Redefining Public Art in Toronto

A collaborative project by researchers from OCAD University & the University of Toronto

2017
Redefining Public Art in Toronto

A collaborative project by researchers from OCAD University and the University of Toronto

OCAD University Team

Dr. Sara Diamond OCAD U President
Dr. Marie-Josée Therrien Associate Professor
Ala Roushan Assistant Professor
Francisco Alvarez Peter and Doreen Milligan Executive & Artistic Director, OCAD U Galleries System
Dr. Claire Brunet Associate Professor
Derek Sullivan Assistant Professor
Xenia Benivolski Alumni/Independent Curator
Macy Siu Graduate Research Assistant
Roman Romanov Undergraduate Research Assistant
Jade Lee Hoy Graduate Research Assistant
Robin Buxton-Potts Coordinator

University of Toronto Team

Dr. Daniel Silver Associate Professor
Noga Keidar PhD Candidate
Dr. Analays Alvarez Hernandez Postdoctoral Fellow
Yasmin Koop-Monteiro Graduate Research Assistant
Dr. Mark Cheetham, Advisor Associate Professor
“Redefining Public Art in Toronto” provides a blueprint for the future of public art in Toronto. It makes a number of recommendations:

1. A renewed vision for public art in Toronto
   - Redefine public art
   - Public art everywhere
   - Simplify process

2. Robust funding for public art
   - Build new collaborations

3. Promote public art

4. Integrate public art into all future planning
Executive summary and major recommendations

Toronto is poised to become a leader in public art after four decades of significant investment. At the same time, Toronto is at an inflection point; our investment and overall initiative has lagged vis-à-vis peer cities like Chicago, San Francisco, and Ottawa. Toronto will thrive if we renew our commitment to a powerful public art presence for our city and support that commitment with appropriate private and public sector institutional capacity, funding, and collaboration.

Given the cultural diversity of Toronto, its Indigenous population, ongoing development, population growth, and the strength of its public institutions, Toronto should be known for the reach, diversity, and transformational power of public art in its downtown core and across its neighbourhoods and communities. Toronto is Canada’s largest city and a dynamic hub of economic activity and immigration. It is increasingly a vertical city where the public realm plays a critical role in its social and recreational life. Public art can educate and engage youth, spark tourism, help us to understand ourselves better, and enhance our day-to-day experience of the urban environment. Public art can be a powerful force that serves many constituencies and can unify and challenge us across our cultural identities and neighbourhoods.

While at a turning point, Toronto has benefited from decades of significant investment in public art. City policy has harnessed the unprecedented development boom to make public art a compelling presence in the downtown core and other areas of intense growth. Development is now moving into other neighbourhoods, heralding opportunities for continued developer-driven public art investment outside of the downtown core. The number of public art works within the city borders is at an all-time high (700 public artworks in Toronto from 1967–2015), and various programs co-exist to deliver large-scale permanent work, festivals, and temporary and ephemeral installations across multiple media and scales.

Yet there are gaps and challenges. The City of Toronto lacks a public art master plan. Outside of intensive development zones, public art is scarce; and in the urban core there are few sites where it is aggregated into larger or interconnected projects. In comparison with other cities’ public art policies and bylaws, Toronto lacks strong policy tools to bring public art to underserved areas. The City of Toronto does not mandate a significant place in its own infrastructure plans and budgets for public art. Moreover, Toronto’s formal public art guidelines have not kept up with emergent global public art practices, which increasingly encourage more open and diverse ideas of what public art is and can be, emphasizing the power of public art for audience and viewer engagement. Even within the limits of its current policy framework, there is much that the City of Toronto could do to expand the scope and vision of public art. For example, public art created through the City’s own capital projects offer opportunities to
realize projects beyond sculptural work, thereby redefining the notion of permanence when it comes to public art.

Over the last four decades public art has galvanized neighborhoods around the world, yet in Toronto it is a relatively untapped tool for engaging with and promoting vibrant and inclusive communities. Inspired by the potential of art in public space, a vigorous dialogue has sprung up from many sources with the goal of making Toronto a leader in global public art practice. Participants seek to evaluate current practice and explore future opportunities to expand the definition, practice, and support for public art in this city. Though this conversation transcends policy, policy is a key part of the puzzle. Spurred by this dialogue and by the relevance of public art to universities, researchers from OCAD University and the University of Toronto joined together to produce this report, *Redefining Public Art in Toronto*.

While the final chapter provides an in-depth discussion of our conclusions and recommendations, major recommendations are summarized below and structured into immediate actions and midterm actions.

1. **A renewed vision for public art in Toronto**

   **Immediate**
   
   - The City of Toronto must renew its commitment to public art.
   - Establish the goal of international leadership in public art.
   - Establish the goal of public art everywhere and end “public art deserts” outside the downtown core.
   - Launch a one-year public art working group to develop a public art master plan (called for in the 2003 *Culture Plan for the Creative City* but never implemented). In the short term, establish a timeline and oversee implementation of immediately actionable proposals in this report. Include City of Toronto staff, public art experts, artists, developers, planners, and architects.
   - Augment the public art master plan with an implementation plan and integrate public art planning into other key City planning documents and core values.

2. **Redefine public art**

   **Immediate**
   
   - Change Toronto’s definition of public art to encompass artworks of different typologies, durations, and media, from the temporary and ephemeral to semi-permanent and permanent installations and sculpture, media art, and performances, reflecting best practices in leading cities.
• Define inclusive eligibility for professional artists, interdisciplinary artists, and teams that include (for instance) artists, designers, architects, landscape artists, and new media artists-engineers.
• Support local, international, and emerging artists’ projects.
• Create opportunities for Indigenous and culturally diverse voices.

3. Public art everywhere

**Immediate**
- Build a district-oriented approach into a new Public Art Master Plan while simultaneously fast-tracking new local-area public art plans.
- Deploy public art as a means to create community hubs and districts and to humanize and aestheticize much-needed infrastructure.
- Commission public art as a means of social engagement, dialogue, and social interaction, including all City of Toronto neighbourhoods.

**Midterm**
- Integrate public art into specific plans, including those of TOCore, Parks and Recreation, and other Toronto agencies.
- Aggressively deploy existing policy tools to pool public art contributions collected through Section 37 and City capital projects, hence creating dialogue across projects and spaces.
- Strengthen policy mechanisms that permit pooling existing and future funds from private and public sources.
- Establish a centralized and consolidated Public Art Trust Fund from City of Toronto capital projects and new funding sources, capable of targeting any part of the city.
- Partner with Toronto’s existing Local Arts Services Organizations (LASOs) to build a strong public art presence in all parts of the city.
- Support purchases of existing works and loans as an economically viable means to expand public art works.

4. Simplify process

**Immediate**
- Create a single Public Art Office that spans Culture and Planning.
- Ensure that artists are engaged in site and project planning to better guarantee quality, integration, and cost.
- Create clear policies regarding process to acquire existing works: sustainability and stewardship for loans (lending practices), rentals, and purchases.
**Midterm**

- Create and more proactively implement flexible methods to acquire public art through open calls, invitational competitions (RFQ and RFP), commissions of new works, rentals, loans, and purchases of completed works.

5. **Robust funding for public art**

**Immediate**

- Implement Toronto City Council recommendation (2003) that the City of Toronto and its agencies apply a “per cent for art” program to all major capital projects, both for new buildings and infrastructure.
- Create a set-aside to service conservation of City of Toronto art works over the next five years to bring works up to appropriate standards, including conservation and annual reviews by conservators who will issue reports and updates.
- Mandate that the set-aside from developer-supported projects for maintenance (10 per cent or another agreed-upon amount) support an arms-length fund for conservation and annual reviews by conservators, who will issue reports and updates.

**Midterm**

- Create policy mechanisms that require developers to make public art projects a component of all new building projects in the City of Toronto, according to a clear set of guidelines. We acknowledge that the Ontario Planning Act does not currently enable this approach through Section 37. However, this practice is common in many Canadian, North American, and international cities. Possibilities include recognizing public art as an eligible development charge.
- Require that all City of Toronto agencies contribute a fixed percentage of their capital budgets towards public art.
- Develop new tools for funding public art. Possibilities include setting aside a portion of current billboard taxes for billboard public art, setting aside any new City hotel or vacant property tax, and provincial recognition of public art as an eligible development charge.
- Create a central Public Art Trust Fund to support significant public art projects. This fund would pool City of Toronto funds with other potential funding sources.
- Create specific project funds for Indigenous works, screen-based and media works, and works of shorter duration.
- Create opportunities for artist-run centres and post-secondary institutions to commission public art works that are temporary, created by emerging artists, and/or community-based.
• After the task force completes its work, create a “Friends of Public Art” group to foster collaboration and dialogue regarding public art in the City of Toronto and to build the Public Art Trust Fund.

6. **Build new collaborations**

   **Immediate**
   • Collaborate with the Ministry of Canadian Heritage to ensure that there is a public art set-aside for investments in cultural spaces funding in Toronto.

   **Midterm**
   • Strengthen collaborative programs between professionals, public institutions, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Arts Council, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), neighbourhood and civic associations, developers, and universities.
   • Promote public art exhibitions in public facilities, such as libraries, police and fire stations, community and civic centres, and municipal and provincial service centres, as well as cultural institutions and universities.
   • Embed public artists in many city agencies, on the model of Edmonton’s “Art of Living” plan, Seattle’s Artist in-Residence program, or Vancouver’s Artist-Made Building Parts program.

7. **Promote public art**

   **Immediate**
   • Create online interactive tools to promote Toronto’s rich public art holdings by building on Ilana Altman’s *The Artful City*.
   • Develop ongoing support for expert-led engagement with artworks in partnership with universities, existing public art agencies, public art leaders, and other groups, in collaboration with Tourism Toronto.
   • Community consultations and community involvement in the function, site, and conceptual approach of a given public art project should be woven into both the process of choosing artists and finalizing commissions.

8. **Integrate public art into all future planning**

   **Midterm**
   • Integrate public art into all aspects of urban planning such as urban design guidelines. Use public art to enhance the meaning and impact of policy priorities, such as affordable housing, infrastructure developments, or environmental awareness.
   • Review policy every ten years in recognition of the dynamic environment of Toronto.
Approach to research

The interdisciplinary OCAD University and University of Toronto team consisted of public art practitioners, curators, art and architectural historians, design thinkers, urban planners, and cultural sociologists. We deployed a mixed-method approach, beginning with a literature review. We then examined Toronto’s own history through an overview of policy documents, interviews, and a quantitative analysis of the number of public art works produced in Toronto over time to understand where public art is produced and who is producing it. We considered the Canadian and international field of municipal public art policy and practice through a rigorous evaluation of policy documents in order to identify trends and future directions in the field. We undertook a deep comparative case study with Montreal, again using documents and 40 interviews from both cities as part of our qualitative approach.¹

Public art bylaws, zoning, and funding models vary from province to state and from city to town, as delineated in this document. But a common theme across policy and legal environments is that cities with a strong commitment to public art find a way to realize that commitment, whatever their distinctive policy challenges may be. Measured against the international trends in the field, Toronto has not kept up in the ways that we document.

We are suggesting new elements of programs and strategy as well as the implementation of previously proposed but unrealized ideas. But we are also supportive of much that exists in Toronto, seeing ways to update its currency for now and the future. Although not focused beyond Toronto, our recommendations may bear relevance for other cities in Ontario and beyond.

The report is structured as follows: Chapter 1 provides a synthesis of our methods, while Chapter 2 is a literature review. Chapter 3 examines Toronto’s history and practice through its policy documents and patterns of public art development over time. Chapter 4 develops the international comparison, while Chapter 5 discusses the results of our qualitative research, interviews with key public art stakeholders in Toronto. Chapter 6 briefly reviews ideas from two public forums, the result of collaboration between the Art Gallery of Ontario and OCAD University. Chapter 7 articulates the results of a close comparative case study with Montreal.

Chapter 8 reiterates our recommendations. It was clear that Toronto could adopt best practices from other Canadian cities, such as Ottawa and Montreal, as well as from international leaders such as San Francisco, while continuing to lead in

¹We did not undertake a comparative analysis of which artists and media are currently installed in Toronto and Montreal but did consider policy and practice as related to the temporality of art works in each city.
this city’s considerable commitment to public art — not only through ongoing investments by the developer community, but also by expanding the City’s own investment while pursuing other new funding tools.

Readers are encouraged to review the entire report, but may also wish to pick and choose particular chapters of interest. The table of contents contains hyperlinks to each chapter to make this easier.

Funding for this project was graciously provided by the Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso, Leslie Gales, Metropia Developments/Howard Sokolowski, David Moos Art Advisory, Bill Morneau & Nancy McCain Foundation, the University of Toronto, and OnSite Gallery and the Office of the President, OCAD University. We acknowledge the important contribution of Ilana Altman’s research to our conclusions. We thank David Moos for inspiring us to undertake this project.

**We also extend a sincere thank you to our informal Advisory Group:**
- Mitchell Cohen
- Elsa M. Fancelli
- Leslie Gales
- Emanuelle Gattuso
- Claire Hopkinson
- Peter Kingstone
- Nancy McCain
- David Moos
- Anthony Sargeant
- Carol Weinbaum

We thank our readers who gave helpful feedback to our draft: James Booty, Rebecca Carbin, Stuart Keeler, Bruce Kuwabara, Ciara McKeown, Terry Nicholson, and Catherine Dean and her City of Toronto colleagues.
## Table of Contents

### Chapter 1: Principles and Methods for Evaluating Public Art Policy in Toronto  
12
- Core analytical principles: Evolution, context, consequences 12
- Three contexts: History of Toronto, international public art policy, Montreal 13
- Main research methods and data sources 14

### Chapter 2: Literature Review — Key Themes from the Interdisciplinary Dialogue about Public Art  
20
- The emergence of public art as a municipal policy target 20
- Vision and definition: Large public artworks 21
- Definition and impacts: Urbanism 23
- Infrastructure 24
- Outside of the city 24
- Impacts: Social change and public art 25
- Education and educational institutions 25
- Public art selection processes 26
- The reception of public art 27

### Chapter 3: Public Art Policy in the Context of Toronto’s Evolution as a Global City  
28
- Public art policy in Toronto: Historical background 28
- Main elements of Toronto public art policy after 2002 33
- Consequences of Toronto’s public art policy 40
- Public art policy stasis amidst urban dynamism 49

### Chapter 4: Toronto Public Art Policy in the Context of the International Municipal Public Art Policy Field  
54
- Comparing Toronto’s official public art policy to other cities’ Maintenance 54
- Expanding public art presence 61
- Community engagement 65

### Chapter 5: Perspectives on Public Art from Key Toronto Stakeholders  
68
- Major theme 1: Definition and value of public art 69
- Major theme 2: Challenges 74
- Major theme 3: Future directions for public art in Toronto 80
Chapter 1: Principles and Methods for Evaluating Public Art Policy in Toronto

This chapter outlines major principles and methods that inform our evaluation of public art policy in Toronto. It describes what we set out to understand, what we did to achieve this goal, and how we arrived at our conclusions. Our approach derives from the years of collective experience in policy analysis our team brings together.

We feature a multi-method approach in the service of understanding public art policy-making as a dynamic process in need of periodic review and renewal. We draw on several data sources and analytical techniques. Through an analysis of nearly 200 public art policy documents from almost 30 cities, we examine how Toronto’s policies compare to major trends in the field and find that it lags behind in key areas. Through interviews with approximately 40 key public art stakeholders, we unpack opinions about what is working well and what could be improved. Analyzing a database of over 700 public artworks produced in Toronto from 1967–2015 (compiled by Ilana Altman from The Artful City) has allowed us to examine objective trends in the location of public art, who is commissioning it, and who is making it. A wide-ranging literature review places our research in the context of a long-running interdisciplinary conversation about public art and orients our recommendations about how to move forward.

The chapter is structured as follows:
- First, we elaborate the core principles guiding our research: “evolution,” “context,” and “consequences.”
- Second, we introduce the three major policy contexts we examined: the historical context of Toronto’s public art policy; the international field of public art policy; and a deep comparative case study of Montreal.
- Third, we provide an overview of the main methods we utilized.

Core analytical principles: Evolution, context, consequences

Three key principles have guided our research: evolution, context, and consequences. This section elaborates each in turn and articulates their importance to our analysis.

Evolution. To study public art policy in Toronto, we have adopted an evolutionary, or developmental, point of view. Central features of this perspective include:
• Public art policies are products of their times. They are adopted at particular moments by particular people, and defined by the assumptions, politics, social climate, and opportunities of a particular situation.

• Cities continue to grow and evolve after a policy framework is adopted.

• Public art itself is a dynamic practice that continuously changes.

• Therefore, public art policy must continuously grow and adapt, to the city and to public art practice.

**Context.** To understand the evolution of a policy framework, placing it in a comparative and historical context is crucial. Context is important for a number of reasons:

• Broadening horizons. We learn more about ourselves through learning about others. Comparison allows us to break out of parochial assumptions and to identify what is distinctive to Toronto, and what it shares with other cities.

• Seeing paths not taken and imagining alternative futures. Every decision comes at a crossroads, and once a path is taken it can seem inevitable. Examining historical and comparative context loosens up this sense of inevitability and reminds us that other options were available and could still be pursued. Policy ideas that may have been considered in the past but not implemented may be “ripe” at a later date.

• Understanding the original motivations, constraints, and opportunities that created Toronto’s public art policies, as well as understanding the ways that these policies have functioned in practice.

**Consequences.** We evaluate a policy not only by its original aspirations but also by its actual results in practice. Because of the inherent dynamism and complexity of a city, it is impossible to anticipate all the consequences of a policy framework. Hindsight allows us to identify the impact of past decisions and policy interpretations that may not have been evident at the time.

**Three contexts: History of Toronto, international public art policy, Montreal**

Our research begins from and builds upon a substantive literature review. With this review in mind, we examined Toronto’s public art policies in reference to three contexts:
- Toronto’s own history
- The international field of municipal public art policy
- A deep comparative case study with Montreal

Each makes distinct contributions to our evaluation of public art policy in Toronto.

**History of Toronto.** Toronto’s public art policies unfold within the history of Toronto. That history defines what sociologists refer to as the local “opportunity structure.” While we might imagine nearly any policy idea in the abstract, the actual implementation of an idea is constrained and channeled in numerous ways. We thus examine how Toronto has changed since it implemented its public art policies in order to unpack emerging new opportunities and obligations for public art.

**International public art policy field.** Policy-makers often adopt elements of what are considered “best practice” at a given point in time, drawing on definitions developed in the international field. Yet these definitions evolve, and a city that was once at the vanguard can find itself out of step with the international consensus.

Periodically reviewing how the field has developed and comparing local practice to general trends is an effective way to discover where and how Toronto does and does not align with other similar cities around the world.

**Close comparative case study with Montreal.** Montreal has a long history as a global leader in public art. It has effectively managed controversy over specific artworks and sustained a growing and diversified investment in public art. While Toronto and Montreal operate in fairly distinct policy environments, a close study of an international and Canadian leader in the field brings distinctive value. It can provoke, inspire, and challenge Toronto to keep pace — and to push further. As the two cities have been and continue to be measured against one another, it makes sense to do so deliberately and carefully.

**Main research methods and data sources**

Building on an extensive literature review, our research employs four main methods: historical analysis of public art in Toronto, document analysis, interviews, and public forums and consultations. This section briefly provides an overview of each method and its associated data sources.
**Literature review.** We conducted a literature review of a wide-ranging academic and professional dialogue about public art. This dialogue has strong precedents in art, architectural, and urban planning histories. The conversation has grown to include fields as diverse as public policy, politics, cultural economics, economic development, architecture, urban studies, sociology, museum studies, curatorial studies, and cultural studies. In undertaking our research, we absorbed a great deal of this literature, looking for trends and recommendations. Our review was sharpened through participating in a major conference on public art held at York University, Toronto, in May 2017: “Public Art: New Ways of Thinking and Working.”

**Document analysis.** To understand both the history of public art policy-making in Toronto and the broader international context of public art policy, we gathered numerous policy-related documents. Generally, we gathered material from large, diverse, English-speaking cities. Figure 2 summarizes the resulting database.
To analyze these documents, we used two main approaches, qualitative coding and computational text analysis. To qualitatively code the documents, a team of researchers read a subset of the full corpus of documents (N=90) and recursively developed a set of key terms for systematically comparing the texts. In turn, we used qualitative coding software to mark and retrieve passages in documents that exemplify each theme. We additionally produced brief summaries for each city, to facilitate comparison. For a list of the qualitative coding used in our analysis, see Appendix A.

We also explored computational text analysis on the corpus of policy documents. Computational text analysis extracts words and phrases from texts and seeks patterns in their frequency and combination. It can provide a synoptic view of an entire corpus and provide a useful external check on conventional close reading. For this research, computational text analysis was primarily a supplement to our qualitative coding.
Interviews. Documents show the official version of a policy, and reviewing these formal statements is a crucial feature of understanding a policy regime. But they do not capture the full scope of actual practice or the process through which policies were produced.

To better understand this background and application, we conducted interviews with expert informants in Toronto and Montreal. Our interviewees were drawn from a pool of key stakeholders in public art policy. We sought a range of expertise from various domains and perspectives. The main stakeholder categories included:

- architects
- art consultants
- artists and curators
- art institutions and organizations
- city officers
- councillors
• developers
• major public art commission organizations
• philanthropists

While more interviews are always possible, our goal — given the limits of time and resources — was not completeness, but what is sometimes called “saturation.” As interview responses settle into a few recurrent patterns, we approach saturation. Adding more interviews enhances the robustness of findings, but does not alter their overall character.

We conducted a total of 40 semi-structured interviews using a standardized interview guide for consistency and allowing interviews to unfold in spontaneous ways. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by two team members in terms of the themes in the interview guide, and then collaboratively interpreted by the full study team. We sought to understand how various key players understood public art in Toronto from their distinctive vantage points, and we then combined these into a map of the overall field.

For the full list of interviewees and the interview guide, see Appendices B, C, and D.

Public forums and consultations. We undertook a series of public forums that were created in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), organized by Ala Roushan and Xenia Benivolski with input and organizational support from the AGO’s manager of Studio and Group Learning, Paola Poletto. The forums were held at OCAD University and the AGO. These events included presentations by architects, artists, curators, art consultants, and agencies and institutions, all engaged in public art practice in Toronto and other urban centres and representing a range of opinion, experience, and practices. They provided an analysis of current practices, alternate strategies, and case studies.

The dialogue and recommendations were synthesized to form a component of this report. In addition, we presented our research to an informal reference group made up of experts within the Toronto public art context. We also presented our research at the public art conference at York University in May 2017, and have since incorporated elements of feedback into our recommendations.

Trend analysis. We examined trends in the actual works of public art produced in Toronto. To do this, we used a dataset of over 700 public artworks in Toronto from 1967–2015 that was compiled by Ilana Altman from The Artful City. This dataset includes rich metadata about each work, such as the artist, year, location, artist gender, artist country, medium, and commissioning program.

Altman and her collaborators designed an illuminating series of maps with this data and exhibited it at the AGO. We add to their mapping effort by using various graphical and quantitative techniques to show trends over time.
Figure 4. Map of Toronto featuring 716 public art works, 1967 to 2015. Image courtesy of The Artful City.

Credits for The Artful City Map are as follows:
Project founder and lead: Ilana Altman, The Artful City
Project lead: Jeff Biggar, The Artful City
Cartography: Kai Salmela
GIS and data support: Taylor Blake and Isabel Ritchie, Martin Prosperity Institute
716 public art works, 1967 to 2015. Data sources: the City of Toronto’s Public Art and Monuments Collection, the City of Toronto’s Percent for Public Art Program, the City of Toronto’s StreertARToronto, the Toronto Transit Commission, Waterfront Toronto, York University, and the University of Toronto.
Chapter 2: Literature Review — Key Themes from the Interdisciplinary Dialogue about Public Art

This chapter summarizes key ideas from a broad interdisciplinary dialogue about public art. The chapter is organized around brief discussions of major themes in this discourse. Key topics include: the emergence of public art as a public policy target; the focus on large-scale urban projects; public art and urbanism; the linkage between public art and infrastructure (such as bridges, power or waste facilities, and airports or transportation systems); public art beyond urban contexts; public art and social change; the public art selection process; the role of public art in relation to education and educational institutions; and the reception of public art.

The emergence of public art as a municipal policy target

Cultural theorists have argued that “citizens of a place tend to use its culture as an identity marker,” with public art seen as “the punctuation and intonation of public space,” (Ten Eyck & Dona-Reveco, 2016). As such, the public art landscape is “conditioned by both national and local policy, and national and local history, culture, and identity,” (Zebracki, 2011). Research has shown that differentialities in cultural policies can and do affect the production of public art (Zebracki, 2011).

In fact, public art is now a standard element in many cities’ suite of cultural policies, but this was not always the case. Much literature discusses the historical process that led to the integration of public art into urban planning more broadly. It highlights changes coming both from the perspective of art and the perspective of cities, which intertwined to generate contemporary public art practice.

The growth of public art beyond historical monuments emerged dramatically in the last century. This growth was sparked by shifting paradigms in aesthetic sensibility, such as the advent of modernism and the removal of decorative elements from architecture (Finkelpearl, 2000). Policy transformations gave these changes broader impact. Writers chronicle the expansion of public art through the 1980s with the passage of percentage for the arts ordinances in many cities (Finkelpearl, 2000; Bringham-Hall, 2016; Cartiere & Zebracki, 2016). They highlight how “central and local governments embraced public art as a vehicle for urban change and a way for cities to compete for urbanism and business,” (Speight, 2016) in both established metropolises and smaller centres. This is particularly due to a shift towards a focus on economic objectives in cultural strategies, as “culture is more and more the business of cities,” (Zukin, 1995; Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). Today, policy discourse has moved from “supporting culture…towards the terminology of investing in culture,” and with that, the quality of public art has increasingly been measured by
benchmarks of “international appreciation and success,” (Saukkonen, 2013). The literature also discusses how public art maintains a continued, if contested, value in helping cities and their inhabitants live together successfully: “[To] harness a political imagination towards demonstrating and actualizing different ways of being in the world together,” (Cartiere & Zebracki, 2016) which suggests an interventionist and local role for public art. Goldstein’s (2005) Public Art by the Book brought together a number of cities’ experiences in building and implementing public art policies, offering a detailed nuts and bolts roadmap for local governments, arts organizations, arts professionals, and artists.

A major concern, however, is that “cultural policy has little standing or interface with city planning departments and their management of land use and visioning of the city’s physical future,” (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). As such, some argue that it is not the “success” of public art installations that matters, but rather how public art is integrated within city planning processes overall (Pollock & Paddison, 2010). The concept of “embeddedness” marks a turn away from the emphasis on art and culture as economic activities, to a better understanding of the complex system of institutional and societal, as well as economic, factors that frames the network of interactions between actors involved in the public art process (Pollock & Paddison, 2010). Pollock explores this concept within the British context and identifies three main factors that challenge a commitment to public art within local policy practices, namely funding or economic constraints, visibility within local practice, and dialogues surrounding meanings and readings given to public art (Pollock & Paddison, 2010).

Taking the concept of embeddedness one step further, there have also been recent discussions regarding the potential merits of “planner-artists collaborations,” (Metzger, 2011). This shifts the established perspectives on the role of culture in spatial planning from a focus on “planning for culture” to “planning with culture” — to not ask what planning can do to enhance culture, but to see whether artists “can provide useful help in invigorating common bureaucratic forms of planning,” (Metzger, 2011).

**Vision and definition: Large public artworks**

Scale has been a central topic in many discussions of public art. A number of writers chronicle the impact and power of large-scale urban projects, both permanent and temporary. Jenny Moussa Spring (2015) presents evidence of the power of urban interventions in reconfiguring and re-approaching public spaces. She highlights Nick Cave’s HEARD.NYC, which transformed Grand Central Terminal’s Vanderbilt Hall with a herd of thirty colourful life-size horses that broke into choreographed music twice a day, and Canadian Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s 2013 Voice Tunnel, commissioned by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), which transformed the Manhattan Park Avenue Tunnel. Participants controlled the light intensity of 300 lights by speaking into an
intercom that looped and regulated sound over the miles of tunnel (Smith, 2016). Toronto’s Nuit Blanche festival has supported projects of this scale over its ten years of existence. Its contemporary examples of artworks span a wide range of media, from the sculptural to the digital. The archive of monumental and temporary works from Nuit Blanche can be accessed here (Nuit Blanche Toronto) and here (Scotiabank Nuit Blanche: Toronto, Canada, 2006–2015).

Figure 5. Kelly Richardson, Mariner 9, 2012. Photo credit: Colin Davison.

Ambitious large-scale projects are highly complex and can attract enthusiastic general audiences. Cher Krause Knight (2011) argues that popular culture and successful monumental projects mutually support one another. An example of this is a giant inflatable rubber duck: the Rubber Duck by Florentijn Hofman has berthed in Sydney, Taiwan, and many other harbours since its 2013 inception to the present. Monumental works such as Clemence Eliard and Elise Morin’s Waste Landscape (Victionary, 2013) or Kurt Perschke’s RedBall (Victionary, 2014–15).

2 Three-channel HD video installation with 5.1 audio, 43′ x 9′ (variable). Originally commissioned by Tyneside Cinema, UK.

3 A replica created by events producer Craig Samborski was a recent and controversial visitor to the Toronto waterfront.
2013) can overcome and reframe architectural space. Many writers demonstrate links between ambitious projects and private capital or philanthropic investment. Outstanding examples include Millennium Park in Chicago; the California Scenario, a one-and-a-half acre sculpture garden between two towers in Costa Mesa commissioned by the Segerstrom family of Orange County (Basa, 2008); the Brazilian art and ecology park of Inhotim; the High Line in New York City; and the Drive Line in Chicago.

In synthesizing these sources, we find consensus that the definition of public art should be wide and inclusive, encouraging work across scales, durations, and media. This consensus informs our recommendation for Toronto's revised definition of public art.

**Definition and impacts: Urbanism**

As public art has taken its place as a centrepiece of urban cultural policy, a wide-ranging discussion of its impact on contemporary urbanism has ensued. Urbanists Hall and Robertson (2010) note that many have proposed that public art can promote a range of virtues, such as helping residents develop a sense of personal and/or civic identity and a sense of place; addressing community needs; tackling social exclusion; serving up educational value; and promoting social change. They also call for a deep examination of these claims. Jane Jacobs and Robert Venturi supported the integration of public art as a means to reintroduce complexity and contradiction within urbanism, in contrast to modernism's stark and people-less world view (Finkelpearl, 2000). Urbanists and cultural critics have become increasingly alarmed as public art projects become a means of gentrification. They highlight how public art can lead to “the transformation of unpopular and stigmatized urban neighbourhoods and the renewal of urban housing markets,” (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005). Concerns about the relative power of artists as opposed to planners, developers, and architects figure in this dialogue (Miles, 1997).

Other authors discuss the possible impacts of public art in the developing world. According to the recent UNESCO report *Culture, Urban, Future: Global Report for Sustainable Urban Development*, public art has a role to play in enhancing the quality of the built environment and in building a sustainable urban ecology. The report stresses how this impact depends on a more holistic planning, that is, “place-making for sensory experience, for sight, sound, smell, touch and taste must be drive by art and culture that collectively and powerfully reinforce sense of place,” (UNESCO, 2016). In Dakar, the annual Festigraff Festival celebrates the core of young graffiti artists who are part of a social movement to make Dakar an open and accessible city (UNESCO, 2016). Sao Paolo boasts an extensive mural program.
Infrastructure

As public art has been integrated into many cities’ policy frameworks, it has become more deeply intertwined with their overall city-building agendas. Infrastructure projects (bridges, transportation systems, airports, waterways, waste and power stations) have been core targets. Public art increasingly plays a role in improving the design accessibility and public acceptance of infrastructure projects, and in underscoring the presence and importance of transportation systems (Finkelpearl, 2000; Singer et al., 2007; Doherty, 2015). Canada has a long history of public art playing a role in its airports, ostensibly celebrating Canadian and regional identities, and inevitably engendering controversy about audiences for such work and popular understandings of local identity (Flaman, 2009).

Significant infrastructure projects continue to this day, whether it is the extensive art presentations at Pearson Airport curated by No. 9 (Davies, 2015), the permanent installations commissioned by the Greater Toronto Airport Authority, or the ambitious plans for Metrolinx in the Greater Toronto Area. In 2012, Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins colourfully wrapped a GO train in the moving performance Art Train Conductor No. 9 (Davies, 2015). Infrastructure projects can take an experimental and performance-based approach. Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s Maintenance and Sanitation Art has placed the artist as the official artist-in-residence at New York City’s Department of Sanitation (DSNY) since 1977, based on her Manifesto! Maintenance Art, 1969 (Finkelpearl, 2000; Scott, 2016).

The powerful nature of these works has inspired our recommendation for deeply embedding public art in Toronto’s infrastructure projects, for making the city’s currently voluntary program mandatory, and for including a set-aside for public art in provincial and federal building projects in our city.

Outside of the city

While much of the conversation has concerned the expanding role of public art in cities, public art also occurs outside of urban contexts. Artists’ projects include well-publicized non-urban activities, such as Futurefarmers’ creation of the Bakehouse in Loallmenningen, an intervention regarding food policies and rural farming networks, and Blast Theory’s repositioning of an abandoned boat which referenced the loss of the fishing industry and growth of human trafficking and migration (Doherty, 2015). Some art that contemplates Indigenous rights and territory, such as Partners in Art’s LandMarks2017, and other contemporary issues, are sited outside of cities.
Impacts: Social change and public art

One of the most significant questions in both public art practice and discourse has been the relationship between public art and social change. A number of volumes focus on and argue for accentuating this relationship, often in opposition to a permanent, sculptural, or aesthetic function for public art (Helguera, 2011; Lacy, 1994). Discourse regarding public art is now centered in debates about its potential within urban life and culture to “treat public art works not just as aesthetic installations, but as agents that participate in the social and cultural evolution of cities,” (Radice & Boudreault-Fournier, 2017). This thinking rejects the notion of place-making altogether, preferring “artistic strategies of unsettling notions of place, rather than those of place-making, and a belief in the important role that art can play in social justice,” (Doherty, 2015). Julie Boivin (2009) suggests that while there are heightened expectations that artists will capture and express context and identity, “it is an extremely delicate matter to structure spaces to correspond to a predetermined or overdetermined identity.”

One goal of these projects is to bring artists into direct engagement with audiences to deal with compelling issues of our times (Lacy, 1994). Hence community interaction in the development of public art projects receives consideration, with care taken by artists and project organizers to support community-driven projects when appropriate and to permit artists to also work in dialogue with communities — but not at their behest (Doherty, 2015). Doherty offers a wide variety of critical methodologies for artists’ engagement: “displacement, intervention, disorientation, occupation, perpetuation,” (Doherty, 2015). For example, Sydney uses public art in Chinatown as a means to “address the social and cultural aspects of the area and tell the stories of the contributions of Asian-Australians to communities like Sydney,” (UNESCO, 2016).

Education and educational institutions

Colleges and universities have acted as collecting agencies and collaborators, as well as educators for the next generation of artists, conservators, curators, architects and developers, with specific public art programs, streams, or minors that are found in faculties of fine art, architecture, planning, or public policy. Concordia University has a large and diverse collection, as does York University, the University of California, Los Angeles, and Carnegie Mellon University. These institutions illustrate the value of robust public art policies, and, optimally, the integration of public art into the institution’s master plan “by building and enhancing physical environments in which experience, investigation, analysis, and dialogue about the human experience — past and present — can flourish...where community can learn, live, and dialogue with an experience rich in meaning,” (Grenier, 2009). Most famously, the Stuart Collection at the University of California, San Diego, is a multi-year collaboration between the university and the Stuart Foundation (with investment by the National
Endowment for the Arts and other donors) that began in 1982 and has integrated public art into building infrastructure and throughout the campus.

Universities such as York University have spurred dialogue regarding best practices in public art through conferences such as the "Public Art: New Ways of Thinking and Working" conference organized by public art consultant Ciara McKeown and Brendon Vickers, Chair of the Department of Visual Art and Art History at York University.

Educational value extends beyond campuses. Other post-secondary institutions (such as OCAD University's Art and Social Change Program) have created outreach programs in which public art practices occur within neighbourhoods and communities, allowing public school students' work to be exhibited side by side with that of professional artists. Andrew Davies, who leads No. 9 (an arts organization that uses art and design to bring awareness to environmental concerns), emphasizes the potential for educating youth to be the next generation of sustainable planners and public artists. An illustrative project is *Imagining My Sustainable City*, exhibited at Toronto's Evergreen Brickworks in 2014. This project was produced with the Toronto District School Board, in collaboration with one grade 7-8 class from each city ward. Students and artists participated in a four-day sustainable urban planning and design program featuring "civic engagement, governance, and living a sustainable lifestyle," (Davies, 2015).

**Public art selection processes**

The inherent dynamism and complexity that exists within the multi-stakeholder public art process has been identified to be at tension with the "desire for linear decision-making processes [within public agencies]," (Lidman & Bisesi, 2005; DeShazo & Smith, 2014). As such, there has been growing debate around the need for public agency leaders to "rethink...long-established rational decision-making processes," (Lidman & Bisesi 2005) and consider changes that allow for more collaborative approaches to the administration of public art programs.

A number of writers and anthologies (Krause Knight & Senie, 2016; Basa, 2008; Goldstein, 2005) discuss, critique, and propose changes in the process of choosing public artworks. Basa (2008) describes and evaluates the use of slide or image registries, open calls, and invitational calls from a pre-qualified slide library; direct purchases and rentals; RFQs in which artists submit evidence of qualifications based on past work; and RFPs where artists submit ideas in the form of concepts, sketches, and narratives, and which require an understanding of site and context in order to succeed.

Other writers trace the history of efforts to engage artists early in the process of site and project planning. Some feel that the community consultative role that
artists once played has been normalized by city planning norms, while others continue to argue and demonstrate that the best projects engage artists at the inception, and that artists have a critical role to play in imagining urban parks, waterfronts, districts, and major infrastructure (R.E. Millward, 2017; UNESCO, 2016). There are also those who claim that it is the role of public agencies to support artists by actively seeking citizen engagement (DeShazo & Smith, 2014). The Winnipeg Arts Council provides a prime example of a practice common to many cities, as its staff begins community consultation even before a public art call is drafted, so that contacts are already set up for artists once they are selected (Cwynar et al., 2017).

The reception of public art

Other writers tackle the issue of the critical rejection of public art projects, with in-depth studies of controversies in Montreal, such as the case of Glibert Boyer’s Memoire ardente (Rodriguez, 2009) or, most famously, Richard Serra’s Tilted Arc in New York City’s Federal Plaza (Cartiere & Willis, 2008; Mitchell, 1992). In both instances, the artist’s work was eventually removed. These controversies are seen in their best light as a means to engage citizens in discourse, or the “heart of cosmopolitan democratism that intrinsically offers room for potential conflict and open, ardent dialogues between ambivalent vistas (Zebracki, 2016).

Reception has become a growing component of public art analysis, drawing from sociology, actor network theory, and psychology, rather than looking at the city planners’, architect’s, artist’s, or program’s intentions (Lossau & Stevens, 2015; Radice & Boudreault-Fournier, 2017; Vernet, 2017). Topics include the ergonomics of public art experience for viewers; environmental (that is, flora and fauna) uses of public artworks in the context of human use; or the appropriation, misuse, and counter-use of artworks. Some theorists are interested not only in the time and space relationships of public art but the ways that these works structure flow and movement within urban spaces (Bringham-Hall, 2016).

These dialogues regarding public art practice and policy provided valuable consideration for our recommendations.
Chapter 3: Public Art Policy in the Context of Toronto’s Evolution as a Global City

This section reviews Toronto’s main public art policies, highlighting their significant features, overall results, and how the City has changed since their initial formulation. The message of the chapter is that while Toronto’s public art policies have borne significant impacts, they fall short of their full potential.

Several features of how public art policy in Toronto has been formulated and interpreted produce unfortunate consequences, such as:

- public art “deserts” (areas of the city bereft of formal arts and culture in the public realm)
- maintenance challenges
- a narrow range of styles and media
- gender inequity
- decreasing shares of work held in public trust and sited with a view to the widest public impact

Toronto has grown and changed in numerous ways that demand a more comprehensive, vigorous, and creative approach to public art. It has been the home of major commissions, such as the first Anish Kapoor public art work in North America (1995), located on the perimeter of the CBC building. Not only is Toronto big, dense, diverse, and economically and politically divided, it also has a robust arts sector and a strong cultural and public art policy capacity both within and outside the City.

The cumulative effect of these changes is to place Toronto at a significant crossroads. Public art can hold the city back, entrench its divisions, and symbolize its unwillingness to experiment — or public art can push us forward, connect our communities, and catalyze our collective creativity. The good news is that the very same processes and penchant for creativity that have brought us to this juncture make it increasingly likely that Toronto can seize the moment and realize the full capacity of public art to enhance its urban environment.

Public art policy in Toronto: Historical background

While Toronto has a legacy of public art going back at least to the nineteenth century, the first formal municipal policies emerged in the mid-1980s. These policies were formulated in part out of a sense at the time that public art was being commissioned through “ad hoc, one off deals with politicians, private citizens, and philanthropic partners,” (Biggar, 2016).
Over time, the City of Toronto developed more formal procedures, led by advocates from diverse sectors spanning business, the arts, planning, policy, and more. These policies co-existed with a number of parallel policies emerging across the Toronto metropolitan area, in Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, East York, and York, as well as the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

Public art policy in pre-amalgamation Toronto was a highly complex affair with multiple overlapping agencies. Some key features include:

- In 1991, Toronto became the first city in Canada to incorporate public art into its Official Plan, joining other cities in seeking a “per cent for art” from large private development projects, typically around one per cent of qualified construction costs.¹

¹ Montreal’s per cent for art policy began in 1961, but this was a provincial ordinance.
• In the early incarnations of the Percent for Public Art program, the City mandated public art contributions on many private developments, generally through requirements on rezoning and Official Plan amendments.
• This requirement was challenged, and City Council clarified that public art contributions were voluntary, not mandatory. The policy has remained voluntary ever since.
• Pre-amalgamation Toronto had a budget for temporary projects, but this was not carried forward after amalgamation.

1998 saw the legal creation of the amalgamated City of Toronto, but it took several years for the new City to harmonize the policies from the former municipalities. This was a very difficult process, the scope and challenge of which is important to appreciate. Staff from multiple agencies with different levels of experience had to be coordinated. Common ground across distinct political cultures had to be found. All of this played out with the recent memory of a 1990s recession in the background and significant uncertainty around what the future version of Toronto would be like. While we may be in a position to judge the resulting policies with the benefit of hindsight, it is likely that anything produced from out of such a chaotic moment would require rethinking nearly two decades later.

The newly amalgamated City did undertake a deliberate planning process to consider options for its new public art policy. The Planning and Culture Divisions commissioned a report by Sterling Finlayson Architects (SFA), which appeared in 2001. SFA made three major recommendations:

1. The City of Toronto must renew its commitment to the creation of public art through its capital budget citywide through the Official Plan.
2. The development community, as good corporate citizens, must continue to voluntarily support the creation of public art in private developments within a comprehensive planning framework.
3. A public art trust fund be established that advocates for public art and solicits donations from businesses, corporations and citizens who believe in the value of public art (SFA, 2001).

SFA noted that these three recommendations were meant to work in tandem, and that relying primarily on voluntary private contributions would be less effective. The third recommendation was not implemented; a public art trust fund was never established.

SFA’s first recommendation was only partially and somewhat tepidly met. The City encouraged its agencies to set aside one per cent of capital costs for its major projects. However, the policy is not mandatory, is unevenly applied, and the Public Art Office is understaffed. Nor is there a clear definition of what constitutes a “major project.”

It was the second recommendation that became the centrepiece of the post-amalgamation approach to public art. As SFA recommended, Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act became its linchpin. Section 37 allows the City to exchange zoning exceptions (for height and density) for “community benefits.”

In the 2002 Official Plan, public art was officially made an eligible community benefit. It is an attractive one to many in the developer community, in that public art directly enhances the value of a development, and a developer may choose to retain ownership over the work. This was an innovative use of Section 37, one that has generated a great deal of high-quality public art, and Toronto remains one of the few cities in Ontario to recognize public art as an eligible benefit. However, public art is only one among several worthy eligible benefits, and it must compete with them in negotiations among developers, city councillors, planners, and community groups. The result is that one per cent is more of an aspiration than a mandate.

SFA made some additional recommendations that are worth highlighting, as they remain relevant today. They recommended that the City diversify the process and structure the Percent for Public Art program so that it could support:

- new media and temporary artworks
• artists on the design team as early-stage collaborators with architects, engineers, and landscape architects
• special competitions by invitation for emerging artists on smaller-scale projects
• a mentoring system whereby emerging artists could intern on projects with established artists
• pooling public and private funds in public art grants targeting underserved areas
• awards
• catalogues, maps, and tours
• educational programs

Figure 8. Cover of Toronto Urban Design, Percent for Public Art Program Guidelines (2010). Image courtesy of Toronto City Planning, Urban Design.
Very few of these recommendations have been implemented, and some have been formally discouraged. For instance, the official guidelines for Toronto City Planning’s Percent for Public Art program state, “Typically, public artists produce site-specific sculptures and prominent installations,” (2010). As the implementation of Section 37 benefits tend to be guided by related Official Plan policies, this statement has tended to encourage a less diversified collection than SFA’s recommendations envisioned, despite some notable exceptions.

On a positive note, the Toronto Sculpture Garden (TSG) continued to operate during this period, as it had since 1981. It provided a venue for innovative, temporary, contemporary sculpture, and a training ground for emerging public artists to hone their skills. However, the exhibition program that sustained it was terminated in 2014. While it has since languished for lack of funding, with support from public and private donors, it could once again play a valuable role.

Overall, the opportunity that opened up at the time of amalgamation to build a more sustainable and robust policy framework was missed. The critical inflection point the city currently finds itself in grew directly out of the partial measures taken at that time. They led to an explosion of mostly traditional public art in a few areas, without strong policy mechanisms to compensate and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing city.

Main elements of Toronto public art policy after 2002

From out of the ferment of amalgamation, the main elements of Toronto’s public art policy framework congealed into a form that has largely remained unchanged since. The Percent for Public Art program is overseen by Urban Design (which is part of the Planning department) and operates in collaboration with what is now Economic Development and Culture, in which the Public Art Office is housed. Section 37 remains the primary policy tool used to generate funds for public art.

Projects that choose to use their Section 37 benefits for public art have two options, on-site and off-site (or a combination thereof).

On-site contributions produce work directly connected to the development. Developers must produce a public art plan that outlines their vision for public art and the method by which public art will be commissioned. While there are some requirements — for instance, juries must have a majority of members with professional art experience — developers retain considerable leeway in selecting artists and juries, and are encouraged to be on the jury themselves. Public art plans must be approved by the City’s Public Art Commission, which is a panel of citizen volunteers providing peer review and advice. Since 2002, the on-site program has generated about 110 works.
Off-site contributions may be directed to the City’s Public Art Reserve Fund. These funds may be pooled towards use on city-owned lands in the political ward in which the development is located. Artist selection is run by Cultural Services, and tends to follow somewhat more formal guidelines for transparent open call competitions.

Detailed information about the total financial contributions to public art were not available at the time of this report, nor is it possible at this point to reliably estimate the economic impacts of public art.

While fairly complex even on paper, the neat flow chart (Figure 9) masks a highly involved, labor-intensive process of negotiation. Local city councillors play a key role. Councillors who are active public art enthusiasts can encourage a developer to use Section 37 funds for public art, to engage artists early in the design process, and to formulate a public art plan that permits wide-ranging

________________________

2 With Lili Huston-Herterich, Program Design by Josh Schonblum with the assistance of Yifat Shaik, Brandy Yang, Christopher Jadoo, and OCAD Digital Futures Initiative students. Three-piece permanent Toronto public art installation, commissioned by Daniels Corporation (In partnership with WJ Properties).
forms and media. They can also pool multiple projects and funding sources together in creative ways.

Together with dedicated city staff and creative business entrepreneurs, this can yield notable results. For example:

- Waterfront Toronto has made public art central to its vision, in accordance with city planning requirements, by aggregating funds from multiple nearby developments and deploying them to heighten the impact on the district as a whole. Though in general current policies make this kind of concentration difficult, it was possible for Waterfront Toronto because so much development was happening simultaneously in one area.

- In its High Park condominiums development, Daniels Corporation commissioned Elle Flanders and Tamira Sawatzky of Public Studio to create a piece of public artwork. Along with a group of OCAD University students, they produced *We Are All Animals*, a multimedia work that combines screen-based art and digitally modeled carved stone sculpture.

- Westbank Corporation contributed more than was required under the Percent for Public Art program towards Zhang Huan’s iconic *Rising* at the Shangri-La Hotel (Figure 11).

![Figure 11. Zhang Huan, *Rising*, 2010–2012. Image courtesy of Westbank.](image)

---

3 Stainless steel, 865 x 780 x 189 inches (2198 x 1980 x 480 cm). Permanent sculpture at the Shangri-La Hotel, Toronto.
• Early incorporation of artists into a pedestrian bridge linking Concord CityPlace to Front Street West allowed Chilean artist Francisco Gazitua to create *Puente de Luz*, which Adam Vaughan describes as, “Actually an experience, which a lot of people don’t get in galleries … When you walk through that bridge, the artist has created an environment that actually changes the way you feel about the city.”

• In Toronto’s East End “The Beaches” neighbourhood, multiple organizations have collaborated to produce the seasonal public art exhibition *Winter Stations*, which integrates intriguing designs into lifeguard stations and draws visitors to Toronto’s lakeshore during the cold winter months. Sponsors span the City, the local BIA, developers, local civic associations, and more.

• The Toronto Art Foundation has worked with City of Toronto’s Parks, Forestry and Recreation division to create a robust Arts in the Parks program that crosses all media, including performance art.

• The Bentway project has placed a premium on public art and could represent a new amalgam of private/public funding for major works (The Bentway, 2016; Bozikovic, 2017), drawing on an approach similar to New York City’s Friends of the High Line.

By the same token, when councillors and developers happen to be less personally committed to or experienced with public art, or have other priorities, the results tend to be correspondingly meager. Much of the process, in other words, depends not on regularized formal procedures but on the vagaries of the unique talents and interests of individual people and communities.

Off-site contributions are also complex. Developers choose to make an off-site contribution for various reasons. For instance, they may not have a suitable site on their property, but city lands nearby may be available; they may also simply wish to avoid the onerous process of producing and implementing a public art plan.

Off-site contributions occur relatively infrequently. Since 2002, only about 20 works have been funded in this way. This indicates that the major policy tool under current planning guidelines for pooling resources and heightening impact is not utilized to its fullest potential. Some of our interview respondents suggested that city officials do not actively encourage off-site contributions, and even discourage them. Hence, one of our recommendations is for the City to take a more proactive stance in promoting off-site contributions in order to maximize the value added by public art, even under the limitations imposed by current interpretations of the Ontario Planning Act.
Figure 12. City involvement in public art.

Whatever the reason, some portion of off-site contributions — funds collected through Section 37 and managed by the Public Art Office in Cultural Services — are simply never spent. The precise amount and reasons vary, but in large measure have to do with “red tape.” While formally city officials are free to pool the money and use it on public lands in the local ward, re-designating funds for new purposes is in fact difficult. Moreover, the requirement to use funds with the local ward creates its own challenges, especially since it prohibits funds generated from various parts of the City from being directed to a place where professionals might deem it to have the most impact.

The City continues to encourage its own agencies to contribute one per cent of budgets from their own capital projects towards public art. But again, this is a complex process. It is not compulsory; hence, there is no across-the-board mandate. In some cases, an agency may contact staff in the Public Art Office, who can use their experience and expertise to manage the process. In others, an agency may commission public art independently, or they may not commission public art at all.

Here again, much depends on personal relationships, experience, and individual initiative, rather than regular, predictable, formal procedures. Since 2002, the most significant addition to the City’s policy portfolio has been the StreetARToronto Program, founded in 2012. Housed in Transportation Services,
this initiative works with local communities to create murals and street art. It also funds artists to paint traffic control boxes. Nearly 320 works have been produced through the program, about 45 per cent of all public art in Toronto documented in *The Artful City*’s database.

While the City is the central actor in the Toronto public art ecosystem, it is not alone. Since amalgamation, major festivals such as Nuit Blanche and Luminato have brought temporary and diverse forms of public art to a large public, and smaller festivals such as The Art of the Danforth have used public art to animate neighbourhoods outside the core. Non-profit foundations such as Evergreen Brick Works seek to couple public art, ecological awareness, and sustainability. Public art is central to Waterfront Toronto’s vision. Metrolinx has an ambitious new plan for integrating public art into its infrastructure projects, and Toronto’s universities continue to host and collect public art.

![Figure 13: The Toronto public art ecosystem.](image-url)
These various efforts complement and enhance the City’s major programs, but Toronto lacks the sort of large and dynamic philanthropic foundations found in cities such as Chicago or New York. Here, the City remains the central player most capable of intervening in public space to deepen and enliven the urban experience — or not.

**Consequences of Toronto’s public art policy**

Toronto’s current public art policy regime has been in effect since 2002 and has remained largely unchanged. With over 15 years since its implementation, we are in a better position to observe and evaluate some of the policy regime’s consequences, intended or not.

---

4 Performance, duration 13 hours. Original costumes by Vanessa Fischer; original score by Thomas Ian Campbell.
“A Heyday for Public Art.” The first and most apparent consequence of the post-amalgamation policy framework is that it has been able to turn Toronto’s ongoing construction boom into a substantial number of public artworks. As *The Artful City* puts it, “The city is in its hey-day for public art, despite a rich history of civic support and government legacy projects of Canada’s 1967 centennial. In fact, 64% of works commissioned in the last 50 years appeared after 2005,” (Biggar & Altman, 2017).

![Figure 15. Overall trends in public art in Toronto, 1965—2015. Each dot shows the number of public artworks generated by all programs in that year. The line (a LOESS curve) seeks to capture the best fitting trend through the points. In this case, it captures the uptick in public art following the classification of public art as a Section 37 benefit, and then more dramatically with the introduction of the StreetARToronto program. Data for figure sourced from *The Artful City* project.](image-url)
The impact of the StreetARToronto Program is particularly striking, as it injected hundreds of small but highly visible colorful murals and paintings throughout the city. Much of the dramatic uptick in recent work comes from this program. Even so, taken as a whole, the other main city initiatives have generally expanded over time.

Figure 16. Trends in public artworks produced in Toronto outside of StreetARToronto. Image by authors. Data sourced from *The Artful City* project.

*Stagnating city collection.* Yet while the construction boom has quite visibly kept the Percent for Public Art program growing through Section 37 contributions, other consequences of the policy framework have become more apparent over time.
In the years running up to amalgamation, the City itself was commissioning more works. But without a strong and mandatory commitment to public art as part of the capital budget, city commissioning has stagnated (see the declining olive line in Figure 17 below).

The TTC (represented by the red line in Figure 17) has been the most active city agency, especially with its series of works along the St. Clair streetcar line appearing in 2011. The City has, however, commissioned increasing numbers of works funded through the developer Percent for Art Program, as more developers have over time opted for the off-site option (see the purple line in Figure 17). Still, the absolute number remains small, and has not reached pre-amalgamation levels of City-initiated commissions.

Concentration near development. The bulk of major new public artworks are generated through the Percent for Public Art program. Because this program (as currently practiced) generally requires works to be on or near new developments, the vast majority of the work generated in the past decades has been concentrated in development areas. Without a corresponding City commitment to
public art in other parts of the city, large swathes of Toronto are now comparative "public art deserts."

For this reason, our major recommendations include making public art contributions mandatory for all of the City’s capital projects, as well as pursuing new funding sources, such as a portion of any new hotel tax or vacant property tax. These funds could be pooled into a general public art trust fund and spent anywhere in the city (to compensate for the tendency of development to cluster), and with a view to where a project could have the greatest impact.

Figure 18. Concentration of public art in Toronto. Image courtesy of the City of Toronto, Urban Design Percent for Public Art Program.
These “public art deserts” also tend to be located in parts of the city where large portions of Toronto’s immigrant and visible minority communities have settled. Thus the concentration of public art near development generates, as a byproduct, serious disparities in access to public art across Toronto’s diverse multicultural neighbourhoods. Even so, development is moving outside of the downtown core, heralding opportunities for public art across Toronto even within the current framework’s limitations. This is an opportunity for community engagement in public art and the commissioning of a more diverse group of artists.

**Private ownership of public art.** Toronto’s approach to public art generates privately owned public artworks in large and increasing numbers. This is an impressive record. While there are differing views on the merits of this situation, contemporary Toronto stands out from other cities and its own past in this regard. By approximately 2010, Toronto was regularly generating more privately owned than publicly owned works for the first time in its history.

![Figure 19. Trends in private vs. public ownership of public art in Toronto. This figure shows a steady increase in private ownership since the implementation of public art as a Section 37 benefit. Data sourced from *The Artful City* project.](image-url)
Public art in private/public space. Toronto’s building boom has primarily been a condominium boom. In contrast to large commercial and civic projects of the past, condominiums generally lack large plazas or similar publicly accessible areas. Yet, because the Percent for Public Art program, as interpreted, generally produces on-site, permanent sculptures, much of the new public art is very constrained. Privately owned spaces, moreover, are not always available to the public at all times, though they are at least meant to be “visually” accessible (such as rooftop lighting).

Figure 20. Eldon Garnet, *Artifacts of Memory*, 2016. Photo credit: Eldon Garnet.

---

5 Brushed stainless steel, 20’ x 20’ x 34’, Toronto.
In our interview, Terry Nicholson (former director of Arts and Culture in the City) highlighted the problem inherent to this move from corporate buildings to condominium development. As he noted, while corporate buildings, with their open plazas and public realms, did serve as effective hosts for public art, condominium corporations provide few places that are accessible as public areas.

**Maintenance.** Maintenance is always a core challenge for public art policy. It is exacerbated due to the complex ownership arrangements in Toronto, and because the maintenance budget and plan itself is often a matter for negotiation in the formulation of a development’s public art plan. Moreover, because so much public art ends up as the property of a condominium, maintenance becomes part of the condominium board’s mandate. While developers may transfer maintenance funds to the condominium as part of their public art obligation, this is not the primary interest or area of expertise for many boards, a situation that creates challenges for conservation. Accordingly, one of our recommendations is to mandate clear guidelines for maintenance and conservation accountability, including requiring accountable parties to contract with accredited conservators and report regularly to the City of Toronto.

![Figure 21. Douglas Coupland, *Red Canoe*, 2010. Photo credit: Paul Orenstei](image)

Figure 21. Douglas Coupland, *Red Canoe*, 2010. Photo credit: Paul Orenstei

---

6 Canoe Landing Park, Toronto.
Gender inequity. Overall, Toronto has commissioned more public artwork from men than women. However, in most of the City’s major programs, the gap has been relatively small, and has narrowed over time.

On-site commissions are the exception. Those commissions in which developers exert greater control over the selection process have seen a growing divergence, with men receiving the bulk of new commissions as the program expanded. By contrast, off-site contributions — those in which the City manages the selection process — have produced relative gender parity, as has the TTC.

To be sure, individual developers may run fair and open competitions, but the net effect of their increased control over the selection process has been to widen, rather than narrow, the gender gap. Exactly why this gap has opened is not clear and deserves further study; for example, it may reflect the views or assumptions of public art consultants who are relied upon to provide a short list of artists rather than the views of developers or architects.

7 We have not yet been able to compile information about ethnicity. Preliminary analysis of artists’ nationalities suggests that Canadian artists have benefited greatly from Toronto’s public art policies. Our information about artist nationality is currently not complete, so this point must be considered provisional.
Figure 22: Trends in public artist gender, by program. This figure shows that most programs over time have achieved approximate gender parity, with the exception of the (on-site) developer Percent for Public Art program. In this program, the gender gap has widened. Data sourced from The Artful City project.

Public art policy stasis amidst urban dynamism

Toronto’s public art policies have remained largely unchanged since they were formulated in the early 2000s. Yet Toronto itself has grown and changed profoundly since then. These changes create new demands that public art policy must meet, and the same changes make it possible to achieve policy goals that might not have been feasible in the past.
Major trends with strong relevance for public art policy include:

**More robust and diverse arts sector.** The number and range of artists and arts organizations in Toronto has dramatically increased since 2000, far outpacing overall job and business growth. For example, from 1999–2008, the number of dance companies, theatre presenters, fine arts schools, and musical groups more than doubled.\(^8\) Toronto is now an established global cultural centre with a deep pool of local and regional talent. Toronto and the GTA’s artistic community can support experimentation with a wide variety of media and forms, and its global reputation can attract leading international artists.

**Denser urban environment in which more people spend more time in the public sphere.** In the past decades, Toronto’s density has steadily increased (20 per cent from 1986 to 2011), and the proportion of the population living in single-family dwellings has steadily decreased (from 35 per cent in 1986 to 27 per cent in 2011).\(^9\) These are large changes. More people live in close proximity to one another, with less private space. More people live in “vertical communities” — in condominiums, rather than in adjacent housing. The public realm becomes correspondingly more important. In the past, it may have been possible to think of a lively and engaging public realm as a luxury. Today it is a necessity, and policy should treat it as such.

**More cosmopolitan.** Toronto has become far more cosmopolitan. Non-European immigration has produced vibrant ethnic enclaves in a broadly multicultural city. Non-Christian faiths and nontraditional religiosity have grown. Diverse young people have continued to cluster in dynamic neighbourhoods. Toronto houses the largest Indigenous urban population of any city in Canada. The ethnocultural diversity of Toronto’s artists, including Indigenous artists, has changed considerably. They represent some of the leading voices on the world stage. Yet most public art remains rooted in the monumentalist tradition of European high modernism, and it appears that many of the artists commissioned for significant projects are schooled in a Western contemporary art tradition.

**More politically divided.** Since amalgamation, Toronto has become a sharply divided city, politically speaking. The single strongest division is between a more politically progressive core (the former City of Toronto) and the more conservative (former) suburbs. Current public art policies tend to feed into this divide by concentrating public art in one part of the city (the core); other areas may often feel left out and resentful. Public art policy needs to ensure that public art is experienced as a collective good accessible to all residents that supports their communities and the city as a whole.

---

\(^8\) These numbers come from Statistics Canada’s survey of organizations, *Canadian Business Patterns*, which only includes more formal organizations. Growth in informal organizations is probably larger.

\(^9\) Data sourced from Statistics Canada.
**Ongoing development boom.** Toronto’s construction boom continues. While the Percent for Public Art program has generally grown in line with development, it has not yielded any multiplier effects in which more development dollars spark even more public art. Moreover, while overall development in Toronto has seen a fairly predictable year-over-year linear increase, there is a great deal of volatility in the number of works produced each year.

**More active and sophisticated cultural policy regime with a track record of success.** If generally Toronto’s public art policies have been in stasis, its overall cultural planning and policy agenda has become stronger, more active, and more sophisticated. Successive culture plans have defined a sweeping yet realistic agenda for integrating culture into more aspects of city governance and day-to-day urban experience. Major policy achievements have been realized, such as striving towards the goal of $25 per capita arts and culture funding, a billboard tax for arts and culture, the completion of major cultural construction projects, and the creation of new Local Arts Services Organizations (LASOs).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 23:** Public art and the building boom. This figure shows two simultaneous trends: the number of public artworks produced through the Percent for Public Art program and the total building permit value in the City of Toronto. While the latter has grown in a steady linear fashion, the former has been more sporadic and volatile. Data sourced from Statistics Canada. Image by authors.
Moreover, since amalgamation there are now more individuals in the City and community who have advanced public art expertise. At the same time, Toronto can draw on a growing base of expertise from around Canada. For example, since its founding in 2002, the Creative City Network of Canada has brought together municipal cultural workers in an ongoing dialogue of cultural policies and programs. Public art has always been a vital part of this dialogue and is one of the reasons that the field has grown in sophistication across the country. This creates huge potential for Toronto, but also highlights the need for coordinated action.

The *Culture Plan for the Creative City* (adopted by the City Council in 2003) formally recommended the development of a public art master plan. While this has not yet materialized, the City is now in a strong position to follow this recommendation. It now has a tradition of confident cultural policy-making and is ready to extend that tradition to the domain of public art; hence our recommendation to revisit that long-standing commitment and finally put it into practice.

At the same time, while public art is sometimes cited in planning documents from other city agencies, rarely is that citation accompanied by clear guidelines for integrating public art as a powerful force for transforming the public realm. Sometimes planning documents even implicitly pit important priorities (such as affordable housing) against public art. A more robust integration of public art into the planning process would recognize that affordable housing and public art should not be counterpoised but rather be intertwined. Affordable housing demands excellent, community-engaged public art.

To facilitate this, our recommendations include integrating public art into all urban design guidelines.

********

Toronto is in a strong position to revise its public art policies to meet these challenges. In the new Toronto, an attractive, animated, and aesthetically intriguing urban environment is mandatory, not optional. A growing arts community and an effective tradition of cultural policy-making have placed the arts and culture closer to the centre of public consciousness. Public art is increasingly viewed not as a controversial expenditure, but as a crucial public good.

Within this context, artists can act as urban problem solvers (Bringham-Hall, 2016). The Indigenous group Ogimaa Mikana has renamed Toronto streets back to their original First Nations names (CBC, 2016). This coincides with the Indigenous notion that humans are custodians of all spaces, and that humans are not owners of the land. International projects serve as models. For example, Rick Lowe’s *Project Row Houses* are works of urban sculpture that have created
thriving neighbourhoods in Houston, Watts, and Birmingham. Chicago artist Theaster Gates founded and directs the Rebuild Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on culturally driven redevelopment and affordable space initiatives in under-resourced communities. Closer to home, The Public Access Curatorial Collective and Dr. Janine Marchessault have undertaken projects such as the *Houses on Pengarth (HOP)* in Lawrence Heights that engage local communities in relation to soon-to-be demolished homes, and both York University and OCAD University host programs for socially engaged art.

In these and other ways, public art can respond to new urban challenges by encouraging citizen engagement, inclusion, and social transformation. Our recommendations accordingly include measures to broaden the geographic scope of public art throughout Toronto’s many diverse communities and to create specific funds geared towards supporting Indigenous works, screen-based and media works, and works of shorter duration.
Chapter 4: Toronto Public Art Policy in the Context of the International Municipal Public Art Policy Field

This chapter places Toronto’s public art policies in the context of the international municipal public art policy field. The central point of the chapter is that while Toronto was in the past at the leading edge of an international wave of public art policy-making, the field has continued to evolve, and Toronto has in many ways fallen behind.

![Figure 24. Cities adopting per cent for art ordinances. Image by authors.](image)

Early policies were generally developed with a view to establish public art as a legitimate public policy target. This is now broadly accepted, and most policies in major cities start from the expectation that public art is a vital public good, and they seek to deepen and broaden its character and reach. By contrast, Toronto’s official framework is relatively conservative and narrow.

However, other cities’ policies can offer inspiration, ideas, and potential models to adopt. They demonstrate that what might seem difficult here is feasible elsewhere, and that with the appropriate commitment, it could be possible here as well.

**Comparing Toronto’s official public art policy to other cities’**

In the following sections, we compare Toronto’s official public art policies to those of other cities along a number of different dimensions. We highlight key differences and feature examples and models from elsewhere that we believe might provide especially useful lessons for Toronto. (We do not discuss Montreal in this section, since we give it special attention in Chapter 7).
The definition of public art. In the past decades, the field has generally moved towards a more expansive and experimental definition of public art. Indeed, as the Dublin City Council notes in its Policies and Strategies for Managing Public Art, “Since 1997… the understanding of public art has broadened to include all art forms and artistic disciplines.” Yet Toronto’s official definitions of public art remain closer to 1997 than 2017; they are relatively cautious and traditionalist.

Comparing Toronto’s definitions to those of other cities makes this clear. While some of this conservativism may be attributed to the limitations imposed by the Ontario Planning Act, that is not the whole story. Ottawa and Mississauga offer particularly telling contrasts. Those cities are subject to the same provincial policies as Toronto, yet stake out much more ambitious definitions of public art. Our recommendations thus include a new definition of public art for the City of Toronto, one that brings together key elements from many cities’ definitions and highlights the diverse forms, media, durations, and goals that public art can include.

- **Toronto**: “Typically, public artists produce site-specific sculptures and prominent installations that add character and distinction to a development and the surrounding neighbourhood,” (Toronto Urban Design, 2010).

- **Ottawa**: “Public Art Commissions may take the form of a standalone or architecturally integrated artwork, temporary or ephemeral artwork, digital artwork and other visual art forms. The Public Art Program recognizes that public art is a constantly evolving visual expression,” (City of Ottawa, 2017).

- **Mississauga**: “Public art is publicly accessible to all citizens and can be in any medium/media, take on any shape, form or scale. Public art can be permanent or temporary. Public art can include, but is not limited to, community art, mural art, installation, digital, hoarding, sculpture and street art,” (City of Mississauga Culture Division, 2016).

- **San Diego**: “Once known mostly as monuments, public art now embraces works that range from monumental works in many permanent and familiar materials to those less expected, both in terms of permanency, placement, and interaction,” (City of San Diego, 2004).

- **San Antonio**: “[Public art] encompasses a wide range of media, from permanent sculptures and murals, to temporary art installations and art performances. It also embraces new media technologies such as digital art, video, sound and light-based work, as well as other emerging art practices and genres,” (City of San Antonio, 2015).

---

10 Emphasis (in bold) added by the authors, for this and all other quotations.
• *Perth*: “Art interventions may include temporary and ephemeral artworks such as, but not limited to: murals, short term sculptural and installation works, performance and conceptual works, experimental works exploring new mediums and approaches, and short term works using light, sound or new technologies. Art interventions may also take the form of public art events such as, but not limited to: artist talks, symposiums, festivals and curated programs of performance art and installations,” (City of Perth, 2009).

**The value of public art.** Many cities stress how public art supports values crucial to contemporary, democratic, pluralistic urbanism. They highlight the ways that public art supports a broader agenda and therefore deserves support from city leaders and cities. Key values include: creativity, local and global identity, equity, accessibility, visibility, diversity, inclusion, memorability, animation, buzz, vitality, environmental sustainability, and more.

For example, The *San Francisco Arts Commission Strategic Plan 2014–2019* highlights more socially inclined values that emphasize accessibility and community engagement:

We value:
- Cultural equity and access to high quality arts experience for all
- The arts as a vehicle for positive social change and prosperity
- Artists as integral to making San Francisco a city where people want to live, work and play
- The arts as critical to a healthy democracy and innovative government
- Responsiveness to community needs
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Accountability and data-driven decision-making

(San Francisco Arts Commission, 2014)

These values shape the mandate given to public art programs and the goals associated with it. Toronto official policy tends to stress beauty, innovation, tourism, economic growth, monumentality, memorability, and sense of place. There is relatively little mention of equity, multiculturalism, community engagement, diversity, sustainability, animating public space, or of public art
acting as a means to sustain and retain local artists through commissions and recognition.\textsuperscript{11}

Neglecting these core values distances public art from Toronto’s broader mission. Our recommendations are designed to make these values more central to the definition and practice of public art in Toronto through proposing a wider definition, new funds to encourage diversity among artists and works, and a range of community engagement programs.

\textbf{The media of public art.} As the increasingly broad definitions of public art indicate, there has been a general movement away from sculpture as the predominant medium for public art. Many cities now embrace multiple and mixed media as well as events and festivals. By contrast, Toronto’s formal public art policies tend to highlight a relatively narrow range of media. This makes it difficult to tap into Toronto’s considerable talent pool of artists experimenting across many media and forms of exhibition and performance. Our recommendations are designed to remedy this by proposing funds to encourage work in new media and by redefining public art to include diverse forms.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure25.png}
\caption{Media included in official definitions of public art. This figure categorizes public art programs by the media they included in their definitions of public art. The categories are arranged from the narrowest to the broadest. While Toronto adopted the narrowest definition, the largest group of cities is in the one that allows various media. Image by authors.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{11} Calgary provides an example of a strong commitment to local artists: “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,” (City of Calgary, 2015).
The lifespan of public art. Just as the media of public art have expanded in many cities, so too have conceptions about the duration of public art. The vast majority of cities formally encourage permanent, temporary, and seasonal art. Toronto’s official policies, however, tend to feature permanency and to downplay ephemeral, seasonal, and temporary public art. Our recommendations would bring Toronto more in line with international practice by creating mechanisms for producing works of varying durations.

The funding of public art. Some cities include public art in their annual budgets. This is the case in Brisbane and Melbourne (City of Perth, 2009). However, the most common model for funding public art remains some version of a per cent for public art policy.

Yet “per cent for public art” can mean many things. The norm is for the percentage to be mandatory for a city’s own projects. In many cases, the percentage is greater than one per cent. In nearly all cases, the percentage is applied according to a clear and regular schedule. Often these funds are aggregated into a public art budget managed by a single city agency — generally an arts and culture department — which may target projects anywhere in the city.

Likewise, it has become common to mandate a percentage of private development budgets for public art. There are several models for this, but the most common is, again, to require a fixed proportion according to clear guidelines. While many programs do connect public art to the development funding it, many also have a system in place to direct portions of funds to a pooled public art trust fund designed to serve other areas.

Toronto’s system of case-by-case negotiations, voluntary compliance, and ward-based restrictions is nearly unheard of elsewhere. This is why we strongly recommend that Toronto should prioritize mandating public art contributions, both for its own projects and for private development projects that meet clearly defined criteria. While implementing the former is straightforward, the latter will require more creative thinking about potential additional policy mechanisms outside of Section 37. Possibilities include working to have public art recognized as an eligible development charge by the province.

While moving towards a mandate for public art may go against the grain of current Toronto policies, the fact that so many major global cities have done so indicates that it is possible across diverse legal and planning environments. It can happen in Toronto if we choose to make it so. Consider some examples of how other cities fund public art out of their own budgets:

- San Diego: “A discretionary City Council appropriation consisting of 2% of selected eligible Capital Improvement Project budgets for public art,” (City of San Diego, 2004).
• **Brisbane:** “All Capital Works Briefing Documents and Urban Design projects are developed taking into consideration the inclusion of public art. The percentage allocations should be commensurate with the public profile of the site and/or project. This generally averages out between 2.5 and 5%...Temporary Program — $250,000 for 6 projects (Funded by City Planning),” (Excerpted from a study by the City of Perth, 2009).

• **Dallas:** “All appropriations for city capital improvement projects, whether financed with city bond proceeds or city monies from any other source, shall include an amount equal to 1.5% of the total capital improvement project appropriation, or an amount equal to 0.75% of the total appropriation for a project that is exclusively or street, storm drainage, utility, or sidewalk improvements,” (City of Dallas).

• **Melbourne:** “The program budget is on average $250,000, which funds the temporary commissions (six commissions at $30,000 each + program management + sundries (advertising, documentation)). Further to this, 1% of Council’s overall Capital Works Budget, approximately $400,000, goes towards funding major commissions (one every 18/24 months),” (Excerpted from a study by the City of Perth, 2009).

Several cities require public art in private construction projects that meet certain conditions. While their policy environments differ from Toronto’s, they again indicate that when a city commits to mandating public art, it can find a way to do so. Vancouver, for example, requires public art contributions at a fixed rate for all “rezonings greater in aggregate than 100,000 square feet and to projects where a substantive public benefit is sought.”12

**The administration of public art.** Most major cities house public art in a single office (usually the Arts and Culture department, although a handful use their Planning/Design departments). This creates a more concerted and simpler process. Some cities have arm’s-length organizations that administer public art outside the official city bureaucracy. In Philadelphia, a pioneer in implementing a Percent for Art ordinance in 1959, public art is administrated by the Redevelopment Authority.

---

12 In San Francisco, “Section 429 of the Planning Code requires specific projects to provide public artwork on private property equal to 1% of project costs,” (San Francisco Planning Department, 2014). And in Philadelphia, “The Percent for Art clause is included in most Redevelopment Agreements and requires the selected Redeveloper to dedicate an amount equal to not less than one-percent of the total construction cost budget for work(s) of fine art. The clause shall be contained for all projects with a construction budget of $100,000 or more,” (The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, 2015).
Here, Toronto is again is an outlier. It administers public art primarily through the complex relationship between Urban Planning and Culture, as described above. As we saw in Chapter 3, this creates inefficiencies and high transaction costs. For example, funds directed from one office to the other are sometimes never spent. Our recommendations therefore include the creation of a single Public Art Office that spans the Urban Planning and Culture departments.

![Figure 26. Types of public art administrative agencies. This figure presents the number of cities in our sample by the type of administrative agency. In most cities, the Arts/Culture department runs the program. The figure highlights Toronto’s unique and complex administrative situation: it is the only city in which Planning and Culture split administration of the program. Image by authors.](image)

**Maintenance**

Maintenance is one of the core challenges faced by public art policy. Wherever they are located, artworks are affected by the elements: light, temperature, humidity, accidents, vandalism, and more. Toronto generally includes a maintenance budget and plan in a project’s public art plan. However, while there are typical recommended practices suggested by city staff, these are not part of a comprehensive policy.

By contrast, many cities recommend or have developed a strategic plan for maintenance that offer alternative models for Toronto to consider.
Public Art NEXT! San Jose’s New Public Art Master Plan (2007) recommends that conservation efforts be central to the city’s policies. It suggests provisions to:

- Support the findings and recommendations in the condition assessment of the collection and a strategic plan for conservation, restoration and maintenance recently commissioned by the Public Art Program.
- Provide adequate financial and staff resources to implement the findings and recommendations in the assessment and strategic plan.
- The Public Art Program has commissioned a team of art conservators to inspect the collection, evaluate maintenance needs and develop a conservation plan for the public art collection. Their recommendations should form the basis for increasing annual General Fund allocations to maintain the collection.

(Bressi et al., 2007)

Other conservation and maintenance policies include regular surveys of the current collection; predictable and regular maintenance contributions; clearly delimited standards of maintenance responsibility; partnerships to encourage civic and neighbourhood groups to “adopt an artwork” that they commit to maintain; and fostering collaboration between artists, cultural professionals, engineers, and conservators.

These examples indicate some of the challenges in developing a clear and comprehensive maintenance policy. Yet they also offer models Toronto could draw from when it develops its broader public art master plan.

**Expanding public art presence**

Many cities face the challenge of expanding the presence of public art beyond individual sites and throughout their many neighbourhoods and communities. They have pursued several policy avenues for meeting this challenge, some of which we summarize here.
**Districts**

One powerful approach to heightening the impact of public art beyond an individual building or site is to plan public art for entire districts. Over the years, many cities have recognized the need both for a comprehensive public art plan and for local districts to cultivate approaches and styles distinctive to that area. In numerous cases, they produce separate plans for different parts of the city, such as the downtown, a ravine system, the airport, and more. These are often developed with additional local partners.

Siting public art in districts and planning the cultural ecosystem is used to tackle challenges related to urban identity, equity in dispersion of resources, walkability, and more. The City of Toronto has recently begun to develop some local area plans, including *Public Art Strategy, West Don Lands, Toronto* (Anholt, 2009); *Lower Don Trail Access: Environment + Art Master Plan* (2013); and the upcoming *Scarborough Centre Public Art Master Plan*.

Examples from other cities point towards models for carrying that important work much further. They inform our recommendations to more aggressively utilize existing policy tools for pooling public art contributions collected through Section 37; to create dialogue across projects; to establish a centralized Public Art Trust Fund from City capital projects and new public and private funding sources, capable of targeting any part of the city; to build a district-oriented approach into a new Public Art Master Plan while simultaneously fast-tracking new local area public art plans; and to partner with Toronto’s existing LASOs to build a strong public art presence in all parts of the city.

**City centre and downtown**

Cities often designate the downtown area as a distinct zone for intensive public art development. Given its central position, they typically encourage major spectacles to attract tourists and residents from across the city. This downtown district strategy is often used as a tool to generate a coherent physical identity for the sprawling city. Many recognize its capacity to knit the rest of the city together, to create the feeling that the city offers ongoing exciting events, and to demarcate boundaries that give meaning to the movement through urban space.
The city of Sydney uses districts to foster the notion that the city is an organically interconnected whole, on the metaphor of the human body:

City Centre Urban Structure:
George Street = Spine
East-West connectors = Ribs
Important intersections = Vertebrae
Squares = Rooms/Heart and other organs
Lanes and Streets off George Street = Circulatory system

… Public art picks up where road closures and infrastructure improvements leave off and is an important part of any plan for urban renewal. Public art offers legibility. A single brief put to teams of artists and architects could reinforce the spatial identity of the city.

(City of Sydney, 2013)

San Jose’s Office of Cultural Affairs and the city’s Redevelopment Agency articulate a series of “frames” that reflect the different functions public art could offer to the downtown area, creating a sense of pace, functioning as navigation between city sites, building a sense of urban dynamism, and improving walkability by upgrading streetscapes (City of San Jose, 2007).

Toronto has first-hand experience of the power of major temporary pieces to galvanize and bring together many people, with Ai Weiwei’s Forever Bicycles and Craig Samborski’s Mama Duck offering examples. Our recommendations include expanding these sorts of large-scale temporary exhibitions and earmarking a portion of funds generated by a new City hotel tax towards them, as these kinds of events can have immediate benefits for the hospitality industry.

**Expanding public art beyond the core: parks, waterways, neighbourhood districts**

Toronto is not alone in experiencing a strong pull of public art towards its downtown. Yet other cities have not stood by and let this happen as if it were beyond their control.

For example, in Boston’s Strategic Plan for Arts and Culture (2015), the concentration of cultural activity in the downtown area is perceived as a severe problem that results from racism and widening income disparities. These other cities provide models for how Toronto can seek to push back against the
deepening of its “public art deserts” proactively, without only waiting for spreading development to somehow take care of the problem on its own. Utilizing the park system is one key strategy. Toronto’s Arts in the Parks program already brings free, family-friendly arts events and activities, providing a strong foundation for a deeper incorporation of public art. For example, in New York City, parks are recognized as a resource with underutilized potential, which could assist in promoting cultural equity and serving deprived areas:

Virtually any park in New York City can host a public artwork, and nearly one in ten parks has done so. Our Artist’s Guide to NYC Parks Public Art Sites highlights two dozen parks that show promise and potential as community art hubs. These parks are in highly visible and well-trafficked locations, but exist in neighborhoods that have been underserved by cultural programming.

(City of New York Parks and Recreation, 2016)

Waterways provide another strategic opportunity for dispersing public art outside the urban core. To enhance public engagement with its waterways, Houston/Harris County's Cultural Arts Council established a set of maps plotting the natural systems, the infrastructure, the neighbourhoods, and the gathering places.

Boston offers models of strategic initiatives designed to create a more equitable distribution of public art across the city. For example, its 2015 plan calls for the creation of three “arts innovation districts” outside of the city centre. It also adopts an overall approach to neighbourhood districts that involves public-private cooperation and the creation of works and the promotion of arts and culture. According to our recommendations include creating strong arts districts in Toronto, partnering with local arts and community organizations, and artist-in-the-community residence programs.

13 “Tactic 4.2.2 City-led Short-term: Promote the development of public art and performance opportunities in neighborhood settings, and explore sustainable options for public and private financing of public art, through partnerships with Boston Main Streets, community development corporations, and other community organizations and City departments. Tactic 4.2.3 City-catalyzed Short-term to Long-term: Support the creation and promotion of arts and cultural districts and creative development opportunities within and across Boston’s neighborhoods by partnering with neighborhood, community development, and other civic organizations,” (City of Boston, 2015).
Facilities and infrastructure commissions

One of the most direct ways cities can expand the presence of public art throughout their neighbourhoods is to utilize their own facilities as public art hubs. In Ottawa, the public art program provides opportunities for local artists to display new and retrospective exhibitions in public galleries, including a gallery in the city hall (City of Ottawa). Calgary’s Public Art Program developed a separate public art plan for four new recreation facilities (City of Calgary, 2013). Toronto has numerous possibilities in this regard, such as libraries, fire and police stations, community centres, city councillor offices, courthouses, and other civic buildings.

Vancouver provides a valuable model for the incorporation of art into civic infrastructure, preserving historical sites, enhancing new buildings, and encouraging large-scale district projects.14

Our recommendations include proposals geared towards more deeply integrating public art into all infrastructure projects in Toronto: mandating a public art contribution in all City capital projects; including public art in Heritage Canada and Ontario infrastructure projects in the city of Toronto; and embedding artists in City agencies to facilitate the inclusion of public art in City projects from their inception.

Community engagement

While Toronto has very little by way of community engagement in the public art process, various cities provide models for how to do so. They stress the contribution of public art to their diverse communities and neighbourhoods and highlight the importance of community engagement in the process of selecting and producing public art.

14 “1. When the city builds new public facilities — such as new parks and recreation buildings, pump houses, and police, fire and library construction projects — there should be a firm commitment to incorporating public art from the earliest stages of design.

2. The Public Art Program should commission art projects that are retrofit into existing civic facilities, particularly as way of letting communities identify places and projects that could be important to them, but only under the most appropriate circumstances.

3. For agencies with vast reconstruction programs (primarily the Waterworks, Sewers and Streets), the Public Art Program should consider collaborating on ‘Departmental’ or ‘Citywide System’ plans,” (Program Review and Design Framework for PA, Vancouver, 2008).
Common strategies for public engagement include:

- **Local district planning.** Some cities have developed strategies for involving local citizens in the public art planning process (City of San Jose, 2007).

- **Embedding artists in communities.** One powerful strategy for engaging communities in public art is to embed artists in communities as collaborative partners, with Chicago providing a valuable model (City of Chicago, 2012).

- **Education and environmental programs.** In several cities, community engagement is not only part of the planning and acquisition process, but is one of the outcomes meant to result from public art. For example, in Philadelphia, public art projects that exceed $50,000 must dedicate five per cent of the budget to educational programming (The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, 2015).

- **Online materials.** Many cities have developed online databases and self-guided walking tours, sometimes in collaboration with local media companies and universities. Still, in general, cities are not using smartphone based apps, social media, interactive maps, augmented reality, and other new opportunities for outreach to their fullest potential, if at all. This is an area where Toronto has an opportunity to innovate.

- **Compelling work.** Perhaps the deepest and most important form of community engagement with public art comes from the public actively interacting with artworks and making them their own. A prominent case is Anish Kapoor’s *Cloud Gate* in Chicago, which has been adopted by Chicagoans and visitors as “the Bean,” and has become an icon of the city itself.

Boston provides an example of how to involve local communities in the public art planning process. It engaged the Department of Play (DoP), a collective that makes temporary play zones in public areas. “DoP creates opportunities for city residents to step out of their everyday lives and have collective experiences of play in public spaces, taking a break to reflect on their relationship with the city and with one another,” (City of Boston, 2015). For instance, in public festivals and community meetings, DoP invited people to build their vision for Boston’s arts and culture by foam blocks and to pin ideas for art amenities on the city map.

Our recommendations include several measures designed to increase public engagement with public art. These include creating an interactive website, a mobile application, and social media guides to Toronto’s public art that leverage Ilana Altman’s *The Artful City* maps, as well as public art tours developed with Tourism Toronto.
The major aim of this chapter has been to review alternative approaches to public art policy from other cities in Ontario, in Canada, and internationally. The central conclusion is that Toronto is an outlier in a number of ways, but that there are also viable models that Toronto can adapt and mold to its own situation. In many cases it can do so by building on its existing capacities; in other cases, Toronto can build new ones.

To be sure, Toronto’s talented and committed public art professionals in the City operate within the constraints of current policy tools and interpretations of the Ontario Planning Act. While these may explain the situation, they do not excuse it. As this chapter has demonstrated, cities with a strong commitment to public art find ways to make public art a mandate. They make public art a compulsory component of their own projects, have dedicated budgets for public art, strong maintenance programs, and a commensurate staff complement. They have clearly delineated standards for when private developments must make a contribution to public art, and how much. They actively pursue diverse styles, genres, and durations, and seek to integrate public art into all parts of the city. They engage the public; value diversity, equity, and sustainability, as well as growth, place-making, and tourism; and put public art in the service of broader and deeper values. They streamline and simplify the process, cultivating opportunities for artists to put their stamp on projects from the outset.

They make public art part of the fabric of urban life, from the ground up. Our recommendations show how Toronto can too.
Chapter 5: Perspectives on Public Art from Key Toronto Stakeholders

Official reports and trends give insight into the formal procedures governing public art policy in Toronto, their objective consequences, and how they compare to other peer cities. They do not reveal key participants’ perceptions about the process and its results, nor, even more importantly, do they point towards a vision for the future of public art in Toronto. To develop such a vision, we conducted a series of interviews with stakeholders intimately familiar with public art in Toronto.

Our goal was to learn what interviewees thought public art in Toronto is and should be, as well as to understand their vision for how it could realize its full potential. Our team talked to people from diverse sectors — artists, developers, administrators, art consultants, curators, and more (see Chapter 3 and Appendices B & C for the full list of interviewees) — in order to canvass a range of opinions. We did not expect unanimity, nor did we find it. Instead, we sought to gather a diversity of (sometimes contradictory) viewpoints that could give a window into the real complexity of the field (see Appendix D for the interview guide).

This complexity informs our vision and recommendations. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Rather, Toronto needs a suite of policies that can accommodate diverse forms, sites, and definitions of public art. If there is a collective vision that emerged from the interviews, it was precisely this: that there is no single authoritative meaning of public art; that any vision for public art in Toronto must remain open to multiple visions; and that public art policy should be viewed as a platform for supporting ongoing experimentation with the very meaning and purpose of public art.

To unpack major themes from the interviews, we met several times as a group to discuss the interviews as a whole. We organized each interview according to key topics informing our research:

- The definition and value of public art
- Challenges with the process
- Future visions for public art in Toronto, including administrative and funding opportunities

This chapter gives an overall sense of the variety of viewpoints interviewees expressed regarding these themes, and makes some suggestions about how to integrate them into a vision for the future of public art in Toronto.
Major theme 1: Definition and value of public art

The qualities of a successful work of public art

We asked interviewees to tell us which works of public art in Toronto and elsewhere they thought were particularly successful. Henry Moore’s *Two Large Forms*, a work that was thoroughly reviled when first presented in Toronto, was considered a local landmark. As several interviewees note, “There is no child that has grown up in Toronto that has not crawled all over it.”


---

1 Bronze. Overall dimensions 151 15/16 in. x 240 3/16 in. (386 x 610 cm). Purchase from the artist, 1973.
However, there was disagreement among interviewees on the definition of “success” with respect to many other public artworks in the city. Dereck Revington’s *Luminous Veil (Suicide Barrier)* along the Bloor Edward Viaduct was mentioned as an artwork created by a highly reputable artist and supported by an engaged Business Improvement Area (BIA). Yet some interviewees felt that the project has not had an impact on the community and space commensurate with the resources devoted to it. Zhang Huan’s *Rising* at the Shangri-La Hotel on University Avenue was mentioned by many from the development community as an impressive and unique achievement that demonstrates the result of allowing the private sector to have more freedom, while other stakeholders see it as an example of a poorly conceived public site.

While it is hard to imagine universal agreement about the nature of successful public art, our interviews revealed widespread agreement about one type of public art to avoid: “plop art.” This term was mentioned in different interviews, signifying the outcome of a commissioning process that does not allow the artist to be engaged with the local community or even the particular space where the artwork is to be installed. Tim Jones, the CEO of Artscape, a non-profit urban development organization that creates spaces for arts and culture in the city, warned against commissions that do not understand their location, or that make only a passing or “clichéd” reference to site. Jones blames the commissioning process: “Often the artist has to come with their fully formed idea to the competition. Rather than going through a process of iteration where they might be working with the community, from the ground up, to think about what art could mean in this context.”

*More active and sophisticated cultural policy regime with a track record of success*

If generally Toronto’s public art policies have been in stasis, its overall cultural planning and policy agenda has become stronger, more active, and more sophisticated. Successive culture plans have defined a sweeping yet realistic agenda for integrating culture into more aspects of city governance and day-to-day urban experience. Major policy achievements have been realized, such as striving towards the goal of $25 per capita arts and culture funding, a billboard tax for arts and culture, the completion of major cultural construction projects, and the creation of new Local Arts Services Organizations (LASOs).

Our recommendations suggest creating flexible funds that can support a range of art works (including those that are screen-based, temporary, and community-driven) as well as the means to pool funds for district-focused, larger, semi-permanent or permanent works.
**Complexity of public art as its blessing and its curse**

Examples illustrate how many factors must be taken into consideration in order to define success. Several interviewees noted that this complexity is inherent to public art, which must satisfy multiple levels at once. Brad Golden, the principal of Brad Golden + Co Public Art Consulting, a firm that manages public art projects for both public and private sectors, lists the different levels at which a successful work of public art should operate: “It’s part of the city building process … when it’s finished and completed, participating at the scale of the city… so that there is a relevance of the artwork at the level of urban design…. it has to invite participation in terms of some type of dialogue.”

Precisely because public art involves such a complex mix of interests and factors and scales and time horizons, it can be difficult to satisfy all of them in any given project. The result is sometimes that in trying to satisfy everybody partially, nobody is satisfied very much. Artist and curator Dave Dyment expressed concerns that the process can compromise projects, resulting in dissatisfaction on the part of the public, art community, artist, and developer. He cautions, “If a million-dollar commission comes up, of course artists are going to clamour to do it. Whether they have a piece that’s appropriate for it or not is a different thing.”

This inherent complexity informs our recommendation to open up the definition of public art to include and encourage work of multiple forms, scales, media, and durations, and also to create measures for promoting work by Indigenous, emerging, and diverse artists. With a suitably wide definition of public art unfolding across multiple projects, no single one need be expected to satisfy all interests at once.

**Who should create public art?**

A major question related to the definition of public art is who should create it. This is a complex and difficult question, and interviews revealed diverse opinions. Many of those we interviewed felt that professional artists must create public art (as opposed to designers who might produce decorative or functional outdoor furniture or playgrounds, or architects who would embellish sites) (Zebracki, 2011).² Catherine Dean, Public Art Officer at the City of Toronto, noted that many people who work as public artists “have no art practice other than making things in public.” She believes that work by practicing artists is stronger, hence, “We actually started including the Canada Council’s definition of a professional artist in our calls.”

² This view, though, may not be a surprise, as we interviewed a significant number of artists, art experts, and professionals who work closely with professional artists.
Nevertheless, the idea that public art, by definition, must be created by professional artists is not universally shared. Adam Vaughan, the councillor who represented Ward 20 from 2006–2014, and who was a key actor in promoting public art, offered a different opinion. From his point of view, “Sometimes the best ideas don’t come from professional artists…. letting everybody participate is a much better way than letting only some…[E]verything that…credentializes [the process]…limits our ability to use that money creatively.” The sentiment Vaughan expresses is part of a growing agenda of creative place-making found in many other cities (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010) where the calls have included the option for landscape architects and designers (as well as artists) to respond to commissions.

At the same time, however, Vaughan and other interviewees noted risks in excessively “opening” the definition of who should create public art. In many cases, interviewees felt that there ought to be engagement between the artist and the host community of the artwork. However, others, while supporting some level of interaction, cautioned against permitting communities to vote on which artworks should be retained for their site or community. They thought it was important for artists to retain autonomy, even while consulting citizens.

Our recommendations include proposals for threading the needle through these difficult questions. We support a definition of “artist” that focuses on creative professionals, and also acknowledge that there are now artist-architects, artist-engineers, artist-designers, and more. We also endorse the opportunity for interdisciplinary teams of artists and designers to collaborate. Entities like Metrolinx, as well as certain cities, have flexible criteria that can allow different approaches to teams and individuals. As far as community engagement is concerned, our recommendations promote extensive consultation and interaction between artists and communities while respecting artists’ autonomy.

**The “wow factor,” or, what value does public art add to public space?**

Overall, interviewees agreed that public art is a public good and that public art can create a unique sense of place. Kristyn Wong Tam, the current councillor of Ward 27 and a gallerist and art collector, defines the added value that public art should bring to an urban space as the “wow factor”:

“**There has to be a component that just either draws you in slowly and subtly, and you don’t even know that you’re being wowed, or it hits you over the head…it can’t be too safe. The hotel quality art, you know what? Leave it for the hotels. Leave it for the condominium lobbies. I think for public art to be really successful in public spaces, it’s got to pull you in.**"

Numerous interviewees also highlighted that public art can involve risk-taking, be meaningful and expressive, and in some cases, be thought-provoking and
personal. At the same time, others highlighted the importance of combining elements such as urban design and public art, citing compelling works in public parks that are both functional and eloquent.

**What types of work should we be producing?**

Interviewees expressed different opinions as to the type of artwork that should be produced. Many city officials and politicians held definitions of public art that included only permanent sculptural or mural works. However, artists, curators, art consultants, and some developers strongly supported the idea that public artworks should have various durations and forms. These include temporary or ephemeral works as well as works of digital media. Naomi Campbell, Director of Artistic Development of Toronto’s Luminato Festival, explains the role she sees for ephemeral, temporary, large-scale contemporary artworks alongside permanent ones, lauding “the different way people experience things when it’s there and then it’s gone. It’s different from when you walk past it everyday… Sometimes an encounter with something unexpected can really make a difference.”

On the other hand, Barbara Astman, a professor at OCAD University and an artist with a practice in public art with experience on a number of public art juries, highlights the reasons behind the need to maintain a more narrow definition of public art in private and public developments, suggesting that Luminato and Nuit Blanche fulfill the role of experiential events. Permanence is demanded. “Once you have government and developers, you have to think about health and safety. And you have to think about all these really tight…confines.”

Terry Nicholson, former director of Arts and Culture at the City of Toronto, describes how this situation emerged in Toronto and the bureaucratic restrictions that limit the creation of temporary artworks. The city, he noted, has limited resources for temporary artworks, unlike in pre-amalgamation times. He believes that the difficulties and time lines of approval processes remove incentives for temporary projects: “Even if an artist wants to do a temporary project, you’ve got…this big legal document, [as if you are] signing your life away.”

These broadly shared sentiments inform our recommendations to open the definition of public art and to create funds and programs specifically geared towards temporary and seasonal work. As we saw in Chapter 4, this is common practice in many cities, and Toronto can draw on numerous models for implementing this recommendation.

Beyond the different views expressed above, overall, the interviewees agreed that while the quality of public art in Toronto currently ranges from fair to good, it can certainly be improved, and there is a good opportunity to do so now.
**Major theme 2: Challenges**

Both Astman and Nicholson’s commentary illustrates the intimate relationship between principle and process. A principled commitment to public art of multiple durations cannot be maintained without a process that supports it. We therefore were very interested in interviewees’ opinions about the process of public art creation in Toronto, and how it supports or stymies their visions of high-quality work.

**Funding**

One of the most widely shared perceptions was that the current tools that Toronto uses to fund public art need to be expanded and reformed. Many acknowledged the tremendous contribution that developer-funded public art has made to Toronto.

Still, a number of respondents expressed concerns regarding the dependency on a development boom and the lack of other sources to support public art in Toronto. For example, both activist artist Luis Jacob and development industry representative Danielle Chin expressed largely similar sentiments (although for different reasons). In Chin’s view, since public art is a public good, it should be funded by the public, not primarily (or only) by one sector:

> If we collectively as a society value public art, then collectively everyone should be paying for it...It’s already paid by developers and builders, whether a portion of that is shared by the tax base...or shared by grants, I think that it shouldn’t be on one interest group because the benefit is to everyone.

From Jacob’s point of view, a central challenge of the current system is that it gives undue weight to the interests of developers because they have a “hand” in the commissioning process and approval of the choices of artists and works.

However, despite concerns regarding Section 37’s limitations, there was overwhelming sentiment that Toronto must continue to encourage developers to invest in public art in the context of ongoing development expansion, and that many excellent projects have resulted from the Percent for Public Art program. What most of our respondents wanted was an opportunity for better process and wider investment in Toronto’s public art.

Respondents believed that developer investment should not release the city from commissioning significant public art works on its own sites. Councillor Krystin Wong-Tam notes,
Even in the Official Plan, we have some language about public art, but the formula is so loose and discretionary, that it ends up being no one’s responsibility. In 2016, the city had about $200,000 in their budget for public art for the entire city….Therefore, the wealthiest city in Canada really had no public art program and collection to pursue [on] their own.

Many interviewees pointed to the need for increased public funding and public accountability as a counterweight to the expanding role of the developer-based program. While we see significant value in developer-driven public art, we also make a strong recommendation that public art contributions from City capital projects be aggregated into a central fund, with a view to supporting work in underserved areas.

Others interviewed underscore the potential importance of private philanthropy. Art consultant Brad Golden noted that compared to peer U.S. cities with initiatives such as Millennium Park and Olympic Park, public art private philanthropy in Toronto is poorly developed for public art. He notes a few exceptions, such as Judy Matthews’s sponsorship of St. George Street improvements and the Under the Gardiner project. Our recommendations take this sentiment seriously in proposing new partnerships with civic groups. Philanthropic support for public art should fall within Canada’s definition of charitable donations.

**Frustration with “Let’s make a deal” public art**

As noted in previous chapters, a distinctive feature of Toronto’s public art policy is its heavy reliance on case-by-case negotiations around the allocation of public art as a Section 37 “community benefit.” As Jane Perdue, Public Art Coordinator in Urban Design, noted, Toronto’s recognition of public art as such a benefit has produced widespread acknowledgment of the importance of public art in the planning process: “Planners know that public art is very high on the list [of Section 37 benefits]…Developers are really interested and so are the politicians...Yes, it competes with other requirements, with community centres, with social services, with a whole bunch of things. But, given that it really is a small amount it...is sitting pretty high on everybody’s list of priorities.”

Still, some interviewees lamented the fact that making this process so central to the City’s overall public art policies has subjected public art to restrictions imposed by the Ontario Planning Act. Despite the fact that public art is often recognized and funded as a “community benefit,” they were concerned with the fact that this requires pitting public art against other community benefits, such as community housing; that any pooled funds generally must be spent within the same ward, rather than taking a city-wide, needs-based, or impact approach; and that the personal interests of local councillors become paramount. Mark
Mandelbaum of Lanterra Developments recognizes that “Whether public art is or is not a part of that package really depends on the appetite of the local councillor and also what the needs are of the community.”

For these reasons, our recommendations include measures designed to support public art through mechanisms that operate outside the Section 37 process. These are meant to supplement rather than supplant Section 37, offering alternatives to compensate for its shortcomings while recognizing its importance and continuing impact.

**Complex administrative process**

As Mandelbaum indicates, the Percent for Public Art program is a very complex affair. One per cent is rarely achieved. Beyond the specific negotiations among developers and councillors, the complex administrative process of procuring and managing public art throws up additional challenges. In many cases, those who are nominally in charge of the process feel that their creativity and know-how is sometimes thwarted by complex procedures.

Catherine Dean describes some of the challenges that she has faced in putting the Percent for Public Art program to innovative uses, in part because of risk aversion on the part of government and the lack of curatorial authority vested in city staff. There are currently unallocated Section 37 funds that could be applied to sites, but there is not a clear method with which to allocate these funds (for example, through the curatorial authority of the City staff, all of whom have extensive curatorial experience).

Our recommendations therefore include proposals for simplifying the administrative process and vesting the City’s public art professionals with more authority to utilize their professional judgment in deciding how to utilize public art funds.

**Lack of diversity among selected applicants and opportunities for emerging artists**

Many interviewees felt that the public art process is open only to a small group of “privileged” people. There is a general desire to widen the pool of artists, consultants, and curators to enable diversity and create more opportunities for emerging artists. At the same time, there was a perceived need by many that arts professionals could play a larger role in the selection of artworks and in supporting artists through the process. Some interviewed suggested that new guidelines, unconscious bias training for juries, outreach, and open calls could strengthen the diversity of the pool, noting that public artists are overwhelmingly
male, white, and of European descent. Outreach to emerging artists was also advised.

Interviewees variously stated that increased cultural diversity, Indigenous artworks, public accessibility, collaboration, and community involvement would be important success factors for public art projects in the future, and would better represent Toronto. In addition, several stakeholders stressed that emerging artists and curators need more opportunities to break into the public art process. We not require that the private developer program have open competitions, although this remains one of their options. However, our recommendations for new types of programming and funds respond to these opportunities.

**Attracting well-known artists**

Several interviews identified an opposite challenge of the current commissioning process: it has difficulties attracting the work of renowned and international artists to Toronto. According to Mark Mandelbaum of Lantera Developments, who worked with Vito Acconci on a major commission, high-profile artists often do not wish to jump through the hoops of submitting a proposal, and instead expect to be curated. While officially developers are free to commission public art through competitions, invitation, or direct commission, the view that they were informally pushed towards a more “regimented” process by city officials was reinforced by several other developers and public art consultants that we interviewed. The flexibility to commission directly exists, and this route can be more proactively used.

**Maintenance**

Beyond challenges in the selection and creation process, other interviews pointed towards maintenance challenges. Alka Lukatela, Director of Urban Design at the City of Toronto, describes the unfortunate reality of how successful public artworks suffer from lack of maintenance. She notes that the complex ownership structure of public art in Toronto makes it difficult to clearly delineate responsibility for maintenance. Mike Williams, General Manager of Economic Development & Culture of the City of Toronto, emphasizes the need for public artworks to be built to withstand the elements from the onset of the installation.

Our recommendations recognize the importance of healthy maintenance budgets, both for the City of Toronto works and those commissioned through the developer process.
The value of aggregation

Several respondents remarked on challenges relating to difficulties in combining funds and projects into larger aggregates that could become something more than the sum of their parts. These range from the more general aesthetic and conceptual challenges of reimagining public art beyond a specific site or stand-alone project to the more mundane challenges of designing policy frameworks that permit public art to operate across sites and scales.

Alfredo Romano of Castlepoint Numa, a private development group, highlights the importance of rethinking public art in terms of how it interfaces with an entire community or area and is accessible:

“[It’s] not just about that specific space, that specific building, but how it disseminates through the entire community and through the city at large. We’re also interested in making sure that if we’re going to have strong public art, [it has] to occur in places where people gravitate to, you want to create crossroads.

Some interviewees noted how larger-scale, more ambitious works can achieve a wider reach and draw new audiences. Louise Garfield from Etobicoke Arts discussed how “when it’s really big and really successful,” public art is “more accessible to more people. More citizens of the city who [do] not ever want to go into a gallery or look at art in any other way.”

Many referenced Chicago’s Millennium Park as a model that Toronto should emulate in its combination of green space, public realm, and large-scale works. While several interviewees pointed to some examples in Toronto of moving beyond an individual, autonomous project, they also noted how rare this type of thinking is here. Terry Nicholson underscores that public art in Toronto is “under scaled” compared to Chicago. Ilana Altman, who is now the curator of the Bentway project, notes, “In New York there [is] a much stronger mentality and conception of the block as an entity.” She singled out Toronto’s “Canary District or the Pan Am Village” as examples “where the public realm was considered from the start as something that was cohesive and the public art program within it was [part of] a curatorial vision for the whole.”

Danielle Chin from BILD also thought that “It would probably be more beneficial to have larger-scale projects” in Toronto. Yet she was skeptical about the realization of large-scale projects: “A lot of developments that are happening now,” are restricted “because of land constraints.” Priorities such as “the function, livability, and efficiency or a new residential tower, for example,” could rule out significant projects.
Our recommendations build on existing movement towards larger-scaled and district-based approaches in Toronto, with a view towards making them an ongoing and regular feature of Toronto’s public art policies.

Sites unseen

While our interviews revealed a number of crucial challenges facing public art in Toronto, sometimes they are also important in revealing blind spots in the public art community or field. One example of such a blind spot concerns the heavy concentration of public art in the downtown core of the city and its corresponding underdevelopment elsewhere. Spaces outside of the downtown core become sites unseen, and are, in effect, “public art deserts.” This situation was rarely remarked upon as a major challenge by our interviewees.

To be sure, the emergence of “public art deserts” has not gone totally unnoticed. Alfredo Romano emphasizes the need for regulations to “catch up” and encompass a broader, “living” definition of public art.

"I think it’s actually the regulatory framework that needs to catch up and recognize and understand how art disseminates itself...Obviously in the downtown core, because of the institutional presence and artists who live in those communities, it’s much more vibrant. That doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist in the other parts of the city that are less urban, less contextually urban. Art also exists there, it just needs to be mined and promoted....Public art has to be part of an ongoing narrative that exists in a community, is living in the moment, and will project into the future."

It has also been a major topic of concern in many of the commentaries published on The Artful City blog series, especially because Ilana Altman’s mapping efforts have made the spatial concentration of public art so abundantly clear. This is what makes it all the more surprising that this situation was not more central in our interviews.

This blind spot points towards another major challenge public art policy faces. As urban historian Richard Harris recently demonstrated (2015), Toronto’s intellectual, planning, and artistic elite are heavily concentrated in the downtown core. He argues that they develop a corresponding downtown-centric outlook, making it difficult or unlikely to see the city from the point of view of its inner suburbs — where, in fact, the large majority of its residents live, along with the vast majority of newcomers.

Because public art by its very nature is supposed to serve the city as a whole, being cognizant of how this downtown-centrism potentially affects public art
thinking and policy is an important challenge to face going forward. Our recommendations recognize this situation and seek to remedy it by creating and expanding funds and programs geared towards underserved areas outside development centres. A new City vacant property tax could provide resources earmarked to support these endeavours.

Major theme 3: Future directions for public art in Toronto

While it is easy to criticize, it is more productive to provide a vision for a way forward. Our interviews therefore were careful to ask respondents to outline their future vision for public art and to articulate concrete proposals for achieving it. Many people suggested that a comprehensive new public art strategy and accompanying implementation policy is needed at this point in the City’s history, particularly given the absence of public art within the recent TOCore report, and the nascent initiative for a new Culture Plan at the City of Toronto. Our recommendations support this view, and propose as an immediate action creating a Public Art Working Group with a new Public Art Master Plan as a crucial objective.

The fundamental question, however, concerns not only the principles on which a new strategy should be based but also how to realize them. Indeed, Toronto has not lacked for visions in the past — achieving them has been the problem. Bruce Kuwabara, partner at KPMB Architects, highlights Toronto’s “history of incomplete visions”:

“They have grown almost unconsciously, just development after development which has raised all these questions about how we live in cities and what the quality of life is. Before you get to the art, I think you actually have to have some integration with the consumption of public space at a larger metropolitan scale, and then probably see all the things that have already occurred. Otherwise, you’ll be chasing it development by development again and again, right?”

Kuwabara’s evaluation of the state of public space in Toronto stresses that public art is only one component in a broader discussion about the future development and the quality of life in the city.

On the other hand, some interviewees saw public art as a spark that could transform the urban sphere. Still, beyond the challenges and the different approaches towards city-building, there were some wide agreements about how public art in Toronto could and should be redefined.

- **Expand the definition of public art.** Most interviewees hoped that the definition of public art would evolve to include work of differing durations,
executed in diverse media. They often pointed to the success of such public artworks in other jurisdictions, especially Montreal.

- **Simplify and clarify the process.** Many believed in the need for a more open, simple, and transparent commissioning and funding process in Toronto.

- **Involve artists earlier and more deeply.** Many participants stressed that involving artists and curators far earlier in the process would be beneficial. Artists would ideally work closely with architects, engineers, developers, and city planners throughout the entire project. Many also discussed the need for artists to be part of an interdisciplinary team of architects, landscape architects, and engineers.

- **Explore new funding tools and increase public accountability.** A number of people proposed new funding tools, ranging from dedicated taxes to public-private partnerships, to arm’s-length foundations, to dedicated Arts Council funds, in order to increase funding for public art.

- **Expand outreach.** Across most stakeholder categories, interviewees remarked that more promotion and interpretation of our public art assets would benefit the local public and help create a stronger cultural tourist destination.

Our recommendations reflect these concerns and offer proposals for implementing them.

Finally, there is the question of who should lead this process. Some interviewees recommended that the City coordinate the public art process, remove roadblocks, and better harness the deep expertise and resources of local cultural institutions — from museums to festivals, arts councils, artist-run-centres, universities, and the developer community. Public art thrives as part of a rich and complex ecology. The City is one central player, which can do much more to coordinate and spark the entire system.
Chapter 6: Public Forums on Public Art in Toronto

In order to open up a broader dialogue about public art in Toronto that could inform our research, team members collaborated with the AGO to convene two public forums in March 2017, one at OCAD University and the other at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The goal of the forums was to reflect on the current situation of public art in Toronto and to imagine how public art might constructively contribute to Toronto’s future. A major topic was how public art could provide a counterweight to the homogenizing forces of large-scale downtown condominium development by enhancing the diversity and texture of the urban fabric. Another major topic concerned access: how to open up opportunities for emerging and diverse artists to participate in Toronto’s public art scene, and how to engage diverse publics.

After inviting a creative and engaged circle, the panels surveyed new social and economic models for public art space and site in Toronto.

This chapter provides brief overviews of the two panels.

Session 1

Session 1 included the following panelists: Rebecca Carbin (Waterfront Toronto), Aisha Sasha John (Artist), Kari Cwynar (Evergreen Brickworks), Catherine Dean (City of Toronto) and Ben Mills (Public Art Management), moderated by Jacob Zimmer.

Session 1 explored public art in Toronto from a variety of angles. Key themes included inclusivity, site specificity, and cultural difference. The discussion also reflected on the impact of colonialism, immigration, and generational differences. At the same time, it sought to look forward, asking: What will the public art landscape in Toronto look like in 20 years? What kind of narrative will we choose to be our legacy? What does sustained public engagement really look like?

The following are some of the key points that emerged from the discussions:

- **The definition of public art.** Defining public art/art in the public realm and understanding its critical role within the fabric of the city is central and must be a continuous and iterative process that responds to the city as it evolves and changes over time. A need to redefine public art is essential and is a creative collective process.
• **The practice of public art.** Public art practice is becoming much more of a dialogue. It is much more about art in the public than it has ever been. We must keep encouraging and fostering the dialogic aspect of public art.

• **The experience of public art.** A real value of public art is how people encounter it within their own lives and on their own terms as they go about their business in public space. This creates a very different relationship between audience and artwork as compared to the traditional format of actively choosing to visit a gallery or an institution. Art has the possibility to become an integrated part of everyday experience and daily rhythm.

• **The scale of public art.** It is important to rethink and consider scale when it comes to public art — large-scale work is not always the best way to create the most impact. Think beyond object-based large-scale sculpture.

• **The responsibility of public art.** There is a responsibility and sensitivity that comes with public art. There are ethical concerns because there is a public audience. And public art can also be effective when it challenges the audience.

A series of crucial questions emerged to frame the challenge facing public art:

• **Diversifying the field.** How can we rethink the process of public art competitions to encourage more applications and increase the diversity of the type of artists that participate and the types of work that is implemented?

• **Responding to diverse publics.** What type of public artwork can serve an audience that is less definable as a single body but is instead marked by plurality and diversity?

• **Diversifying the work.** How can we encourage temporary, smaller-scale, more dynamic, and changeable projects that really listen to the fabric of the city?

• **Sustaining opportunities.** How can we think beyond Section 37 and utilize other more sustainable funding opportunities that will outlast the current construction boom?
Session 2

Session 2 included the following panelists: Helena Grdadolnik (Workshop Architecture), Alex Josephson (Partisans) and Maxwell Stephens (Hadley+Maxwell), moderated by Jacob Zimmer.

Session 2 built on the first session by articulating possible future trajectories for public art, highlighting a creative and socially conscious agenda. Key themes included revising current policy and practice to complement the City’s diverse sociocultural geography and to incorporate new mediums and debates about public art. Ilana Altman (KPMG Architects) from The Artful City opened the session with a presentation on public art and art in the public realm in Toronto.

The following are some of the key points that emerged from the discussions:

- **Understanding policy and practice.** It is of critical importance to better understand the Ontario Planning Act and municipal public art policies. It is also important to find creative ways to maximize the opportunities that are presented rather than being discouraged by what is in place.

- **Public art beyond the core.** Our current policies do not support a balanced planning model and an integration of public art within the entire city of Toronto. It is important to foster public art beyond high-density development zones.

- **Seize existing opportunities.** Public art created through the City’s own capital projects offer opportunities to realize projects beyond sculptural work and so redefine the notion of permanence when it comes to public art.

- **Revise policy to reflect contemporary practice.** Policy should reflect the fact that contemporary public art practice includes a range of durations.

- **Move beyond the dichotomy of infrastructure and art.** Infrastructure and public art do not always need to be separated. Public art should be integral, not an add-on to building or infrastructure planning and budgets.

- **Think beyond individual sites.** The ongoing development boom should result not only in a series of disconnected works, but could also produce an organically interconnected set of interventions that adds to public life and civic identity.

- **Encourage collaboration among design professionals.** Great creativity and opportunities can emerge if a range of creative talent is involved from
the early stages of a project. Artists, curators, and art consultants can enhance the work of engineers, architects, and landscape architects — and vice versa — if they work closely together from the outset.

- **The importance of site.** Site should be critically considered. Public art can address the specific needs of a site and be developed for a specific context. At the same time, opportunities should be available for artists to proactively choose sites suited to their public art practice.

- **Public art and city building.** Creative city building requires making public art an integral part of urban forms and functions as a means to express our diverse values.
In this chapter, we examine Montreal’s approach to public art with a view to lessons for Toronto. Key themes include stakeholders, policies, programs, financing models, and promotional tools and strategies. In addition to government-led programs, we studied the public art initiatives of educational and artistic institutions such as universities, museums, and non-profit arts organizations.

We sought to understand current practices, challenges, and potentials in Montreal’s public art realm through various methods: surveying literature, policy documents, and interviews with artists, architects, designers, city and provincial government officers, art historians, and museum professionals.

The central point of the chapter is that public art funding and commissioning mechanisms in Montreal significantly differ from those in Toronto. While in Toronto public art policy primarily operates by seeking to extract funds from private development, in Montreal this is not the case; rather, the public sector predominates.

Indeed, the two principal stakeholders in Montreal are public sector entities: the Ministry of Culture and Communications (MCC) and the City of Montreal. MCC administers the Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture et à l'environnement des bâtiments et des sites gouvernementaux et publics, also known as the “artistic one-percent” (for architecture, buildings, their surrounding environments, and sites). The ordinance mandates public art contributions from all buildings and sites subsidized by provincial capital funds according to a clearly delineated, fixed schedule (Summarized in Figure 28).

These contributions must be dedicated to on-site artworks, including sculptures, paintings, photographs, murals, tapestries, or stained glass. More recent commissions have explored novel forms of public art, such as J’aime Montréal et Montréal m’aime (2012–2017) by Thierry Marceau, an evolving performance that was enacted once a year for five years. Public artists are normally chosen from an “artist registry” open to professional artists who reside in Quebec.

Since the policy’s adoption, it has generated over 500 hundred public artworks located in schools, libraries, hospitals, universities, etc.

1 The policy was inaugurated in 1961 by the government of Quebec and taken over by MCC in 1981.
The City of Montreal runs a parallel public art program. It commissions public art through various channels, but the most important is the Bureau d’art public (BAP), founded in 1989. BAP commissions and acquires public artworks for the City’s collection, and is responsible for its maintenance and promotion. BAP has a dedicated annual budget, derived from municipal construction costs — typically between one per cent and two per cent.

In addition to running its own municipal public art program, BAP applies MCC’s one per cent policy in Montreal’s municipal buildings and sites when these receive provincial funding. Currently, BAP’s team has eight members: one head of section; one public art commissioner; four public art officers; one engineer in charge of the maintenance; and one information access and archive officer. A long- and medium-term planning strategy allows BAP to expand or reduce its team according to the number and complexity of future commissions.

---

Thus in contrast to Toronto, public art in Montreal is a core municipal and provincial service. Dedicated budgets, a compulsory per cent for art program, and ample staff provide resources for the city to integrate public art into the texture and fabric of urban experience and to experiment with both traditional and novel approaches to doing so.

In 2017, Montreal is celebrating Canada 150 (as is Toronto), the 375th anniversary of the founding of Montreal, and the 50th anniversary of Expo 67. While Canada 150 is generating a good amount of programming in both cities, it is not resulting in many public art projects in Toronto. In Montreal, however, Canada 150 and that city’s 375th anniversary celebrations have generated a good number of public art projects, such as La Balade pour la Paix, among others. There is a conscious effort by the City of Montreal to use the 375th anniversary as a platform for public art to generate international prestige.

**Key findings**

This section summarizes some of the main findings of our research.

I. **Collaboration between stakeholders**

While BAP and MCC are the two major public art stakeholders in Montreal, they operate alongside and in collaboration with other public institutions. These strong collaborative relationships are a crucial part of Montreal’s successful public art initiatives. Currently, there are two important clusters of collaboration between museums, universities, and the City.

- **Zone Éducation-Culture** is a forthcoming public art hub on Bishop Street, a zone shared by the Quartier du Musée and the Quartier Concordia in the Ville-Marie borough. An initiative of the City of Montreal, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) and Concordia University, the Zone “stems from a common vision to enhance Montreal’s role as a city of culture and knowledge. It will showcase works of public art that will demonstrate the commitment of those partners to the democratization of the art in the public sphere,” ([Introducing Zone Éducation-Culture](#)), 2016).

- Although not identified as an official zone, the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) has a similar agreement with the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership (QDSP). The Mur brun: paroi Aquin is an interactive digital screen-like wall developed in collaboration with students enrolled in the UQAM Design of Events program (DESS). Like Concordia University, UQAM has designed special courses where students are engaged in more hands-on public art projects.

II. **Promotional tools and strategies**

Education and promotion are essential components of the City of Montreal’s public art initiatives and programs. The City produces rich promotional material, such as online registries, printed brochures, printed and online maps, walking
and cycling tours, mobile applications, and more, often in partnership with other public and private partners (see below).

For its part, BAP has organized workshops seeking to highlight the City’s public art collection at various public events, such as Montreal’s Culture Days. It has also held public exhibitions to show the creation processes of commissioned works, or maquettes (e.g., in 2016, Stephen Schofield exhibited the maquettes used to model the permanent installation Où boivent les loups (Where the Wolves Drink), in the Place des Arts. BAP also runs an online registry, which provides valuable information and visual material about each of the 325 or so public artworks owned by the City (artpublicmontreal.ca, 2017). BAP’s registry and website were revamped between 2011 and 2014 in collaboration with professional art historians.

BAP has also pursued playful and creative ways to engage the public. As part of its 25th anniversary in 2014, it organized a public art treasure hunt, consisting of five free public art circuits tours. This initiative was also highly collaborative, resulting from a partnership with Tourism Montreal, the non-profit organization L’Autre Montréal, and other public art owners such as the Société de Transport de Montréal (STM), the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Musée d’Art Contemporain, the McCord Museum, and the Montreal History Centre.

Other agencies also help to promote public art in Montreal. Art Public Montreal (APM) is a public art partnership, an initiative of the City of Montreal in collaboration with Tourism Montreal. The website Art Public Montreal (artpublicmontreal.ca) is the first tool developed by this partnership. The platform brings together all public artworks in the city, whatever their origin, and broadcasts public art-related news. This collection will eventually include more than 1,000 artworks.

The APM partnership has also recently launched a new public art brochure. The brochure outlines five public art tours featuring more than 100 works. This art map, available in French and English, has been widely distributed throughout the city.

III. Temporary public art

Montreal uses its public art resources and staff to support not only permanent but also temporary work. A number of municipal and community initiatives, non-profit organizations, events, and programs work to make temporary public art a regular feature of the city’s rhythms. We have identified two main temporary public art sources.

- The Quartier des Spectacles Partnership (QDSP) The Quartier des Spectacles Partnership (QDSP) is a non-profit organization. It operates an
An urban area known as the Quartier des Spectacles, which has become a nationally and internationally known cultural and entertainment hub, hosting over 40 cultural events throughout the year. The Quartier des Spectacles area covers one square kilometre in downtown Montreal, and comprises eight public squares and nine projection façades. The City of Montreal owns the area’s facilities and public spaces, and together with the Province of Quebec, it funds the Partnership’s activities. The QDSP’s annual budget comes close to C$7 million.

Since 2009, as part of its mandate, the QDSP has commissioned temporary cutting-edge lighting designs, immersive environments, and interactive digital installations, mainly for the Luminothérapie festival. Supported by the Urban Digital Laboratory (UDL), the QDSP encourages “urban media art,” one of the most exciting forms of contemporary public art. Its permanent video projection system is exclusively devoted to the broadcasting of innovative and original artistic content. The Partnership is a member of the Connecting Cities Network (CCN). CCN is an international project founded in 2012 by the Berlin-based platform Public Art Lab, which is dedicated to replacing advertisements with media artwork.

- Public art-related events and festivals - There are many festivals and art events that produce or display temporary works of art. These invite the public to experience or imagine the city in new ways: The Montréal en Lumières Festival was the first festival (in the early 2000s) to introduce giant projections and video mapping effects on Montreal’s buildings; the international public art event ILLUMINART began in 2017 and featured 25 works that used light as a form of artistic expression; Luminothérapie offers an urban design and interactive-based winter experience through high-tech temporary installations; the Aires Libres public art manifestation is an annual public art event which occupies St. Catherine Street East, between St. Hubert and Papineau Streets; the Art Souterrain Festival presents artworks across Montreal’s underground city; the Mural Festival has taken over St. Laurent Boulevard every summer since 2013. The 2017 edition will simultaneously unfold in the Old Montreal area.

IV. Anniversaries: Montreal’s 375th anniversary

Beyond its regular programming, Montreal’s public art community seizes the opportunities presented by major anniversaries. The City’s 375th anniversary celebration in 2017 is a case in point. It has involved an unprecedented number and variety of public art patrons, who have commissioned high-calibre, expensive projects relying on a vast range of expertise, techniques, and mediums. Consider some of the major projects:
Temporary public art is a major part of the celebration. Several public art projects aim to "activate iconic sites," whether architectural or natural. Marc Séguin and the multimedia company 4U2C are transforming the Mont Royal with the video projection *Aurores Montréal* (Aurora Montreal). This project features artificial northern lights, poetry, and lyrics by Marie Uguay and Leonard Cohen, among other images of daily life.

Another example is *Cité Mémoire* (City Memory), a series of 20 large-scale video projections inspired by the history of Montreal and supported by the *Montréal en Histoires* free mobile application (available in French, English, Spanish, and Mandarin). Throughout Old Montreal, projections featuring characters and events that shaped and influenced the city since its foundation appear on walls, trees, and the ground every evening from dusk to midnight.

*La Balade pour la Paix* is another initiative that reactivates one of Montreal’s major arteries, Sherbrooke Street. This linear “open-air museum” is an initiative of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in collaboration with McCord Museum and Concordia and McGill universities. It showcases 72 existing artworks that reflect the universal values and humanism of Expo 67.

The 375th anniversary will also leave behind a series of “legacy projects.” Especially notable is the *Promenade Fleuve-Montagne* (River-Mountain Walk). The pathway is a 3.8 km walking trail that connects the St. Lawrence River to Mount Royal Park. This City redevelopment project highlights the city’s history, heritage, landscape, and unique culture. The revitalized route brings attention to existing public artworks and includes three works specifically commissioned for the sites, including the interactive media-based piece *Cortège* (Projet EVA), only accessible through a mobile application. One of these three public artworks is sponsored by the Brigade Arts-Affaires de Montréal (BAAM), a non-profit organization formed by young business professionals.3

Other key stakeholders are utilizing the 375th anniversary celebration to enhance their public art portfolio. For example, the QDSP has planned a major public art event, KM³ (cubic kilometre). This event features 20 original temporary works and installations and two commissioned permanent public artworks by Quebec-based artists working in the visual arts, digital art, design, and architecture. The Partnership foresees transforming KM³ into a biennial event that highlights and promotes Quebec temporary public art practices and support local artists. KM³ is a key example of bringing a curatorial vision to bear on the public art across

3 These young philanthropists have raised $100,000 to commission a public artwork.
an urban area. In its first year, it will be curated by Melissa Mongiat and Mounia Andraos (the founders of Montreal-based design studio Daily tous les jours), in collaboration with the Musée d’Art Contemporain’s curatorial team.


**V. Seasonal public art**

Montreal is also experimenting with new forms of public art, beyond or between the typical categories of “permanent” and “temporary.” We may call this type of work “seasonal.” Season public art includes, for example, annual commissions of temporary public artworks and the highly anticipated return of works that have previously engaged the public.

\[4\] Modélisation: Jonathan Villeneuve, 2016.
An emblematic example is *21 Balançoirs (21 Swings)*, an interactive work that has become a public art event on its own. Every spring since 2011, people of all ages line up to play on the swings installed in the vicinity of the Place des Arts. Once the swings are in motion, they set up notes that, combined, create collective melodies.

Another major example is the installation *Boules Roses (Pink Balls)*, designed by landscape architect Claude Cormier. Displayed every summer in the Montreal Gay Village since 2011, the installation is made up of 180,000 resin balls suspended over one kilometre of St. Catherine Street East. For the first time since 2011, the balls’ distinctive pink colour will change: in its 2017 edition, they will follow a rainbow-like display (18 colour variations), as part of the Aires Libres event’s 10th edition.

**VI. Public art rental program**

A major benefit of having such a strong public art program is that Montreal’s various stakeholders have by now built up a substantial collection. Since many of these are temporary or seasonal, they may be rented to other cities around the world.

The QDSP has been a leader in this regard. The Partnership has given a contract to an independent firm that is in charge of finding venues to rent out its artworks. This rental program not only increases the visibility of the City of Montreal, but it also increases local artists’ reputations.

This is a key example of how a strong policy leads to multiplier effects: more public art leads to more opportunities.

**VII. Loan initiatives**

In addition to renting out its own collections, Montreal reciprocates by accepting works on loan. This is a way to commission major works at a lower cost without being required to maintain the work permanently.

A prime example is the elevated Bonaventure highway; Montreal is creating a new signature entranceway to its downtown. The Bonaventure will be replaced by a boulevard with a green median. Its entrance will be enhanced with a monumental sculpture. The long-time philanthropist couple France Chrétien-Desmarais and André Desmarais have commissioned the Catalan artist Jaume Plensa to create a ten-metre sculpture which will be on loan to the City of Montreal for at least 25 years.
VIII. Support for artists and communities

A key to sustaining a successful public art program is to support artists and communities. Although we cannot confirm that this is a systematic practice, some of the Montreal interviewees referred to the “processus d’accompagnement” (accompanying process) in which artists, in consultation with the experts, have a chance to refine their work.

Another form of support occurs when groups of citizens ask the City to commemorate their cultural heritage through publicly placed art. In some cases, the City (i.e., BAP) has positively answered these requests and commissioned commemorative public art pieces, in collaboration with ethnocultural communities (e.g. Armenian, Lebanese, and Chilean). Before the creation of the BAP, works of public art celebrating immigrant heritages were almost exclusively the result of grassroots initiatives and efforts.

IX. Public and artist involvement in public art processes

The participation of artists, residents, and users in public art processes varies depending on the project and the rules of each organization. For instance, at the BAP, juries are normally composed of seven voting members. Recently, artists have been included as jury members. The composition of the selection committees reflects one of the BAP’s priorities: to bring a diversity of experts and voices into their public art commissions.5 In the case of the MCC, the president of the selection committee has to be a professional artist. As for the QDSP, the composition of the juries varies with each project.

An example of community involvement in public art processes is the interactive video installation Chorégraphie pour les humains et les étoiles (Choreographies for Humans and Stars), on view since 2014 at the Montreal Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium. Daily tous les jours worked with the local youth during this artwork’s creation process. Previous works commissioned by the BAP have also

5 The president is selected by a jury. The jury composition is as follows:
Three art experts. The experts’ selection depends on the commissioned work’s medium. For instance, if it is a photo, there will be at least one specialist in photography on the jury. These experts come from universities, CEGEPs, artist-run organizations, museums, and can also be art critics, curators, and artists.
- One architect or landscape architect
- One representative of the client
- One representative of the citizens (merchant or leisure associations, etc.)
- One representative of the City’s Cultural Service
- One BAP team member, who acts as the jury’s secretary
implemented this “collaborative model”: *L'Étreinte* is an aluminum-based installation unveiled in 2013 in Toussaint-Louverture Park. The artist, Luce Pelletier, created this work in close collaboration with *Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance’s* residents.


**Montreal interviews**

Given the vastly different public art infrastructure and policies that exist in Quebec and Montreal, it is perhaps not surprising to note some differences given by Montreal interviewees to much the same set of questions. Developers play a much smaller role, to the extent that there were no interviews with developers in Montreal. Twelve people were interviewed in total, in the categories of artists and curators, art institutions and organizations, and City officers.

In general, the Montreal interviewees expressed a looser definition of public art than Torontonians, or more simply “art in public spaces” that might encompass new and hybrid art forms that blur traditional distinctions between art and design, advertising, public events, and spectacles. Julie Belisle of the Musée d’Art Contemporain described public art as “a practice that brings art to the public.” Other values noted in the interviews were the accessibility of the site; the use of landmarks; a desire that the work should be connected with the site it occupied;
and that it be original, commissioned work. Some saw public art as a means to commemorate diverse communities and their histories. Public art was also valued as a means to attract tourists, provide income for artists and art historians, and attract international prestige. Public art was also seen as a means to reflect back on previous monuments, to think about the past and the urban present in new ways.

To the many roles and benefits of public art listed by Toronto participants, Montreal respondents added the improvement and beautification of neighbourhoods. Michèle Picard, head of section and BAP’s director in Montreal, argued for public art’s value both in supporting artists and for city building: “It's a reflection on urbanism, on the ‘living together.’ It brings another perspective on the city. It makes art accessible to the citizens. It is an open-air museum.” The notion that public art is an extension of museum practice makes sense in the Montreal context, where galleries and museums are collaborators in the curation and presentation of public art. Others interviewed continued with the theme of urbanism. Pascale Daigle of the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership sees public art as a means to build civic engagement: “It changes the relationships between the people and the city…Successful public art allows for a new appropriation of a site; it permits a fresh look at the city.” She also sees it as a tool for neighbourhood improvement, adding, “In underprivileged neighbourhoods, public

art introduces and gives a sense of pride.” Others mentioned the opportunity for public art to create safe spaces and refuge within troubled areas. The majority of respondents favoured temporary and rotating displays of art in the public realm, as these allowed for more experimentation with technologies and materials and required less consensus around the work’s message than permanent works demand. Respondents were concerned that permanent works become naturalized into their location. However, interviewees also noted that Montreal aspired to be Chicago, and lauded *The Cloud Gate*, Paris’s iconic *Stravinsky Fountain* by Niki de Saint Phalle, and *Les deux plateaux* by Daniel Buren — all permanent works of art.

Public art in Montreal is not free from debate. Laurent Vernet, public art commissioner at BAP, believes that “a successful public artwork is one that engages people…If people ask questions, it’s a strong work, it’s a success.” Julie Bélisle notes that “public art requires constant negotiations” between audiences, presenters, and artists.

Like Torontonians, Montrealers had concerns about the promotion and interpretation tools for public art, as well as its maintenance by government, wanting to see more resources focused on these two components of existing programs. Some would like to see the criteria for MCC updated, arguing that public art is an expanded field that should include interventions by designers and landscape architects. Others mentioned the need for careful mediation of the jury process because of the weight that non-experts can have on the jury. Many felt that the system supports artists and communities quite well through the process.
While Montreal has a strong record of collaboration between different kinds of institutions in public art projects, respondents argued for more collaboration between various levels of public agencies. Some also proposed creating an exchange agreement between Toronto and Montreal for the exchange of temporary public artworks. A number of respondents yearned for the kind of investment into Montreal public art by developers that characterizes Toronto’s process.

Key lessons from Montreal

This close case study of Montreal offers several lessons for public art in Toronto. It highlights the benefits and significance of maintaining a strong annual budget for public art; ensuring strong provincial support for public art; nurturing collaboration between different stakeholders (the City, museums, universities, provincial government, developers, etc.); implementing strong programs and promotional strategies to communicate, educate, and engage with the public; making public art an essential component of cities’ anniversaries and public celebrations, and leveraging these events to create legacy projects; supporting artists throughout the creative process; relying on a single division such as the Bureau d’art public, which has an entire team devoted to manage public art; establishing public art hubs, such as the Zone Éducation Culture (Concordia University & MMFA); multiplying temporary public art commissions as a way to encourage artistic creation and innovation and to financially support local artists; experimenting with seasonal and recurrent public art; bringing a curatorial vision to public art districts or zones; broadcasting artistic content on urban media façades and billboards; drawing upon the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership and other Montreal art events’ models and approaches for commissioning and managing temporary artworks; and creating public art rental and loan programs that would allow the City of Toronto to borrow and loan works from individuals or institutions from Canada or abroad.
Chapter 8: Redefining Public Art in Toronto — Vision and Recommendations

Toronto is poised to become a leader in public art after four decades of significant investment. At the same time, Toronto is at an inflection point — our investment and overall initiative has lagged vis-à-vis competitor cities like Chicago, San Francisco, and Ottawa. Toronto will thrive if we renew our commitment to a powerful public art presence for our city and support that commitment with appropriate private and public sector institutional capacity, funding, and collaboration.

Toronto should be known for the reach, diversity, and transformational power of public art in its downtown core and across its neighbourhoods and communities. There should be no more “public art deserts.” Toronto’s public art should encompass artworks of different typologies, durations, and media, from the temporary and ephemeral to semi-permanent and permanent installations and sculpture, media art, and performances.

To support public art Toronto must create a robust funding regime for public art, effectively deploying both private and public contributions.

Toronto should more actively promote its public art through comprehensive digital promotional tools and events to provide public access to its public art and explore collaborations with post-secondary and arts institutions and digital media companies to undertake this work.

To realize this vision, we recommend that Toronto produce a Public Art Master Plan. This Public Art Master Plan should be reviewed and refreshed every ten years.

This plan should be developed by a Public Art Working Group. The working group should have a limited timeline. It should include public art experts, artists, developers, planners, and architects. It should advise the city in the creation of a master plan and implementation strategy, and work towards an integrated public art planning and implementation office.

1. A renewed vision for public art in Toronto

Public art cannot be reduced to a single set of values. A new approach to public art must explicitly recognize its role in building a pluralistic city. Toronto is both an economic powerhouse and a gateway for migration and immigration. It is also increasingly a vertical city where the public realm is crucial for socialization and recreation.
Public art can be a means of engaging varied audiences in exploring their social and cultural context in new ways — including built spaces, the natural environment, waterways, and city infrastructure. Hence, public art can be a vehicle for promoting cultural equity and access to high-quality arts experience for all.

Public art can be a gateway to multiple and new meanings within a city, provide beauty, delight, and provoke intellectual exchange. It can build identity and interpret a city’s complex histories.

Public art can be a catalyst for enhancing the economic and cultural value of a city. It adds value to real estate, cultural caché to a city, and attracts cultural tourism. It positions a city in a global context.

Public art is a platform for supporting artists: local, national, and international. Toronto can follow international best practices and ensure that a percentage of public artworks are commissioned from local artists, thereby helping to sustain the city’s artistic presence and its recognition.

The best public art programs build community collaboration and partnerships.

A renewed commitment to public art in Toronto would serve many purposes and many audiences. It would enable public art to realize its potential to act as:

- A means of place-making, punctuating urban space, community-building and engagement.
- A framework for understanding history and site specificity, of engaging with Toronto’s Indigenous history and present, its cultural diversity, its complex and specific neighbourhoods and districts and its global reach, as well as promoting the public realm and the city’s livability.
- A means to activate communities, evoking social, economic, Indigenous, and diverse visions of our city and communities.
- A strong draw for cultural tourists.
- An instrument for youth education and engagement. It would assist young people in interpreting their city and communities and in building a more sustainable urban environment. It would be integrated into schools, university programs, the Toronto Public Library, and arts organization outreach programs.

To realize this vision, a number of initiatives can be taken.

**Immediate**

- The City of Toronto must renew its commitment to public art.
- Establish the goal of international leadership in public art.
- Establish the goal of public art everywhere — end public art deserts outside the downtown core.
• Launch a one-year Public Art Working Group to develop a Public Art Master Plan, which was called for in the 2003 *Culture Plan for the Creative City* but never implemented. In the short term, establish a timeline and oversee implementation of immediately actionable proposals in this report. Include City of Toronto staff, public art experts, artists, developers, planners, and architects.

• Augment the Master Plan with an implementation plan and integrate public art planning into other key City planning documents and core values.

2. Redefine public art

To realize its potential as a public art leader, Toronto must **expand the scope and vision of public art in Toronto**. Concepts of appropriate durations and forms of public artworks have changed over time. Toronto can support public artworks that are durable long-term works of art in all media; interventions into infrastructure such as bridges, transit, and all manner of City of Toronto facilities; and works of shorter durations, such as installations with defined durations, rotating screen-based and virtual digital works, and seasonal artworks.

Public art in Toronto includes and should continue to include temporary activities such as PATCH (Steps Initiative), the StreetARToronto Program, creative graffiti programs, and events such as Nuit Blanche.

**Immediate**

• Change Toronto’s definition of public art to encompass artworks of different typologies, durations, and media, from the temporary and ephemeral to semi-permanent and permanent installations, as well as sculpture, media art, and performances.

There is debate regarding whether artists should be the sole creators of public art projects. Some artists make public art their entire practice. At the same time, new media artists, landscape architects, architects, and other design professionals often cross over to work both as and with public artists, creating powerful public experiences. In the 21st century, these categories are increasingly fungible.

To help clarify the process of which creators to commission, Toronto can adapt a number of definitions from cites such as Ottawa or from programs such as Metrolinx. In principle, public art work creators must be creative professionals who provide original content. They must have a history as a working creator, evidenced through (for instance) sales, commissions, salaries, royalties, residuals, grants, and awards. Creating diversity in definitions of practice can also encourage community-based artists or artists with diverse practices to apply.
Midterm
- Support local, international, and emerging artists’ projects.
- Create opportunities for Indigenous and culturally diverse voices.
- Define inclusive eligibility for professional artists, interdisciplinary artists, and teams that include artists, designers, architects, landscape artists, and new media artists-engineers.

3. Public art everywhere

Public art in Toronto should be present throughout the city. Toronto should create ambitious art parks, districts, or hubs, on the model of cities like Chicago and Montreal. It should build on the foundations laid by Waterfront Toronto, the Greenway Brickworks Don River Valley Park Project, and the Bentway. Public art should form a celebratory component of Toronto’s many festivals and exhibitions, with the possibilities of acquisition to retain quality works.

Immediate
- Build a district-oriented approach into a new Public Art Master Plan while simultaneously fast-tracking new local area public art plans.
- Deploy public art as a means to create community hubs and districts and to humanize and aestheticize much-needed infrastructure.
- Commission public art as a means of social engagement, dialogue, and social interaction, including all City of Toronto neighbourhoods.

———

Metrolinx provides the following guidance:

- While favoring professional artists, there should also be opportunities for other creative disciplines and collaborative teams to make works, reflecting contemporary practice. They could meet three of the following criteria adapted from Metrolinx and other calls:
  - The individual or group or group members have received public or peer recognition: a) in the form of honours, awards, professional prizes, scholarships, honourable mentions, or invitations to participate in a group exhibition or performance, or b) by publicly disseminated critical appraisal
  - The individual or group or group members’ artistic or related creative activity has been presented to the public by means of exhibitions, publications, performances, readings, screenings, or other means
  - The individual or group, or group members, promotes or markets their work a) by means including attending auditions, seeking sponsorship, agents, engagements or exhibitions and similar activities appropriate to the nature of her/his work, or b) by being represented by a dealer, publisher, agent, or similar representative appropriate to the nature of his/her artistic activity
  - The individual has received specialized training in an educational institution or from a practitioner or teacher recognized within their artistic/creative profession. The individual has membership in an organization representing their artistic activity whose membership or categories of membership is limited under standards established by the organization.
Midterm

- Integrate public art into specific plans, be these TOCore, Parks and Recreation, and other Toronto agencies.
- Aggressively deploy existing policy tools to pool public art contributions collected through Section 37 and City capital projects, hence creating dialogue across projects and spaces.
- Strengthen policy mechanisms that permit pooling existing and future funds from private and public sources.
- Establish a centralized and consolidated Public Art Trust Fund from City of Toronto capital projects and new funding sources, capable of targeting any part of the city.
- Partner with Toronto’s existing Local Arts Services Organizations (LASOs) to build a strong public art presence in all parts of the city.
- Support purchases of existing works and loans as an economically viable means of expanding public art works.

4. Simplify process

While there is room for debate about the best technical means to modernize and simplify Toronto’s public art systems, there can be no question that doing so is necessary to make Toronto once again an international leader in the field. In the short term, the Public Art Working Group can act as a public art advisory committee spanning both the Planning and Culture departments, as it works to produce a new comprehensive strategic plan for public art. Once recommendations for the new plan are finalized, the public art advisory committee can be revitalized.

Clarify how artists engage with the process and project

The fulsome integration of artists into the design process is crucial. Successful projects are often marked by early engagement of artists in site and project planning. Adopting a team-based approach to planning and integrating artworks ensures the appropriate integration of artworks into the overall vision of the project or site.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to formulate the public art guidelines so that development projects (whether site-specific or district-focused) include integrated art components, both permanent and temporary (if a facility for presentation is a component) during early scoping. This will ensure that art strategies and requirements are part of the overall plan and the infrastructure or architectural proposal.
Clarify methods for selecting artists

Create flexible yet clearly articulated approaches to choosing artists:

**Juries.** Juries should be arm’s length. Include art professionals with knowledge of Indigenous and diverse public art practices such as curators, artists, and designers. Require the rotation of participants in juries.

**The open call.** Short-listed artists should be asked to develop proposals (with fee payment) with winners to be decided by juries.

**The invitational call.** Establish a City-administered bank of pre-qualified artists or teams (on the model of Montreal’s artist bank). This process should allow artists to be registered and then curated by developers or the City, or for developers, institutions, or curators to register artists. Developers and the City of Toronto should have the opportunity to work with established institutional curators to choose artists to commission works.

**Public consultations and engagement.** The primary role of public consultation is to deepen artists’ connection with the community — its history, aesthetics, and context — not for communities to be placed on juries as non-professionals. Communities should be engaged in this capacity throughout the process. Some artists may choose to engage with communities in all levels of design. Members of the community where public artworks are planned and commissioning bodies (such as developers) should have access to public art training sessions that will inform them about the history, context, and value of public art. Create active participation during launches.

**Indigenous and diverse artists.** Make proactive calls that include diverse and Indigenous artists. RFPs and artist pools should make a commitment to diversity and equity by actively encouraging proposals from all individuals.

**Politicians.** City politicians can support a mandatory one per cent policy and other mechanisms suggested in this proposal, understanding the value of public art to community enhancement. Politicians should be enablers of public art projects, yet play an arm’s-length role in the selection of public art, deferring to expert juries and other proposed processes.

**Immediate**

- Create a single Public Art Office that spans Culture and Planning departments.
- Ensure that artists are engaged in site and project planning to better guarantee quality, integration, and cost.
- Create clear policies regarding process to acquire existing works — sustainability and stewardship for loans (lending practices), rentals, and purchases.
Midterm

- Create and implement existing flexible methods to acquire public art: from open calls, invitational competitions (RFQ and RFP), and commissions of new works to rentals, loans, and purchases of completed works.

5. Robust funding for public art

Toronto should mobilize public, private, and institutional funds, artists’ residency opportunities, and educational capacities to realize a renewed vision. We recognize that components of our vision for funding public art require several tools that are not possible within Toronto’s current public art policy framework. However, our review of international public art practices has convinced us that this vision is within our reach. While all cities face their own distinct political and policy challenges, those committed to innovative and creative public art find a way to make it a reality.

Here we outline broad suggestions and aspirational goals. Specific details should be worked out by the Public Art Working Group and integrated into the new Public Art Master Plan.

Mandate a percentage for public art for all City capital projects.

All city capital projects should be required to make a public art contribution. The contribution should be fixed according to a clearly delineated schedule. These funds should be gathered in a general public art fund and administered by Cultural Affairs. There should be no restrictions on where or how these funds are used, as long as they support public art in any form.

Reinterpret the developer per cent for public art policy.

Integrate a more open definition into formal planning guidelines to encourage developers to consider a wider range of styles.

Official policy should also be explicitly formulated with a view towards pooling existing and future funding into a consolidated source for public art proposals by private developers.

Toronto should aspire towards the creation of tools that require public art to be a component of all new development.

Additionally, it should be possible to:
- Facilitate district-wide sites and projects that use pooled funds.
- Continue to support site-specific projects.
• Track spending on projects and results.

For off-site contributions, grant the Public Art Office broad discretionary power to utilize these funds according to their judgment. Minimize any restrictions on how these monies are combined, and where they can be spent, as long as they are spent on public art.

**Pursue new funding tools.**

*Hotel tax.* A percentage of any new mandatory hotel tax should be geared towards public art. These monies can be geared towards public art initiatives to boost tourism, and not be restricted to permanent sculpture. It should be administered by Cultural Affairs.

*Vacant property tax.* A percentage of any new vacant property tax should be geared towards public art. These monies can be geared for public art initiatives in underserved parts of the city, and not restricted to permanent artworks. It should be administered by the Toronto Arts Council/LASOs.

*Development charges.* Make public art an eligible service for development charges. The Toronto City Council voted in the past for cultural spending to be removed from the list of ineligible services. In 2014, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute made a similar recommendation. With the Development Charges Act coming under review in 2018, the time is ripe to include public art as an eligible service.

*Public art trust fund.* Create a central fund that supports significant public art projects. This fund would pool City of Toronto funds with other potential funding sources.

*With more robust funding tools in place, Toronto can develop a variety of new special purpose funds.*

*Undesignated project fund.* Create opportunity for developers of smaller projects and philanthropists to contribute to overall fund for screen-based or other digital works, temporary works, or for aggregated funding for public art sites. Consider bundling these funds into a Public Art Trust Fund.

*Maintenance fund.* At least ten per cent of the budget (or other agreed to amount) is currently put in place for the ongoing maintenance of the artwork. City of Toronto staff should be held responsible for the expenditure of this funding (funds should be guaranteed). Accountability for maintenance should be clearly delineated for every public art project, and accountable parties (including condominium boards or building managers) should be required to obtain annual reviews by conservators, who will issue reports and updates.
mechanisms to review expected lifespans of public artworks, as the current expectation of 25 years is too long.

**Screen-based and virtual/interactive works fund.** Create a specific fund for screen-based or other digital works. This fund could support work that shares advertising and commercial space. It could also negotiate with billboard and advertising holdings and with media distribution and technology companies. The fund would be in a position to collaborate with Toronto's many media arts and film festivals, such as TIFF, Images, ImagineNative, and others.

**Indigenous public art fund.** Toronto is home to the largest urban Indigenous population in Canada. Support for Indigenous public artworks would explore the culture, history, and contemporary context of the Indigenous people of Toronto, Canada, and global communities, while also engaging with Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation process.

Implement the TOCore proposal to “Support and promote Indigenous storytelling and history through naming, wayfinding, monuments, interpretive features, public art, partnerships, and programming.”

**Art rental and loan.** Create an art rental and loan program where works can be borrowed and sited for minimal costs from public collections. The City and developers can work with existing institutional collections from museums, galleries, universities, and private entities to rotate artworks into the public domain.

**Provincial funding contribution.** While recognizing constraints in Ontario's current budget, Ontario also has one of the most competitive economies in Canada. Negotiating an Ontario set-aside for public art in Ontario in upcoming infrastructure projects in the City of Toronto would make infrastructure works accessible and attractive to communities. Existing mechanisms such as the Ontario Arts Council could administer competitions or a similar process to that of the City of Toronto could be used.

**Federal funding contribution.** The federal government is engaged in significant infrastructure investment. Heritage Canada could require that public art be set aside for all future culture spaces investment. It could negotiate a per cent for public art on top of allocation for built space and infrastructure within its own ministry and other federal ministries.

**Immediate**

- Implement Council recommendation (2003) that the City of Toronto and its agencies require a per cent for art program for all major capital projects, both new buildings and infrastructure.
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Canadian Heritage to ensure that there is a public art set-aside for investments in cultural spaces funding in Toronto.
Create a set-aside to service conservation of City of Toronto art works over the next five years to bring works up to appropriate standards, and include conservation and annual reviews by conservators to issue reports and updates.

Create mechanisms for developer-supported projects to ensure that art works are maintained by condominium boards or building managers and include conservation and annual reviews by conservators to issue reports and updates.

**Midterm**

- Create policy mechanisms that require developers to make public art projects a component of all new building projects in the City of Toronto, according to a clear set of guidelines. We acknowledge that the Ontario Planning Act does not currently enable this approach via Section 37. However, this policy is common practice in many Canadian, North American, and international cities. Possibilities include provincial recognition of public art as an eligible development charge.
- Require that all City of Toronto agencies contribute a fixed percentage of their capital budgets towards public art.
- Develop new tools for funding public art. Possibilities include setting aside a portion of current billboard taxes for billboard-specific art commissions and any new City hotel or vacant property tax, as well as provincial recognition of public art as an eligible development charge.
- Create a central Public Art Trust Fund that supports significant public art projects. This fund would pool City of Toronto funds with other potential funding sources.
- Create specific project funds for Indigenous works, screen-based and media works, and works of shorter duration.
- Create opportunities for artist-run centres and post-secondary institutions to commission public art works that are temporary, created by emerging artists, and/or community based.
- After the task force completes its work, create a Friends of Public Art group to foster collaboration and dialogue regarding public art in the City of Toronto and to build the Public Art Trust Fund.

**6. Build new collaborations**

*Public art exhibitions in public facilities.* Use public facilities as exhibition spaces for temporary and seasonal public art. Utilize the full range of facilities, such as parks, waterways, libraries, police and fire stations, courthouses, community centres, and civic centres. The City can act both to commission exhibitions and to streamline the permit process for public arts groups interested in using public facilities for their own independent activities.
Public partners. Create opportunities for developers and the City of Toronto to collaborate with art organizations and post-secondary institutions, to access works in their collections, to site artworks on campuses, and to further strengthen education, curatorial, and conservation activities. Amplify Toronto’s role as a source of public art expertise.

Toronto Arts Council and LASOs. The Toronto Arts Council can make calls for proposals to fund neighbourhood-based works that build capacity and broaden the range of artists able to undertake projects, utilizing the local service capacities of the LASOs, and to commission emerging artists and temporary works.

Philanthropy. Encourage philanthropic and foundation public art funding sources and exhibitions. Foundations could create annual prizes or awards for the best public art. Strive to create a competitive culture of excellence in public art.

Community sponsorship. Create mechanisms through which communities, neighbourhood associations, and local BIAs can access maintenance money to adopt temporary artworks for a longer period of time.

Universities. Toronto’s universities are living laboratories for experimenting with and expanding public art in Toronto. They are home to strong public galleries. A number of universities have extensive public art collections. Universities provide curatorial and conservation education, as well as art and design history. These programs expand the field of public art and produce the next generation of public artists.

GTA universities should work together to explore public programming and training, and to build a powerful collaboration with the City of Toronto and the developer community to expand Toronto's intellectual leadership in the field of public art.

Cultural institutions. Museums and galleries can play a significant role as partners in the development of public art in their vicinity and in providing expertise. They can also make their collections available to be borrowed by the City, developers, and local neighbourhood and business associations.

“Friends of Public Art.” Create a citizen-based entity that can act as informal advocates and advisors regarding public art.
Midterm

- Strengthen collaborative programs between professionals, public institutions, the City of Toronto, Toronto Arts Council, BIAs, neighbourhood and civic associations, developers, and universities.
- Promote public art exhibitions in public facilities such as libraries, police and fire stations, community and civic centres, municipal and provincial service centres, and cultural institutions and universities.
- Embed public artists in many city agencies, on the model of Edmonton’s “Art of Living” plan, Seattle’s artist in residency program, or Vancouver’s Artist Made Building Parts program.

7. Promote public art

Promote Toronto as an international destination for public art. Market expert-led public art tours and use the City’s digital assets to create experiences for Toronto’s residents and tourists.

Immediate

- Create online interactive tools to promote Toronto’s rich public art holdings by building on Ilana Altman’s *The Artful City*.
- Develop ongoing support for expert-led engagement with artworks (including walking tours and scholarship) in partnership with universities, existing public art agencies, public art leaders, and other groups, in collaboration with Tourism Toronto.
- Engage communities in dialogue about, celebration of, and the use of public art. Community consultations and involvement in the function, site, and conceptual approach should be woven into public art process and finalized commissions.

8. Integrate public art into all future planning

The new Public Art Master Plan for Toronto should be fully integrated into the TOCore plan and other planning documents, including the Official Plan. The 2003 Culture Plan for the Creative City called for a comprehensive public art policy, and it is time to finally answer that call.

Rather than fostering zero-sum competition over competing policy priorities, public art policy should be fully integrated into a vision for the public realm in every dimension.

Public art has the distinctive power to enhance the impact of other policy goals, especially when it is deeply embedded within the daily application of those policies. For example, public art could be deeply integrated into the upcoming
Parks and Public Spaces Plan with its focus on “connecting and expanding parks and public space,” and “anchoring and improving connections between parks and public spaces; and stitching across the rail corridor, under the Gardiner and across Lake Shore Boulevard.”

Even more broadly, public art should be integrated into urban design guidelines at all levels, for tall buildings, streetscapes, neighbourhoods, and more.

**Midterm**
- Integrate public art into all aspects of urban planning, such as urban design guidelines. Use public art to enhance the meaning and impact of policy priorities such as affordable housing, infrastructure developments, or environmental awareness.
- Review policy every ten years in recognition of the dynamic environment of Toronto.
## Appendices

### Appendix A: Qualitative coding used for policy document analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History &amp; accomplishments</td>
<td>Description of the policy history and public art accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>How public art is defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitions &amp; funding</td>
<td>Description of procedures related to the funding process and administering the public art programs (selection of artists, community involvement in selection, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites</td>
<td>Types of locations where the city envisions public art (transit, parks, downtown etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Values associated with the contribution of public art (competitiveness, growth, city building, beauty, buzz, character, animation, enjoyment, diversity, equity, ecology, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban models</td>
<td>Reference to an established theory or strategy, i.e., the creative city, the smart city, place-making, or future global events in the city (Olympics, World Expo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic models</td>
<td>Mentioning examples of inspirations of well-known works, artists and existing urban forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Challenges in managing public art (coordination, maintenance, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; stakeholders</td>
<td>Mentioning of stakeholders/influential coalitions, mayor’s vision, establishing new authority and key professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons Toronto can learn</td>
<td>Innovative programs and strategies used by other cities to deal with challenges similar to those of Toronto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Toronto interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Particular interviewee and/or institution</th>
<th>No. of interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Architects                          | *Ilana Altman* (KPMB Architects, *The Artful City*)  
**Bruce Kuwabara** (KPMB Architects)  
**Lola Sheppard** (University of Waterloo School of Architecture) | 3                   |
| Art consultants                     | *Brad Golden* (Brad Golden + Co)  
**Rina Greer**  
**Reid Shier** | 3                   |
| Art institutions and organizations  | *Naomi Campbell* (Luminato)  
**Sara Diamond** (OCAD University and Chair, Nuit Blanche Toronto)  
**Barbara Fischer** (University of Toronto Art Museum)  
**Tim Jones** (Artscape) | 4                   |
| Artists and curators                | *Barbara Astman*  
**Dave Dyment**  
**Luis Jacob** | 3                   |
| City officers                       | *Catherine Dean* (Public Art Officer, City of Toronto)  
**Louise Garfield** (Etobicoke Arts Council)  
Alka Lukatela (Civic Design Program Manager, City of Toronto)  
**Terry Nicholson** Independent Consultant  
**Jane Perdue** (Public Art Coordinator, City Planning, City of Toronto) | 5                   |
| Councillors                         | *Adam Vaughan* (MP, Spadina-FortYork; former Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina Councillor)  
**Joe Cressy** (Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina)  
**Kristyn Wong Tam** (Ward 27 Toronto Centre-Rosedale) | 3                   |
| Developers                          | *Danielle Chin* (Building Industry and Land Development Association BILD)  
**Steve Diamond** (Diamond Corp)  
**Mark Mandelbaum** (Lanterra)  
**Alfredo Romano & Elsa Francello** (CastlePoint Numa) | 5                   |
| Major public art commission organizations | *Laura Berazadi* (Metrolinx)  
**Ilana Shamoon** (Waterfront Toronto) | 2                   |
| Philanthropists                     | *Emmanuelle Gattuso* | 1                   |

*29 Toronto interviewees in total*
### Appendix C: Montreal interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Particular interviewee and/or institution</th>
<th>No. of interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artists and curators</td>
<td>Paul Maréchal (Power Corporation)&lt;br&gt;Melissa Mongiat (Daily tous les jours)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art institutions and organizations</td>
<td>Pascal Beaudet (Ministry of Culture and Communication)&lt;br&gt;Julie Bélisle (Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal)&lt;br&gt;Louise Déry (Galerie de l’UQAM)&lt;br&gt;Clarence Epstein (Concordia University)&lt;br&gt;Annie Gérin (Galerie de l’UQAM)&lt;br&gt;Sylvie Lacerte (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City officers</td>
<td>Pascal Daigle (Partenariat du Quartier des Spectacles)&lt;br&gt;Claude Labossière (City of Montreal, website artpublicmontreal.ca)&lt;br&gt;Michèle Picard (Bureau d’art public Montréal)&lt;br&gt;Laurent Vernet (Bureau d’art public Montréal)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Montreal interviewees in total
Appendix D: Interview guide

Introduction
1. What is your job and where do you work?
2. Why are you interested in public art?
3. What is your role in relation to public art?

Public art agenda
1. How do you define public art (as broad or narrow a definition as you think is appropriate)?
2. How does your institution (company) define public art?
3. How do you define a successful public art project? Give an example of a work in Toronto (Montreal) that you think is exemplary.
4. How do you define a failed public art project? Give an example in Toronto (Montreal) that is a failure.
5. How would you describe the overall state of public art in Toronto?

Public art value
1. What, if any, value does public art contribute to Toronto (Montreal)?
2. Who are the audiences for public art? Why?
3. What are the main principles for public art in Toronto? Are any of these terms valuable in considering public art (site-specific, city-specific, equity, diversity)?

Public art process
1. What is successful in the public art planning process in Toronto (Montreal)?
2. What does not work in the public art planning process in Toronto (Montreal)?
3. Who do you consider to be the influential players in the public art field in Toronto?
4. Who is accountable for public art in Toronto (Montreal)? For planning, commissioning/decommissioning, maintaining?

Looking forward
1. What other cities/models of public art can Toronto learn from?
2. What would be your vision for public art in Toronto?
3. How should public art be defined in the future?
4. What needs to change to meet your vision and definition?
5. Who should be responsible for public art in Toronto?
6. How should artists be chosen?
7. How should sites be chosen?
8. Who should pay for public art in Toronto?
9. How can public art retain relevance over time?
10. What skills do we need to be successful as a public art leader?
Focus groups of subgroups

1. What role do you and/or your (institution, company, government department) play in public art in Toronto (Montreal)?
2. What role would you like to play?
3. Who are your partners in this process?
4. What challenges do you perceive for public art in Toronto?
5. How can public art be improved?
6. What would a future vision of public art be?
References

Books and journal articles


Electronic secondary sources


Policy documents


City of Toronto. *Parks and public space plan*. (2017). Retrieved from [https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Core/File/pdf/Expo%20Boards/ParksAndPublicSpaces.pdf](https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Core/File/pdf/Expo%20Boards/ParksAndPublicSpaces.pdf)


