

Title: **Calgary Civic Arts**
Number: **CP2026-06**
Effective Date: **2026 March 5**
Responsible Business Unit: **Partnerships**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this Council policy is to ensure civic leadership and investment in the arts has a clear and measurable impact on the aesthetic, social, economic and cultural quality of life in Calgary.
- 1.2 Vision that Calgary's:
 - a) Calgarians have a multitude of opportunities to engage in creative pursuits as artists, students and audience members;
 - b) Artists thrive in an open and encouraging environment that places high value on their contributions to our community; and
 - c) Reputation as an inclusive, innovative and culturally vibrant city is broadly recognized;
- 1.3 This policy has been developed to respond to the realities of Calgary and the broader environment in 2004, it is therefore important to be clear about the assumptions and philosophy that underlie the policy itself. The policy should be formally reviewed within 5 years of its adoption;
- 1.4 This policy was completed for The City of Calgary in 2004 with the guidance of the Civic Arts Policy Review Steering Committee. The committee undertook a two-year process of review, research, consultation and writing (see Schedule A for details). This policy replaces the 1996 City of Calgary Civic Arts Policy, which required updating based on a review showing the need for improvements to leadership and communication structures, resourcing and accountability;
- 1.5 The committee concluded that there is an opportunity to recognize the contributions and realize the potential of an arts community that is innovative and entrepreneurial, but in many ways “bursting at the seams.” Calgary is home to many renowned artists and has served as the training ground for many more. These accomplishments have occurred in part due to an endowment of high-quality institutions and facilities and a strong base of private and public sector financial support and volunteers that serve the arts community in a multitude of capacities. This policy is designed to build upon this foundation;
- 1.6 The arts play a significant role in a community’s development, including contributions to economic prosperity. However, despite being a highly valuable outcome, community development is generally not the motivation behind artistic expression. A core

philosophy of this policy, therefore, is to recognize the intrinsic value of artistic expression and the associated need to create an environment which values and fosters artistic innovation and growth. In such an environment, more artists will be doing more work, and the benefits of this activity will naturally flow to the community as a whole;

- 1.7 To take full advantage of the opportunity to build a more creative and adaptive community, The City of Calgary's support for the arts requires improved strategic leadership. In the current environment of rapid population growth and increasing diversity, it is difficult to manage the increased operational and capital infrastructure demands of arts organizations. It is also difficult to create coordinated strategies for the arts as part of a broader agenda to improve the quality of life in Calgary. The city is more likely to meet these challenges through clear structures for planning, leadership and action; and
- 1.8 An overriding goal of this policy is to celebrate and build on the best of what we have, while creating the conditions to unlock the potential that clearly exists. It will not happen overnight, but with the continued dedication of the arts community, working in partnership with the private sector, government, and other interested parties the vision articulated in this policy is achievable.

2. APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This Council policy applies to Council and City Administration.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 **Guiding Principles.** The following principles and are meant to serve together as a guide to practice and decision-making as the policy is implemented.
- 3.2 **Ensure that: The Arts Play a Leadership Role in the Future of Calgary.** City Council recognizes and is committed to support the significant role arts and creativity will play in meeting the challenges of building a healthy, safe, caring, and vibrant Calgary Tomorrow;
- 3.3 **Ensure that: Arts are welcome in Calgary.** A thriving arts scene requires working artists. A key indicator of the success of this policy will be the extent to which artists see our city as a "place to be." Artists will thrive where there are positive attitudes, energetic peers, a spirit of cooperation, voracious audiences, the resources necessary to do great work, and high profile support;
- 3.4 **Ensure that: The Arts are accessible and engage as many Calgarians as possible.** The arts impact quality of life in a city when significant numbers of Calgarians are engaged. Engagement includes attending, viewing or participating in professional or amateur arts activities, including public art, as well as learning about various art forms in educational programs. Opportunities for engagement are accessible when they are diverse, yet meaningful to the people of Calgary and their everyday lives;

- 3.5 **Ensure that: Calgary’s Artists are recognized for their excellence.** Calgary is home to many artists who receive critical acclaim for the quality of their artistic achievements. This is an environment where artists challenge themselves to excel and where, despite the many other benefits available to Calgarians from a thriving arts community, the intrinsic value of art “as art” is cherished and celebrated;
- 3.6 **Ensure that: Unique and Authentic Characteristics of Calgary’s Arts scenes are identified and strengthened.** Calgary is a young city with a robust heritage but is also a city where growth has been fueled by inter-provincial and international immigration. Life in Calgary is shaped by the dramatic physical environment, the spirit of entrepreneurship that drives our economy, and more and more by the experiences of people from increasingly diverse geographies and cultures. Calgary’s arts scene reflects that reality in all its forms;
- 3.7 **Ensure that: Interested parties cooperate and create connections to realize the full potential of the Arts.** Cooperation is facilitated by purposefully created connections across geographies, arts disciplines, economic sectors, and with sister agencies focused on other aspects of the community. A cooperative approach to infrastructure investment initiatives and determining strategic priorities for the sector will assist in bringing the resources of new supporters to Calgary’s arts-related priorities;
- 3.8 **Ensure that: Arts and Culture are recognized as an important part of a vibrant city.** The existence of a thriving arts and culture sector is itself an indicator of a healthy and balanced city with the capacity to deal with many of the challenges of growth. The arts and creative industries make a significant contribution to Calgary’s economy through direct employment and spending multipliers due to local consumption and tourist spending. The arts also have the potential to increase social inclusion, improve mental *and* physical health, and give youth significant learning advantages;
- 3.9 **Ensure that: Arts and Culture considerations are included in municipal planning.** Calgary’s Public Art program requires City business units to incorporate art in large capital development projects. Tremendous additional benefits can be realized using additional mechanisms such as urban design panels, policies for alternative bonusing structures for incorporating arts in a development, or zoning changes to make “artist-friendly” neighbourhoods;
- 3.10 **Ensure that: Accountability is maintained when making arts-related investments.** Calgarians expect their leaders to make sound investments that will improve the quality of life in Calgary. All partners in this initiative will strive to maintain transparent processes, good governance, and the measurement of and reporting on investment outcomes;
- 3.11 **Ensure that: Municipal investments in the arts leverage investment from other orders of Government and other sectors.** Though comparisons are difficult due to data differences, other orders of government have historically spent proportionately less on arts and culture in Alberta than in other provinces. Throughout policy consultations, one message was clear: if The City makes arts and culture a priority,

with a compelling vision and clear plans to benefit the Calgarians of Calgary, other supporters will come to the table as partners; and

- 3.12 Ensure that: Investments made in the arts are focused on long term growth and sustainability of the sector as a dual responsibility of funders and arts organizations.** While acknowledging the need to encourage artists and arts organizations to take risks, this policy represents a commitment to the long-term growth and sustainability of the arts in Calgary. The City of Calgary and other partners will work to increase the level of resources available for the arts in the city and expects an equivalent commitment to sustainability principles from the organizations it supports.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Structure Guidelines

- 4.1 City Council will delegate the creation, maintenance, and implementation of a long-term strategic plan for the arts, in line with this policy, to a single arm's-length arts authority.
- 4.2 City Administration will ensure that The City of Calgary's organization structure provides clear responsibility and accountability for all City of Calgary arts-related operations and policy.
- 4.3 City Administration will ensure that The City of Calgary's arts-related operations complement and support the work of the arm's-length arts authority, with no duplication of activities.

Funding Guidelines

- 4.4 All municipal funding to external arts organizations will go to a single arm's-length arts authority, which will have the final decision on all arts-related funding matters.
- 4.5 City Council will refer all arts-related capital and operational funding inquiries to the arm's-length arts authority.
- 4.6 Funding recommendations related to City-operated programs and facilities will be made by the City division responsible for arts-related operations and policy.

Reporting Guidelines

- 4.7 The City's arts authority will provide City Council with an annual report on the outcomes of all municipal arts and culture funding and the activities of any arts and culture related committees.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 In this Council policy:

- a) **Arts:** Includes all forms of creative expression, including formal and informal arts, as well as art made in for-profit and not-for-profit settings. This definition includes traditional definitions of art such as performing arts, literary arts, visual arts, and the applied arts. The definition is also meant to capture the broad range of arts that impact the everyday lives of Calgarians;
- b) **Creative/cultural industries:** Those activities that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and utilization of intellectual property;
- c) **Culture:** The collection of distinctive traits, spiritual and material, intellectual and affective, which characterize a society or social group. It is a broader concept than “arts,” comprising modes of life, human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs; and
- d) **Public Art:** Artistic creations or collaborations in any medium whether fixed or freestanding, permanent or temporary, within external or internal settings, intended to be freely accessible to the general public, including works are developed under the City of Calgary’s Public Art Policy wherein 1% of municipal capital budgets is dedicated to public art.

6. ASSOCIATED GOVERNANCE

6.1 Pursuant to Paragraph 20 of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000 c. M-26 Council is responsible for developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality.

7. HISTORY

Action	Date	Approval	Description
Clerical Correction	2026 Mar 05	Business Unit Director	Updated Council policy to new approved Council policy template as of July 31, 2025. Added the reference to Schedule A: Appendix 1 from the original policy. Changed Policy Owner from Calgary Recreation to Partnerships and updated policy number from CSPS001 to CP2026-06
Amendment	2016 Feb 01		Changed policy owner from Recreation to Calgary Recreation
Amendment	2004 May 3	Council	Approved new Civic Arts policy. Report number CPS2004-24
New	1996 Jun 10	Council	Approved new Civic Arts policy. Report CS96-21-03.

SCHEDULE A: APPENDIX 1 CIVIC ARTS POLICY PROCESS AND STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Phase I - Review of existing Policy

- February 2002 - Council approved the project terms of reference, formation of the Steering Committee with representatives from key stakeholder groups, and the project budget.
- Cameron Strategies was awarded the contract to conduct the literature review of best practices and policies in selected municipalities. They also facilitated the extensive public consultation sessions intended to obtain insight into the current state of the arts in Calgary including trends, emerging issues, future vision, and the role of the 4 service providers identified in the existing policy
- October 2002 - first consultation with International Arts and Culture expert Robert Palmer
- March 2003 - The consultant's report and recommendations were presented to Council.
- May 2003 - Council approved the hiring of an external project manager to assist with the development of a new policy.

Phase II - New Policy Development

- May 2003 – External project manager is hired.
- May 2003 - 2nd consultation with Robert Palmer
- June 2003 - A working group was struck from the Steering Committee, including an additional representative from the arts community.
- The working group undertook an extensive review of the consultant's work, including an additional review of current practices in other jurisdictions. Based on the review, the working group made a policy framework recommendation to the Steering Committee.
- Steering Committee members undertook the responsibility for getting policy information to the arts community and receiving feedback through community consultation meetings.
- The Steering Committee, based on feedback from their constituents, provided input into all aspects of the policy.
- March 2004 - 3rd consultation with Robert Palmer.

Steering Committee Membership

The Steering Committee was composed of representatives from the following organizations:

CITY COUNCIL

- Alderman Madeleine King Committee Chair
- Alderman Druh Farrell Vice- Chair (2003-2004)
- Alderman Gord Lowe Vice-Chair (2002-2003)

CITY FUNDED ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

- Calgary Allied Arts Foundation - *Merrena Lea Thompson* (Phase I); *Don Stewart* (Phase II)
- Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts - *Colin Jackson**
- Calgary Region Arts Foundation - *Steve Robertson* (Phase I); *Dale Turri** (Phase II)

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, ARTS FUNDERS, LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

- Alberta College of Arts - *Colleen Evans*
- Calgary Professional Arts Alliance - *Bob McPhee*
- Alberta Performing Arts Stabilisation Fund - *Lynn duFort***
- The Rozsa Foundation - *Mary Rozsa de Coquet*
- 1 representative from the Province - *Lois Mitchell* (Alberta Foundation for the Arts)
- 1 representative from the Federal Government - *Gerry Kretzel** (Canadian Heritage)
- 1 representative from companies resident in the Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts - *Tom McCabe*

CITY ADMINISTRATION

- General Manager, Community Services - *Erika Hargesheimer* (ex-officio)
- Director, Recreation - *Rob Pritchard*
- Director, Community Strategies - *Kurt Hanson*
- Resource Staff (non-voting) - *Debbie Kanccsal** (Project Manager); *Terry Rock** (Civic Partnerships Consultant, Phase II only)

ARTIST REPRESENTATIVE ON THE WORKING GROUP

- Artistic Director, Alberta Ballet – *Jean Grande-Maitre**

EXTERNAL PROJECT MANAGER (Phase II)

- Arts Consultant - *Patti Pon**

* Member of the working group

** Chair of the working group