

## **REPORT**

### ***Office of the Chief Administrative Officer***

**To:** Mayor Cote and Members of Council      **Date:** April 11, 2022

**From:** Lisa Spitale  
Chief Administrative Officer      **File:**

**Item #:** 2022-249

**Subject: Public Art Program Update**

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council receive this report regarding the Public Art Program for information.

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide Council with an update on the Public Art Program.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2012, the City of New Westminster adopted its first Public Art Policy. The goal of the Policy was to promote and encourage opportunities to animate the urban landscape, nurture civic dialogue and support the development and growth of the arts in the City.

In 2021, with guidance from the Public Art Advisory Committee and in response to recommendations included in the City's Arts Strategy, staff initiated a review of the Public Art Policy.

The resulting revised Policy, adopted by Council in February 2022, included key changes intended to diversify the way in which artists are engaged, address barriers and systemic inequities and allowing for a more responsive Program.

#### **ANALYSIS**

##### **Current Public Art Projects**

Following is a brief summary of current projects:

### təməsewtx<sup>w</sup> Aquatic and Community Centre

Prior to the Policy revision, the City of New Westminster's Public Art Advisory Committee recognized the need to centre Indigenous artists and honour commitments to Truth and Reconciliation. For the təməsewtx<sup>w</sup> public art project, an open call to Indigenous artists and/or artist teams was developed. Following a two-stage selection process, the commission was awarded to James Harry, a Coast Salish artist from Vancouver. The work is a large-scale sculpture referencing traditional Coast Salish design motifs and the Glenbrook Ravine, which will be installed on the grounds of the Centre adjacent to the main entrance.

#### Project status:

- Design details are currently being finalized prior to fabrication;
- Project completion is planned for fall of 2023.

### Artist Roster (2022-2024)

An Artist Roster is a list of artists pre-qualified to create public art throughout the city. The Roster allows for a streamlined selection process and positions the Program to better respond to emerging projects and community partnership opportunities.

For the 2022-2024 Roster, seventeen (17) artists were selected and will be eligible for projects as opportunities arise in the next two (2) years. All artists live or work in the Lower Mainland, three (3) reside in New Westminster.

Current Roster projects include the following:

#### Agnes Greenway

- Artist Rain Pierre, a local artist from the Katzie First Nation, has been identified from the Artist Roster for a design-only contract to develop artworks for two crosswalks in school zones adjacent to Qayqayt Elementary School;
- Informed by Pierre's previous *Legacy Projects*, the Agnes Greenway will include a youth art competition based on the theme of reconciliation;
- Final installation is expected in summer/fall of 2022.

#### Street Banners

- Three (3) artists from the Artist Roster have been invited to submit artworks to enliven the urban realm;
- The new banners will be installed in June 2022.

### Capture Photography Festival 2023

The City and Capture Photography Festival are working together to commission a lens-based artist for the glass façade at the Anvil Centre. The project will be curated by Capture Photography Festival's Executive Director, Emmy Lee Wall. This invitational approach, where select artists are invited to submit materials for consideration allows staff to work with curators, advisory bodies, Elders or Knowledge Keepers to identify artists.

Project status:

- Studio visits have been conducted with three (3) BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) lens-based artists and invitations have been extended to the artists to develop site-specific concept proposals;
- One artist will be selected in fall 2022;
- The work is planned for installation as part of the 10th annual Capture Photography Festival taking place throughout Metro Vancouver in April 2023.

Boundary Road Drainage Pump Station

In 2018, artist Hanna Benihoud was commissioned for a design-only contract for an integrated public art work at the Boundary Road Drainage Pump Station. Design-only opportunities allow for artists to collaborate with the design team to include public art in the overall concept of the space. A design-only contract also broadens the opportunity to engage artists who may not have construction or project management experience.

The artwork will consist of a series of small sculptures and painted horizontal and vertical surfaces surrounding the pump station.

Project status:

- Shop drawings will be created by the fabricator;
- Installation will coincide with the completion of the overall construction project.

New Westminster Public Library

A one-stage open call has been launched to select the artist for the Library project. In this process, the artist is selected based on qualifications, past work and an interview, before developing their concept.

Project status:

- Call to artist was issued in March, closing on April 29, 2022;
- The selected artist will work with City, Library and stakeholders to develop their final project.

Artist-Initiated Public Art Project

Generally, public art opportunities are determined by the percent for art funding mechanism from eligible construction projects or other City planning priorities. An Artist-Initiated Public Art opportunity, funded through the Public Art Reserve, allows for grassroots, artist-led initiatives and reverses the normal processes, giving artists the ability to identify where art could be sited and to determine the goals of the project based on their practice and interests. Artist-initiated public art projects support experimentation and build capacity.

A Call to Artists was issued for a two-stage process. Three (3) artists were shortlisted, and were engaged to develop and present concept proposals to the Selection Panel.

The selected artist, Emilie Crewe is North Vancouver-based artist who will develop and install a temporary and interactive LED installation on the façade of City Hall which

references the City of New Westminster's response to a request for submissions by the Province on police reform.

Project status:

- Community engagement will take place over the coming months to refine the concept;
- The work is planned for installation in May 2023.

### **Public Art Plan**

A strategy for a Public Art Plan is being developed in consultation with the Arts Advisory Committee, to be brought to Council for direction. The development of a Public Art Plan is an opportunity to engage, build and renew relationships with artists, cultural communities, local Indigenous communities as well as local businesses, organizations and private industry to ensure that the public art program sets a direction that is intentional, responsive, respectful and inclusive. The Plan will inform both the direct delivery of civic projects and how the City can best support community-led projects.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Current public art projects are funded through the City's approved capital plan.

### **OPTIONS**

Council is asked to consider the following options:

1. Receive this report regarding the Public Art Program for information;
2. Provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommend option 1.

### **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
Quyen Hoang, Public Art Coordinator

This report was reviewed by:  
Todd Ayotte, Manager, Community Arts and Theatre

This report was approved by:  
Lisa Spitale, Chief Executive Officer