or on an international level.

Creating a roster of artists. It takes time and work to apply for each project. In some cases, artists will be able to apply to be on a roster and then called upon to participate in particular projects that match their interests.

Offering residencies. Time and space is often the hardest thing for an artist to come by. By embedding artists in City departments, we will invest in their process. At the same time, artists will bring their creativity to bear on issues that matter to citizens.

Publicizing widely our calls and requests for proposal. Calgary has gained an international reputation for its visionary approach to public art, attracting responses from over 40 countries. We will continue to cast our net far and wide for the best artist for the project.

Fostering a global conversation, network and community of artists who create art for Calgary that is local, national and international.
Through a century of generous giving, the citizens of Calgary have made our city more beautiful with works of public art. Individuals, businesses, public and private groups and citizens have supported the creation of many forms of public art that has shaped the diverse and important collection we enjoy today. The City of Calgary has an art collection numbering over 1,200 works, including paintings, works on paper, sculptures, glass, ceramics, textiles and photography. There is a portable collection that is rotated throughout public buildings and spaces, as well as outdoor sculptures sited in parks and plazas, installations integrated into infrastructure, monuments, memorials, environmental art, temporary projects, street art and functional objects.

The Public Art Master Plan envisions building a collection that represents the most diverse array of art from a variety of artists. We want art that builds community, creates a sense of place and captures the dynamics of our city. We will build on our heritage, just as sculptures and monuments that date from decades ago are a cherished part of how our city is defined and understood by visitors and citizens alike.

To build the collection, the Master Plan will:

• Provide a diversity of opportunities and approaches to ensure a broad representation of artists and artworks in the collection.

• Work with artists and fabricators to ensure that artworks meant to be permanent are durable. Sustainable artwork requires that the design and fabrication take environmental pressures into account.

• Undertake a number of temporary initiatives every year. Recognizing that public art doesn’t always have to last forever, we will turn to artists to help emphasize different aspects of the community, allowing for experimentation in the creation of work that is current and relevant to Calgarians.

• Take on the challenge to “paint the city.” Building on the popularity of the Painted Utility Box program, we will develop other opportunities for site-appropriate street art.

• Employ artists in residence to work with City department design teams. The WATERSHED+ artist residency has been an award-winning project in the Department of Utilities and Environmental Protection. WATERSHED+ initiatives have given Calgarians a unique perspective of the river watershed. We will develop other opportunities to place artists in other City departments to enable them to connect effectively with citizens around issues.

1. Women are Persons! – Barbara Paterson
2. Under the Helmet – Ilan Sandler
• Seek to develop artist exchanges with other cities that will bring Calgary to the world – and the world to Calgary.

• Invite artists to design a wide range of functional items for streetscapes, from bike racks to bus shelters.

• Commission or buy art from some of the world’s most outstanding public artists. Our plan is to have a collection that is internationally recognized. We will seek opportunities to invite celebrated artists to come to our city and contribute to its unique character.

• Maintain and conserve our collection. We understand that what is created today is cherished tomorrow. We will ensure that we undertake a thoughtful, timely approach to protecting a valuable cultural legacy for Calgarians.

• Embark on a variety of approaches to build the collection through donations, commissions, purchases or competitions.

• Manage the collection with care, integrity and informed expertise within a framework of the highest professional standards and in conformity with codes of ethics and principles.

The Winner
John Seward Johnson Jr.
“A Public Art Collection creates a legacy for generations to come.”

- Independent citizen research 2015
“It is indeed a great thing for Calgary to take our public art to the next level.”

- Independent citizen research 2015
The plan envisions exploring all possibilities to create a variety of art, in a variety of highly visible public spaces, in consultation with Calgarians.
EMBRACING COLLABORATION
Collaboration is key to the success of the Public Art Master Plan. Public art contributes to the identity, understanding, appreciation and enhancement of public places. Therefore, the plan strongly encourages involvement from a wide variety of people – an approach, we believe, that strengthens our community.

**To guide effective collaboration, the Master Plan calls for:**

- City business units and Civic Partners to continue to work with the Public Art Program to consider how best to allocate the one per cent for public art required on each capital project. We must determine how Calgarians will get the best value for the dollars spent. As part of the process, we need to consider if the money should be used to enhance each and every individual project or if it can be pooled to enable greater impact at selected sites.

- Developers and planners to optimize the opportunities to embed art in the development of new communities and new developments, both commercial and residential.

- Private sector businesses and individual citizens to consider making contributions to the Public Art Reserve, enabling art to be geographically dispersed across the city, where people live, work and play.

- Pooling funds from a variety of different projects if there is potential to create an iconic piece on an appropriate site, considering:
  - Visibility
  - Public accessibility
  - Vehicle and pedestrian flow
  - An area’s unique characteristics and physical attributes, community, history, and environment

---

1. Mobile Painting Device – Jeff Nachtigall
2. Egg, The Unity of Diversity (detail) – Mid-Ocean Studio Brower Hatcher and Mary Rogers *
MOVING FORWARD
“Art is a reflection of the human condition and makes life worth living. It transforms a city from a concrete jungle to a home.”

- Independent citizen research 2015

The future of public art in Calgary is filled with possibilities. The Public Art Master Plan is not static. It presents an overarching vision for the next 10 years. It is complemented by a detailed Management Framework and is intended to help shape the specific plans developed by The City’s business units, individual developers and other partners. It will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains responsive and relevant, and that the actions planned to be undertaken here have achieved results.

Above all, the plan is an invitation to all Calgarians. To be prepared. Surprised. Delighted. Even unnerved.* As we, together, create a lasting impact on Calgary’s visual landscape and build a collection that captures our community’s spirit – because a great city deserves great art.

Family of Horses
Harry O’Hanlon
Chinook Arc – Joe O’Connell and Blessing Hancock with Creative Machines

Cover credit: detail of the Chinook Arc by Joe O’Connell and Blessing Hancock with Creative Machines

*Credits
Luminous Crossings - Cliff Garten Studio. Photography by Jeremy Green
TransitStory - Jill Anholt. Photography by Carlos Arnat.
THESAMEBETTER/READER - Ron Mappett, Commissioned by Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC). Photo extended courtesy by CMLC.
Wonderland - Jaume Plensa, Commissioned by Encana Corporation
Egg, The Unity of Diversity - Mid-Ocean Studio, Brower Hatcher and Mary Rogers. Commissioned by the Calgary Zoo.
Borrowed from The New Rules of Public Art by Situations.

Stay connected: facebook.com/YYCArtsCulture | Twitter.com @YYCArtsCulture | visit Calgary.ca/Culture | or email us at publicart@calgary.ca