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## City of Toronto Public Art Program Overviews

The City of Toronto currently delivers a number of public art programs that make a significant contribution to animating public spaces in Toronto – including the City of Toronto Public Art and Monuments Collection; the Percent for Public Art Program; and StreetARToronto. An overview of each is included below.

Together, these programs engage communities across Toronto with public art, and implement the policy directions contained in the City's Official Plan. The City's new 10-year public art strategy will build on the strong foundation and successes of these programs, and will seek to identify a shared vision and guiding principles to enhance their collective impact.

### **City of Toronto Public Art and Monuments Collection**

*Administered by the Economic Development and Culture Division*

The City of Toronto has a legacy of public art that dates from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Building on this historical legacy, today the City of Toronto's Public Art and Monuments Collection contains close to 300 works that are managed and maintained by the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) Division. The City's collection primarily grows through commissions and donations. A large number of works that adorn Toronto's streets and parks have been donated by individuals or groups, and commemorative foundations.

EDC's Public Art Officers work collaboratively with various City divisions to identify projects that span across divisions, agencies, boards, and commissions that present public art opportunities. The process for commissioning, acquiring and managing public art works is based on principles of openness, equity and fairness. This not only ensures the innovative quality and integrity of the City's selection of artists and projects, but also values the artistic process by providing a range of opportunities to artists at various stages of their careers through a program that allows for innovation and is respectful of the creative rights of artists.

EDC's public art program builds upon existing relationships between the City, artists, arts organisations and community members in order to create opportunities for citizens to participate in the arts in the course of their daily lives; encourage civic discussion about public art and make possible the expression of a variety of cultural voices; and enhance community sense of ownership and value by commissioning works which are site-specific and encourage awareness of collective heritages and neighbourhood identities.

## **Percent for Public Art Program**

*Administered by the City Planning Division*

The Percent for Public Art Program is administered by City Planning's Urban Design section and is an embedded feature of the development review process. Planning secures public art opportunities in the public realm – on private lands, on public lands for future development, infrastructure and civic capital projects as part of the review and approvals of development proposals. The overall objective is to create public art that adds character and distinction to a site, neighbourhood or major destination.

The name of the program is derived from the principle that one percent of a project's gross construction costs is dedicated to public art. This guiding principle has been used for decades in hundreds of programs across North America and Europe. The success of City Planning's Percent for Public Art Program is due to the ongoing commitment by private developers, working within the City's development review process, the Planning division, partners in other divisions, City Council and the community.

The first policies to promote and implement public art were adopted by the former City of Toronto in 1985, resulting in a strong link between public realm initiatives in new, major (over 10,000 square feet) commercial and residential developments.

Legislative tools of the *Planning Act* and Toronto's Official Plan provide the authority and tools to encourage the inclusion of public art in all significant private sector developments and the endorsement of the "Percent for Public Art" funding principle. To determine leadership and commitment, there are Official Plan, City Planning and Urban Design policies encouraging the City to include public art component in major, municipal capital projects and on properties under the City's jurisdiction.

From a planning perspective, public art supports the Official Plan policies to create a more livable city by adding richness and variety to the urban environment. City Planning ensures inclusion of public art on Precinct and Public Realm Plans, Secondary Plans, and Master Plans through the identification of opportunities in the early development and review stages. The Official Plan states; "Public art installations, both publicly and privately owned, make walking through the City's streets, open spaces and parks a delight for residents and visitors alike".

In 2010, City Council approved City Planning's "Percent for Public Art Guidelines". Funds secured from large developments are typically used to provide on-site works of public art on publically accessible areas of private lands. Contributions from smaller developments are more often pooled as a donations towards the creation of public art located on public lands or in civic infrastructure projects. On occasion, hybrid on-site/off-site agreements for public art installations are reached.

A key feature of City Planning's approval process is the role played by the Toronto Public Art Commission (TPAC). The commission functions as an eleven-member panel of informed citizens that coordinates with City Planning on the review of Public Art Plans proposed by private developers. TPAC provides peer group review and advice on public art plans and ensures that the commissioning of public art by private development is conducted in a fair and balanced manner.

The development industry has embraced the Percent for Public Art Program, recognizing that public art can add significantly to the attractiveness, profile and value of a development.

With approximately 200 projects completed and another 100 underway, private developers have contributed 300 projects over the past 30 years. Their combined contributions to successful city-building efforts cannot be over-estimated. Local, national and international artists have participated in the program. The public's reaction has been very positive and many people come back to visit their favourite works of art.

Over the years public art has been acknowledged in many ways including through the Creative City Network of Canada's Public Art Year in Review, Toronto Urban Design Awards, publications nationally and internationally, and promotional and educational activities through public tours and lectures.

Many installations become city-wide landmarks and all have contributed to enhancing the quality of the public realm by animating spaces through unexpected moments of beauty, amusement, reflection or intrigue. Today, public art is recognized as an integral component of successful city-building and attractive place-making.

### **StreetARToronto**

*Administered by the Transportation Services Division*

StreetARToronto (StART) has its origins in the Graffiti Management Plan adopted by City Council in 2011, which set out four key action areas: deter graffiti vandalism, support victims of graffiti vandalism, support street art and artists, and provide a central point of contact with expertise in all graffiti and street art related matters including the interpretation of Municipal Code Chapter 485, Graffiti. Since its inception, StART has evolved to a suite of programs which also focus on advancing Council's Strategic Actions and achieving Transportation Services Divisional objectives. This includes everything from public art to managing graffiti removal on the right of way on behalf of various divisions with assets in the public realm. StART and the Graffiti Management Plan received a national Institute for Public Administration (IPAC) award for public sector excellence for its ability to turn around the considerable graffiti problem in Toronto through its engagement and its approach.

By replacing unsightly graffiti vandalism with colourful, vibrant, meaningful and legal art work, street art installations make City streets safer and more inviting encouraging active transportation (walking and cycling) and help to maintain infrastructure in a state-of-good-repair thereby reducing maintenance costs. Partnerships with internal divisions and corporate entities such as Energy & Environment, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Social Development, Finance & Administration, Seniors Services & Long Term Care, Toronto Employment & Social Services, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Water, Economic Development & Culture and BIAs, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Transit Commission, Metrolinx, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Parking

Authority, schools, railways and a long list of art organizations, community and business organizations, and residents and businesses have achieved similar results and been mutually beneficial. StART's commitment to inclusion, diversity of artists and art styles and strong community engagement are key to its success now approaching 1,000 mural installations city-wide and provided StART staff a deep knowledge base in the street art community as well as neighbourhoods in all areas of Toronto.

The suite of programs ranging from small scale traffic signal controller cabinets to 20+ story buildings along with workshops on artist mental health, community engagement and working at heights provides a skills development ladder that along with StART's online platforms and activities showcase local artists and mentor emerging talent and have helped Toronto artists establish careers, including national and international commissions.