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Town of Aurora
Memorandum
Community Services

Re: Public Art Strategy Update

To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

From: Phil Rose, Manager, Cultural Services

Date: March 20, 2025

Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding the Public Art Strategy Update be received; and
2. That the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee comments regarding the Public Art Strategy Update be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

Background

The Cultural Services Division is developing the Town of Aurora's first Public Art Strategy, to be presented to Town Council in the Spring 2025.

Analysis

The Public Art Strategy (PAS) will direct the development and implementation of a successful public art program in Aurora from 2025 to 2029, including prioritizing potential sites and opportunities for new public art practices within our municipal boundaries. It also establishes transparent processes for the administration and implementation of public art projects that foster strong partnerships, embrace diverse perspectives and showcases local artistic creativity.

Public Art refers to original works of any medium that is:

- a) Planned in alignment with the Town's Public Art Vision and Values.
- b) Informed through established processes that gain community feedback through a range of online and in-person engagement tools.

- c) Created by one or more Professional Artists, with priority given to Artists with relevant knowledge of the Town, its diverse communities, and its histories.
- d) Planned and executed for the specific purpose of being placed and experienced in a public space.
- e) Relevant to the site or context in which it is placed and experienced by the public.
- f) Acquired using the Town's established processes and community engagement channels.

To highlight Aurora's unique characteristics, the Public Art Strategy defines 8 public art site categories, including:

Site Category 1. Key Civic Sites (e.g., Aurora Town Square, Aurora Town Hall)

Site Category 2. Gateways into Aurora (e.g., Highway 404 and Wellington, Yonge Street)

Site Category 3. Heritage Areas (e.g., Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District, Historic Yonge Street)

Site Category 4. Parks and Trails (e.g. Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area, Oak Ridges Trail, Fleury Park)

Site Category 5. Major Private Developments (e.g., Addison Hall Business Park, SmartCentres Aurora North, Aurora Centre)

Site Category 6. Transit Hubs and Corridors (e.g., Regional Arterial Roads, Major Transit Station Area, Yonge Street Multi-use Path)

Site Category 7. Streetscapes within Intensification Areas (e.g., Aurora Promenade, Cultural Precinct, Downtown Aurora)

Site Category 8. Sport and Recreation Facilities (e.g., Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Aurora Community Centre)

The Cultural Services Division will be responsible for the administration of the public art program and implementation of the PAS. Staff will prepare an annual Public Art Workplan with recommendations regarding proposed public art projects, including preferred site locations, public engagement and targeted consultation with impacted parties, scope, funding, and selection panel membership.

Public art sites will be selected based on an assessment of the following evaluation criteria:

1. **Accessibility:** is the site accessible by various modes of transportation within Aurora.
2. **Visibility:** is the site easily visible and is it in proximity to high pedestrian activity.
3. **Relationship to proposed artwork:** does the location possess unique architectural and/or natural features and will the addition of public art enhance the overall environment and public experience of this location.

Future public art projects will be funded by the Town's public art reserve. There is also \$12,500 proposed within the 2026 operating budget for public art maintenance and conservation.

When appropriate, Town staff will continue to consult with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee when developing future public projects to be located on any of the Town's parks and trails.

Attachments

None.