

Public Art Policies

City Staff, with support from the Public Art Committee, will present the final Public Art Policies. The Commission will be asked to endorse the policies.

Motion: A motion to endorse the Public Art Policies.

Code and bylaw support: This item is presented to the Commission because it will support the management of the public art collection. The Arts Commission is tasked with the following duties related to public art in the Bellevue Municipal Code (3.56.70):

- i. Item F. Develop recommendations for acquiring public artwork consistent with guidelines and priorities approved by city council.
- ii. Item H. Review and make recommendations on the suitability of any work of art intended as a gift to the city.

Background

For the Public Art Collection's history, project managers have relied on institutional knowledge for how the collection is managed rather than standardized operating procedures and policies that drive decision-making. As a result, each project is managed and developed in different ways, maintenance of the collection has never been a focus, and the ongoing success of projects rely on staff with the institutional knowledge. In the past, staff and the commission have made early efforts to develop public art policies for the Public Art Collection but were never carried forward.

Driving the need for policies at this particular time are the following:

- Policies form the foundation of how public art projects and the collection are managed versus relying on long-term staff for institutional knowledge.
- Planning for expected maintenance and restorations needs to be part of the process in determining new acquisitions, including donations, and deaccessions.
- Deaccession may become far more common as the age of many older artworks reaches the end of their lifespan.
- Artwork donation has been problematic because of the lack of an established process in reviewing and accepting potential donations.
- As the Public Art Program will take on larger projects, similar in scale to *Piloti* in Downtown Park, there is an increased need for standards for Selection Panel size and composition across a wider array of project typologies.
- Eligibility requirements are not consistent among similar project types.
- The Arts Commission's role in the public art process needs to be focused on making recommendations to Council on acquisitions, including donations, of new artworks to the Public Art Collection.

Staff has met twice with the Public Art Committee, a subcommittee of the Arts Commission, and at the May meeting with the full Arts Commission to review draft policies to address the above issues.

The policies in Attachment A are largely unchanged from what the commission reviewed and discussed in May. Minor grammatical edits were made for clarity and they have been incorporated into a formatted document.

Key Elements in the Public Art Policies (Attachment A)

1. Updated Public Art Collection Mission and Vision Statement:

New Mission Statement – To be a vital platform for living artists and source of creative inspiration for our community; excelling in representing Bellevue’s unique story through art.

New Vision Statement – The Bellevue Public Art Collection seeks to be a leading platform and community resource for cultural exchange and creative inspiration through art. The collection enhances the experience of Bellevue’s public places, fosters community pride and belonging, raises the discourse on the defining aspects of Bellevue’s civic life, and explores the diverse identities and converging cultures of our residents, creative sectors, and the interplay between nature and the urban experience.

2. Development of project goals assigned to each new project by the Arts Commission. The policies contain goals that apply to the entire collection and goals that apply to singular projects that the Arts Commission would recommend be assigned to specific projects prior to an artist call being issued. These goals are also helpful in determining artworks that no longer meet the standard of the collection and should be deaccessioned. Goals include:

A. Goals that apply to all artworks in the collection and upcoming opportunities:

- iii. Artworks are high-quality and improve the experience of public space.
- iv. Art projects offer a wide range of opportunities for artists in all phases of their career from emerging artists to established international practices.
- v. Artworks are maintainable and safe for the community to interact with.
- vi. Artworks are located to ensure equitable access of a range of project sizes throughout Bellevue. Larger investments in public art should be located in more accessible locations with easy access to transit.
- vii. Each artwork has consistent signage that meets or exceeds accessibility standards.
- viii. All wall-mounted portable artworks have consistent framing quality and appearance. All pedestals for 3D portable artworks are well-maintained with an appearance consistent with the architecture of the facility they are installed in.

B. Project Specific Goals:

Artworks within the collection respond to one or more of the following. An art project or donation is:

- i. Representative of Bellevue’s diverse community, its diverse history and indigenous peoples’ long connection to the land.
- ii. Responsive to Bellevue’s abundant natural areas and environmental conditions facing Bellevue’s community.

- iii. Responsive to the Grand Connection, the BelRed Arts District, city plans or other key city or community initiatives.
 - iv. Illustrating key histories and stories, characteristics, or issues relevant to the community or linked to a specific place.
 - v. Directly supporting tourism, economic development and Bellevue as a destination for creativity and innovation.
3. Link between project typologies, eligibility and selection panel composition minimums for permanent artworks for consistency:

Project Typology	Budget	Eligibility	Panel Size Minimum
Local Artwork – Emerging Artist	Up to \$100,000	Local County Artists – residents of King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties	3-person panel
Local Artwork	Up to \$100,000	Local Artists – residents of Washington State	3-person panel
Neighborhood Artwork	\$100,000-\$300,000	National Artists – residents of the United States, including territories, and Vancouver, BC.	5-person panel
Landmark Artwork	\$300,000 and above	International Artists – national and international artists with some restrictions on specific foreign countries	7-person panel

- 4. Maintenance planning and assessment incorporated into the acquisition process.
- 5. Donations – the policies include required steps for staff to take as part of assessment prior to making a recommendation for donation to the Arts Commission.
- 6. Deaccession – includes common reasons for deaccession, the process of deaccessioning an artwork, and options for removing an artwork from city ownership. Note – The City’s Finance and Asset Management Department’s process for “surplussing” assets from City ownership dictates the process before an artwork can be donated to another public entity or nonprofit, returned to a donor (if donated), an artist or their estate, or disposed of. Typically, this involves putting an artwork up for sale prior to exploring other options.

Attachments

- 1. Attachment A – Public Art Policies

Next Steps

If the Commission endorses these policies, staff will enact their use in upcoming projects.

Staff Contact

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