

Public Art Plan – Anishnawbe Health Toronto, West Don Lands



Project: Anishnawbe Health Toronto / West Don Lands Indigenous Hub Public Art Plan
Project Address: 425 Cherry Street, Toronto
Development + Design Team: AHT, Waterfront Toronto, Dream Kilmer Tricon, Stantec, Two Row Architect, BDP Quadrangle Architects
Prepared by: Ryan Rice, Indigenous Public Art Curator + Chloë Catán, Public Art Program Manager, Waterfront Toronto / 2021

Introduction and Background

A centralized, state of the art health facility serving Toronto's Indigenous community, built on lands owned by Anishnawbe Health Toronto and conveyed by the Province, is the first project on the site of the new Indigenous Community Hub at Block 10 in the West Don Lands.

The Indigenous Hub is a mixed-use city-block cluster of buildings incorporating a full development plan consisting of the four-storey Anishnawbe Health Toronto community health centre, a five-storey training centre for Miziwe Biik, and a 13-storey and 11-storey mixed-use condo and residential rental apartment buildings. The Hub will also incorporate the 1859 built heritage Canary Building that housed the Palace Street School, the Cherry Street Hotel, and the Canary Restaurant. Indigenous aesthetics and design elements provided by Two Row Architect will be embedded throughout the entire complex.

Site Context

On the Ancestral territory and crossroads stewarded by the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron Wendat and the treaty territory of Mississaugas of the Credit, this Project may acknowledge and represent the ancestral connections among the many Indigenous communities and Nations this territory has supported from time immemorial.

Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT)

The new home for AHT is planned as a 4-storey special-purpose-built and culturally appropriate facility of approximately 44,000 square feet of building space and 10,400 square feet of outdoor space to accommodate public and private ceremonial and traditional practices that includes a Sweat Lodge and Ceremonial/Healing Gardens. This new facility will allow for the consolidation of AHT's programs and services at one location, currently being provided across three sites in Toronto. The planning, design, and construction of the Health Centre is grounded by AHT's Mission to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous People in spirit, mind, emotion, and body. AHT's programs reflect the full integration of Western Medicine with Traditional Indigenous Healing within a multi-disciplinary health care model. In space comprised of ambulatory clinics, exam rooms, counselling rooms, a dental suite, a community group room, and a community kitchen, the Health Centre will offer a range of on-site day programs as well as outreach programs, including the following:

- Primary Care Program
- Child, Youth and Family Program
- Mental Health and Addictions Program
- Withdrawal Management and Addiction Medicine Program
- Two Spirited and Trans Program
- Indigenous Palliative Care Program
- Dental Program
- Physiotherapy

Chiropody
Maternal/Infant
Diabetic Services
Traditional Healer Services
Youth Outreach
Community Development Planning

Overall, the new Health Centre will facilitate the full realization of AHT's Vision for a healed or healing community spirit through reconciliation and respect, within a healthy environment that embraces Indigenous identity and culture.

Design

The new Indigenous Hub, designed in the location of the former river delta and estuary, is intended to reference the importance of this specific place through its layers of design elements across the entire block. Comprised of five unique buildings, each one tells its own piece of the story starting with the ground plane and the AHT building. Designed to appear as if being eroded from the movement of water, the building's ground floor is carved into the block with only remnants of pebble shaped spaces remaining. This concept also informs the urban realm, which encircles the entire block. The other buildings in the block also speak to acknowledging the ground plane, the concepts of craft, and the sky.

Public Art

In line with City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto efforts to advance Indigenous placemaking in the public realm, AHT has identified the inclusion of public art by an Indigenous artist as a prominent feature that will represent, promote and affirm cultural well-being and pride. Building on the functionality of a community engaged service hub, AHT has identified the Southwest Plaza as an ideal location for the permanent public art's physical embodiment to represent and share the outdoor inclusive space. This space will facilitate hospitality, and community and public engagement, enlivened by Indigenous visual art and culture.

A significant permanent site-specific public art commission designed, developed, and created by an Indigenous artist or artist team will be installed in the AHT plaza, a primary gateway and a gathering place at the southwest corner of the Hub. The public artwork will contribute towards broadening the city-wide recognition of Indigenous cultural vitalization, creative expression, and city placemaking as it relates to the Lower Don Valley's multi-layered and complex history of the land. In proximity to the soon to be named Wonscotonach Parklands, the Don River's historical role as a corridor networking land-based cultures, mirrors the essential services of optimal holistic wellness offered at AHT.

Curatorial Vision

The wealth of Indigenous land-based knowledges and stewardship of place reveal invaluable connections to layered histories that shift and fluctuate over time. The prospects to restore relationships to the land by cultivating Indigenous narratives and legacies of occupancy in urban spaces enlivens a greater sense of place and belonging to unite past generations with future ones. In this context, the conceptual nuanced principles of place-making and place-keeping proactively initiates a symbolic form of re-territorialisation and revives recognition of Indigenous urbanism from its obscured presence. By (re)centering Indigeneity to place through the socialization of visual culture, Indigenous visual sovereignty manifested as public art becomes perceptible and influential/impactful within the contemporary cultural landscape. As such, Indigenous artists can shape their creative expression to convey cultural continuity through the acknowledgement of care and prioritize an intercultural sense of engagement that amplifies historical and contemporary relationships and custodial responsibilities within the shared territory of Tsí Tkaròn:to.

In alignment with AHT's aspirations to build a healthy and thriving community, the addition of public art is significant to the overall vision. AHT recognizes creative expression is a positive attribute in attaining holistic wellness that encompasses spirit, mind and emotion, which can be commemorated through cultural representation and is reflective of its values. Public art offers visual permanence that will conceptually and aesthetically activate the plaza to embody cultural awareness and distinction. It will generate a compelling connection/relationality to place, and establish a greater sense of belonging to honour and empower the Indigenous community.

Objectives

The artwork should:

- Be visually and physically accessible to the public
- Be a suitable scale for maximum visibility from multiple vantage points and a distinct prominent feature of the Hub's plaza
- Be welcoming, reflective and inclusive of all First Nations, Inuit and Métis visitors
- Make a conscientious effort to respect place, cultural continuity and wellness through creativity
- Make a vibrant statement through the artwork to celebrate Indigenous art, culture and heritage
- Be mindful of the architectural narrative incorporated throughout the Hub, as well as the surrounding public realm
- Be attentive to engaging with a diverse community and the proposed activities and southwest plaza gatherings
- Be mindful of public safety
- Be respectful and receptive to territorial recognition and histories of place
- Be a bridge between urban infrastructure and inherent values of stewardship

Public Art Location Opportunities



The Southwest Plaza is envisioned as a cultural gateway to the Indigenous hub from the Distillery District, which leads to a multi-functional shared outdoor space that will facilitate and program cultural activities and commerce opportunities. This location will allow free public access in the Southwest Plaza's highly visible location for the public artwork to be accessible across the high foot-traffic area of the Indigenous Hub, ensuring widespread visibility and engagement.

The commissioned work could, for instance, be integrated or anchored into the ground surface of the plaza, or installed on an adjacent building wall, or a combination of these (multiple sites). However, artwork must have a direct relationship to the location's functioning circular plaza. The work could take the form of a more traditional sculpture, an art installation, or combine a variety of forms. Artwork should interface / complement and not compete with the overall architectural design elements of AHT.

Several locations have been identified as possibilities for the public art. These are indicated below. Artist proposals must specifically address these location options on the plaza.

Diagram of Public Art Location Options



Panel

Option 1: Plaza Circle



The Southwest Plaza circle is reserved for community facilitated activity year-round. However, the circle itself lends to an opportunity for public art. Artwork could be integrated into the ground surface with design elements created with materials such as concrete, tile, mosaic, and/or landscaping. Additionally, a design could either delineate or bleed out from the circle's perimeter to create a borderline and/or functional components such as public seating, platform/stage, and landscape.

Option 2: Plaza



This area is on slab and has an average depth of 300mm.

This area is on slab and has an average depth of 850mm.

This area is off slab but has site servicing below grade. Footing coordination required.

No anchored public art allowed. This area should remain free of obstructions for the fire route, emergency exits paths, 5m radius at corner property line, and gas lines below grade.

The green, blue, and purple areas in the above diagram have been identified as opportunities for three-dimensional art. North, east, west or south directional areas outside the plaza circle and within these colour bands can be used for anchoring artwork. The interior of the circle must be clear of three-dimensional artwork as the space will be used for public programming and community engagement. The grey area is off limits for three-dimensional artwork due to emergency accessibility.

The oval “pebbles” are conceptual design placeholders that border the circle and function as possibilities for public seating and lighting. The public art opportunity can either replace or integrate some, or all, of the “pebbles” into the design of this designated area.

Artists must work with the AHT design and construction teams to design art foundations that align with sub-surface constraints.

Option 3: 2nd Floor Rental Tower Panel



The exterior of the second-floor rental tower overlooking the plaza has been identified as a possible artwork location. Artists may develop artwork for the opaque spandrel panel (curtain) on the building's exterior façade.

Option 4: **Utility Wall and Ledge**



The exterior of the brick wall joining AHT and the Rental Tower is a consideration for public art. The wall can accommodate flat or low-relief art that could be mounted, and/or protrude. The ledge atop the brick wall overlooks the southwest plaza as well as the interior garden and cultural designed space of AHT. Artwork could be installed on the ledge but must take into consideration sightlines from the Rental Tower windows.

Option 5: **Combination of Sites** (multiple components)

The public art can extend across multiple sites identified above and take a variety of forms.

Constraints

Proposals must not impede the use of access areas or plaza circle. Emergency routes and utilities must remain accessible to firetruck, ambulance, delivery, maintenance and electrical work. Artists must work with anchoring requirements and constraints in the plaza, as well as existing infrastructure (lighting, bollards, etc). Artwork must consider the tree canopy on the Cherry and Mill street sidewalks, as well as residential sightlines.

The successful proposal must demonstrate its suitability for outdoor installation, and withstand winter temperatures, moisture, etc. This usually requires the use of proven technology or documented testing of the fabrication proposal.

Project Team

Client: Anishnawbe Health Toronto

Architect: Stantec, Two Row Architect, BDP Quadrangle Architects,

Indigenous Public Art Curator: Ryan Rice

Waterfront Toronto: Chloe Catan

Landscape Architect: Stantec Architecture

Procurement Process

Artwork procurement will follow a two-stage design competition.

Stage 1: Open Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

An RFQ for artists will be prepared and circulated on Merx, newswire and social media services such as Akimbo. The RFQ will invite professional Indigenous artists to submit their CV, intention and images of past work in order to be considered for the Project. The Indigenous Public Art Curator and Waterfront Toronto will coordinate an evaluation committee who will review applications and determine a shortlist of approximately four (4) artists for the public art opportunity.

Stage 2: Request for Proposals (RFP)

An RFP will be prepared and sent to the RFP shortlist. A briefing session and site visit will follow in order to review the site potential in detail. Up-to-date architectural information, 3D files, neighbourhood context and area history, among other information, will be included in the RFP in order to best assist the artists in their concept development. Proponents will then prepare detailed concepts, for which they will be paid an honorarium. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will review and provide input on each shortlisted submission. The TAC will include

representatives of the client, design team, Waterfront Toronto and the Indigenous Public Art Curator. Submissions will be reviewed by the evaluation committee in order to determine a finalist.

The winning artist(s) will be contracted by the Waterfront Toronto to develop the public art concept.

Artist Selection Process

Applications from Indigenous artists will be welcomed (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis from Canada). Applicants will be asked to identify their Nation(s) and community, band and/or reserve with whom they affiliate. Artists must have familiarity with the territory of the GTA and Indigenous urban communities.

Applicants should also meet the criteria of a practicing artist as defined by the Canada Council for the Arts:

- has specialized training in the artistic field (not necessarily in academic institutions)
- is recognized as a professional by his or her peers (artists working in the same artistic tradition)
- is committed to devoting more time to artistic activity, if possible, financially
- has a history of public presentation or publication.

Artists may apply individually or can submit a collaborative team proposal. The lead is required to be Indigenous and a practicing artist.

The Jury – Voting + non-Voting

Submissions will be reviewed by an evaluation committee (Committee) comprised of the client and arts professionals that will include Indigenous artists, designers and curators. The Committee will include a representative of AHT, a representative of the Architect team (Two Row Architects), and one community member. The Committee will select an applicant shortlist of approximately four (4) Proponents for interviews to discuss their past projects and experience, as well as their interest in the proposed project, in order to advance to the next level.

Shortlisted artists will be evaluated based on a set of pre-determined criteria listed in the RFQ. These will be identified by Waterfront Toronto and the Indigenous Public Art Curator. The same Committee will select one successful Proponent for the project.

Voting (5)

One (1) AHT Representative:

Joe Hester (AHT's Executive Director) or delegate (AHT)

Four (4) Indigenous independent jury members from the following longlist/pool:

Bonnie Devine (artist/curator – Anishinaabe)

Ange Loft (artist/consultant – Kanien'kehá:ka)

Greg Staats (artist - Kanien'kehá:ka)

Lisa Myers (artist/curator - Anishinaabe)

Virginia Eichorn (Curator)

Jake Chakasim (architect/Phd Abd UBC - Cree)

Terri Monture/Jesse Wenté/Denise Bolduc – (local Indigenous community representative)

Clayton Shirt (elder - Cree)

Mikinaak Crystal Migwans (curator U of T Art Museum - Anishinaabe)

Naomi Johnson (ImagineNATIVE director, curator - Kanien'kehá:ka)

Logan MacDonald (artist/curator – Mi'kmaq)

Jordan Wilson (curator - Coast Salish)

Non-Voting (3)

Ryan Rice – non-voting (Indigenous Public Art Consultant – Kanien'kehá:ka)

Chloe Catan – non-voting

Matthew Hickey – non-voting (TWO ROW / Kanien'kehá:ka)

Budget

Public Art Budget (fixed at 1%)	\$1,000,000
Artwork (Includes design, engineering, fabrication, installation)	75%
Administration (Includes Indigenous Public Art Curator honorarium, procurement of curator and artwork, RFQ/RFP preparation, artist shortlist honoraria, TPAC art plan, project management of artwork implementation, project contingency)	15%
Maintenance endowment	10%

Project Schedule

Task Description	AHT Public Art
Curator’s Contract Start Date	Winter 2020/21
Art Plan	Spring 2021
Art Procurement (s)	Summer/Fall 2021
Fabrication (WT*)	2022/2023
Installation (WT*)	Target for 2024/25 (to align with southwest plaza construction)

Maintenance Obligation

Waterfront Toronto will transfer to the owner a maintenance endowment equal to 10% of the art construction budget for the lifecycle maintenance of the artwork.