



Date: December 2, 2003

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: ARTS POLICY**

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## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Board reconfirm its commitment to the arts by adopting the renewed Arts Policy (Appendix A).**

## POLICY

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation adopted the *Arts Policy and Recommendations* in November 1993.

## BACKGROUND

Guided by an Arts Policy Advisory Committee, the development of the original Arts Policy was the result of two years of consultation and research. The Policy addressed both the traditional Park Board involvement in the arts (arts instruction in community centres, public art and painting, dance and concerts in parks) as well as pointed to new opportunities for the Park Board to mesh its community development mandate with the arts through community cultural development processes. Four goals with recommendations and strategies served as the Policy's foundation and formed the basis for annual objectives set by the Arts Team (see Appendix B):

*To expand opportunities in the arts for people to learn and create;*

*To develop a broader role for the artist within communities;*

*To create links between the arts and the everyday lives of people through a Community Cultural Development process;*

*To make the arts an essential component of Park Board policies, planning, operations, parks and facilities.*

It is through these objectives that the Park Board's role in the Arts has been defined. Activities in parks and community centres provide arts opportunities for some who are not otherwise engaged in the arts. Park Board facilities provide a valuable connection to communities for

artists pursuing participatory public art projects and community cultural development initiatives. Staff facilitate these connections and provide in-kind resources, practical advice and hands-on assistance.

The role of the Park Board in the Arts complements that of the City's Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA). OCA works to sustain and stimulate cultural activity across the City through a range of policies and strategies including grant programs for non-profit organizations and the use of zoning and other mechanisms to develop and improve the facilities needed for creation and presentation. OCA develops public art policies and funding programs, advocates for the arts on many fronts, and undertakes various initiatives, such as awards, to promote awareness and appreciation of the arts throughout the city.

## DISCUSSION

A review of the Arts Policy implementation over the past ten years was undertaken starting in 2002. Steps in this process included:

- the establishment of an Arts Advisory Committee to guide the review (Appendix D).
- four focus groups consulting with artists, partners, staff, youth and community members, on the goals and accomplishments of the Arts Policy and asking for recommendations for future directions.
- an arms-length evaluation of the Artist in Residence and Neighbourhood Matching Fund programs. Consultants conducted independent outcome-based evaluations, assessing the extent to which the which the programs were meeting their objectives. These reports are posted in full on the Board website at [www.parks.vancouver.bc.ca](http://www.parks.vancouver.bc.ca).
- research on the substantial evolution of the community arts and community cultural development fields locally and internationally.

Implementation of the Arts Policy has resulted in significant developments within the Park Board including the creation of residence programs, multicultural initiatives, public art guidelines and facility developments. Most notably, art has taken root in communities and, in the corners of Vancouver, works of art reflecting the touch of many hands mark the landscape.

### **Goal Statements – Accomplishments**

Some of the strategies and recommendations of the 1993 Arts Policy have been accomplished, some remain active and others are not currently being pursued for practical and budgetary reasons.

<b>Goal Statement</b>	<b>Strategies Implemented</b>
<i>To expand opportunities in the arts for people to learn and create.</i>	In order to enhance the quality and diversity of arts instruction, a web-based data base has been implemented. There have been some networking initiatives among community association art committees, and staff competence continues to improve.
<i>To develop a broader role for the artist within communities</i>	<p>The Artist in Residence program, described below, was a recommendation under this goal and this program has been highly successful in creating collaborations between artists and communities. Temporary art exhibits in conjunction with the Buschlen Mowatt Gallery have been facilitated.</p> <p>The Artist at Work and the Musical Roots programs have served to recognize artists of diverse cultures and showcase traditional art and music forms.</p> <p>Training in the arts has been undertaken and celebration arts have increased in communities.</p>
<i>To create links between the arts and the everyday lives of people through a Community Cultural Development process.</i>	<p>Defined as the process of collaboration between artist and community in addressing agreed upon issues, community cultural development (CCD) has been an exciting, challenging and rewarding component of the policy implementation. While this field was well-established in Britain and Australia in 1993, it was not formally supported in Canada. The <i>Arts Policy</i> provided new opportunity in the arts and was recognized nationally to the extent that the National Archives requested file copies.</p> <p>Two major CCD projects were conducted - the Trout Lake Restoration and the Moberly CCD projects. Following a 1½ year process where community members discussed the importance of the lake while creating tiles, banners and pebble mosaics, the Trout Lake project produced a community-based operational plan for the park which is still in use. Sunset Community Centre supported a CCD process to establish a plan for the use of Moberly Community Hall which resulted in a designation as Moberly arts and Cultural Centre. Subsequent to these two processes the CCD funds were allocated to the artist in residence program.</p> <p>As is generally the case with community development work, the road has not always been smooth. There has, however, been growing awareness of how participation in community arts processes contributes to the quality of life in Vancouver communities.</p>

<p><i>To make the arts an essential component of Park Board policies, planning, operations, parks and facilities.</i></p>	<p>A major addition to the Park Board arts program came in 1997 when the Roundhouse was built and dedicated to community arts and recreation, creating an anchor for community arts in Vancouver. Public art guidelines and processes have evolved. The Board receives many proposals for donations of memorials and public art to parks. Public art is also installed in parks and community centres through community initiatives funded through the City's Community Public Art and the Board's Neighbourhood Matching Fund programs. In addition, the City's Capital Plan provides funds for public art to be incorporated into new civic developments, including parks. In 2002, artists were contracted to sit on the Mount Pleasant Community Centre Building Committee to advise on the development of facilities to support the arts.</p>
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A detailed outline of the progress on implementation of the Arts Policy is attached (see Appendix C).

*Artist in Residence Program*

The Artist in Residence program is a cornerstone of the Arts Policy. In 1994 the program was launched as a jointly funded initiative between community centre associations and the Park Board with a contribution for several years from the Office of Cultural Affairs. The basis of the program is artists working with communities around issues of joint concern. The program is open to artists from all disciplines including theatre, dance, visual arts and new media. Four residencies are funded annually and 47 residencies have been funded since the program's inception.

The evaluation of this Program revealed strong support for and belief in the effectiveness and potential of the program and its ability to build new relationships and create legacies ranging from physical artworks to neighbourhood memories.

Challenges identified were the need to create greater awareness and understanding of the Community Cultural Development basis of the program, the expectations and responsibilities inherent in CCD, and a need to increase the funding provided in order to match the dedication and quality of work the artists bring to the residencies.

Changes implemented in 2003, include increasing artist's fees from \$5,000 to \$8,000 and a shift from a call for proposals to a call for credentials. This allows the communities and artists to work together to develop the parameters of each residency and in doing so, to establish a joint understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of each partner. Arts and Culture staff have also further developed the orientation workshop for centre staff and artists which is conducted after the completion of the selection process.

## ***Research Findings*** (Appendix E)

Research focused primarily on the field of community cultural development. Findings indicate that participation in the arts and CCD has unique value in promoting personal health and community well-being, in reinforcing the fabric of society and in providing non-traditional methods to achieve the aims of many social and environmental sectors. The arts are positively linked in many studies to enhancing learning ability, to engaging at-risk youth, to positively affecting seniors' well-being, to bringing new dimensions to environmental awareness and to bridging divides between and within cultures and communities. Appendix E outlines the research undertaken and provides examples of community art projects in Vancouver which illustrate these findings.

## **Recommendations from the Consultation Process**

The consultation process resulted in a number of recommendations outlined in the report, *Community Consultation on the Arts Policy*, dated June 2003, and posted in full on the Board website. Recommendations on the vision, principles and policy format have been incorporated into the revised policy. Feedback on specific strategies in the policy included emphasizing partnerships with community groups, compiling a pool of portable arts resources, training for staff and for artists, providing funds to have an artist working in each community centre and support for greater inclusion of youth and artists of diverse cultures. This feedback will inform the annual workplan development.

The focus groups identified changes in the local environment since 1993 as greater appreciation for the arts, more community arts, the development of the Roundhouse, increased support for the arts, stronger relationships between artists and communities, the professionalization of community arts practice and a decrease of arts programming in schools.

Twenty-three steps and new directions were suggested. General recommendations included increasing resources and commitment to the arts, ensuring that the goals are directed towards all partners; association boards, community centre staff, artists and community members, identifying conflict resolution procedures, examining barriers to the involvement of young people in community arts and expanding awareness of the Arts Policy with stronger internal communication within the Park Board.

A Youth Consultation Workshop attended by fourteen youth and facilitated by Youthmappers, followed an asset-mapping process. Challenges to participation in the arts included lack of information and a shortage of funding for youth projects which may be seen as somewhat provocative. Identified as missing were programming for marginalized youth communities and performance and mentorship opportunities.

## **A Renewed Arts Policy (Appendix A)**

In response to a number of suggestions made through the consultation process, the Arts Policy has been shortened to include a Mandate, Vision, Values and Policy Statements.

The implementation strategies will be outlined in an annual detailed workplan. This plan will be based on an outcomes approach to planning and evaluation, linking strategies, activities, inputs, outcomes and impacts to each policy statement.

While the renewed policy suggests continuing to pursue many of the goals of the 1993 policy, there are some additions. Ensuring that the Board provide opportunities for young and emerging artists and artists of diverse cultures, the valuing of innovation as well as tradition and an emphasis on arts qualifications as a significant assets in staff are new directions with this policy.

Partnerships with community centre associations, arts organizations and other social agencies remain a critical factor in implementation of the policy. Close co-operation with the City's Office of Cultural Affairs will continue to support and enhance the work of the Park Board in this field.

Experience in Vancouver over the past ten years and the research and consultation findings point to the value of a society actively engaged in the arts. Beyond the joy that the arts stimulate, participation in the arts is an effective means of enhancing learning skills, improving health, strengthening social ties, stimulating social development, planning, engaging youth and finding new avenues to understand and address environmental dilemmas.

The renewed policy builds on existing arts programs while pointing to new directions. Budgetary restraints will have an impact on the ability to pursue some of the new policy goals.

## **CONCLUSION**

Creativity is a force that must be nurtured. Participation in the arts stimulates the imagination, changes attitudes, broadens thinking and encourages the building of a dream for the future. The Park Board arts mandate provides support for the mandates of a number of other social sectors, ensuring a healthy, active and productive community.

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