Kitchener Public Art
Five-Year Plan
2011 – 2016

The five-year plan builds on existing program strengths, supports the program goals and identifies strategies for implementation during the period 2011 – 2016.

Vision and objectives
Through consultations during the program review in 2008, we heard citizens’ wishes for Kitchener:
• Beautiful, well-designed public spaces featuring public art
• Identification of Kitchener as an exciting creative city
• A panorama of inspirational art works for citizens to enjoy
• Vibrant public spaces where people want to meet and spend time

Vision
The following statement was created during the public art program review through stakeholder and public consultation:

Kitchener is a vibrant community where the best forms of public art explore our diversity, tell our stories, and welcome artists to use creativity and imagination to make unique landmarks and beautiful gathering places.

Objectives
• To contribute to the City’s cultural identity
• To contribute to its strategic priorities: that is, better quality of life, increased social cohesion, good urban design, broad community involvement, increased potential for economic development, and public access to the arts

Five-Year Plan Strategies - Summary
• Recommendation: Explore future public art projects with partners, including Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area (CAFKA).

• Recommendation: Pursue municipal partnership opportunities to educate the public and continue to build the discipline of public art in our community.

• Recommendation: Inform the private development sector of our public art program and invite and encourage participation.

• Recommendation: Waive the purchasing process, if maintenance or restoration on art work is required, to allow the original artist to perform the work within the specified budget. In cases where the original artist is unavailable, the arts and culture unit will select a suitable professional consultant through an RFP process.

• Recommendation: Public art works must be (1) permanently sited, or (2) installed for a specific length of time with the understanding that the art work will not be stored by the City thereafter.
- Recommendation: Public art policy compliance should be built into the project management processes of all affected civic construction projects.

- Recommendation: Develop promotional and educational tools in various media to educate and inform both the general public and sectors of interest.

**Strategies 2011 – 2016 - Details**
The plan’s strategies combine flexibility and best use of funds, with maximum benefit for the community. General objectives are to:

- Implement public art projects at priority civic sites identified in the 2010-2019 capital budget forecast
- Support temporary installation projects such as digital projections on the Berlin Tower
- Extend installation (up to five years) of a Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area 2011 festival art project
- Promote the collection and public education
- Maintain the collection
- Create mechanisms for the participation of private and institutional developers in the public art program.

**Strategy One: Percent for Art**
Kitchener’s program has concentrated on public art for civic construction projects as its major focus. One percent of construction costs is allocated to public art. This requirement is tied to specific projects such as community centres, libraries, fire stations, parking facilities, and City Hall. These sites offer high visibility and high usage in most cases.

Kitchener’s projects strive for public art that is responsive to the site and its use in some way – such as through design, theme or function. Site selection, combined with available budget, helps to determine the type of project: indoor/outdoor, temporary/ permanent. All outdoor art works must ensure public safety and be durable and low-maintenance. Sites are also assessed for technical feasibility of installation.

Public art commissions are awarded as a result of public competitions and fair jury selection processes. The quality of selected art works is directly related to the quality of artist proposals received. The City retains the right not to award a commission if suitable proposals are not received.

Parks Design & Development and Operations staff have agreed to support the mechanism of combining one percent allocations from small parks projects in order to fund a single larger project in an appropriate park location. Staff also supports an approach to public art where an artist would be working on design questions with Parks staff at an early stage in order to integrate public art with other site elements.

Kitchener’s five-year plan identifies projects at civic facilities based on the Capital Budget Forecast for civic construction. The city has been using this method of site selection for the past fifteen years. It provides structure to the program but its site and funding limitations may restrict the program in the future.
**Strategy Two: The Pooled Fund**

New elements to be considered for 2011 – 2016 programming and supported by the pooled fund include:

- mechanisms for inviting private sector participation
- promotion
- temporary installations
- digital public art on the Cube
- project partnerships with other arts organizations
- special projects in priority locations identified during consultation.

Set up in 2009, the Project Balances Account holds 40% of the 1% funds from $10-million+ projects. The funds are meant to support those projects which otherwise would not be possible or would be underfunded.

Projects valued at over $10 million contributing to the pooled fund up to 2016 are Kitchener Library, Consolidated Maintenance Facility, and two parking facilities. The expected contributions up to 2016 total approximately $250,000.

The pooled fund is dependent on very large and infrequent projects. It may not sustain other forms of community public art in the long term. Other public art funding strategies need to be developed. A review of the capital budget forecast in 2015/16 will indicate whether the pooled fund will remain viable.

**Strategy Three: Partnerships**

Partnerships with other arts agencies in the community such as Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area (CAFKA), and the Downtown Business Improvement Area were identified in the program review as potential partners. Project-based partnerships are expected to occur from time to time as resources and opportunities permit. There have been no projects of this type to date.

- **Recommendation:** Explore future projects with partners, including Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area. Selected installations from CAFKA's biennial exhibitions could remain installed for up to five years for the benefit of Kitchener visitors and residents.

**Partnerships with capital grant or loan recipients**

This requirement to participate in the public art program is stated in Policy I-816 as follows: “In construction projects for which the City has provided grants or loans to an outside agency, the terms of the loan or grant agreement include a requirement for public art to be included in that project. The grant or loan must be in excess of $100,000. The one percent allocation will not exceed $300,000.” Although there have been no opportunities for this type of partnership to date, we will actively pursue any such opportunities in the future.

**Partnerships with other municipalities**

A project to increase awareness of public art and promote the region’s public art collections and other program aspects is under discussion with the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, the townships and the cities of Cambridge and Waterloo. The production of a brochure for self-guided driving, cycling and walking tours could enhance residents’ and visitors’ experience of the region’s public art assets.
Public art is an evolving discipline. Administrators and artists learn more with every project they undertake. Investing in public art education for administrators and artists in our region will strengthen public art’s contribution to the quality of life in our community.

- **Recommendation:** Pursue municipal partnership opportunities to educate the public and continue to build the discipline of public art in our community.

**Strategy Four: Private Sector**

Public art in our community may grow through partnerships with institutional and private developers with projects at prominent sites throughout the city. Discussions are already underway with Planning Department staff to bring information about our program to private sector developers at the pre-submission consultation stage. Staff is collaborating with Waterloo and the Region to ensure that developers are aware of the region-wide growth of public art.

Kitchener has the planning framework in place that will assist program growth through: the Official Plan, Urban Design Guidelines, By-laws, and Parks and Open Space master plan.

- **Recommendation:** Inform the private development sector of our public art program and invite participation.

**Strategy Five: Collection Management Guidelines; Procedures**

The Collection Management Guidelines presents directions for maintenance of the collection. Maintenance has always been carried out on an as-needed basis. As the collection ages, the need for regular (annual) inspection of art works will increase. Most works in the collection could have a lifespan of at least 25 years.

Art works in need of specialist attention are maintained through conservation contracts. The independent consultants, skilled conservators and restorers required for this type of work are few in number. Standard purchasing policy procedure such as the RFQ has not provided the city with the expertise needed for art work maintenance or restoration. This was demonstrated in the recent work done on the Bullas sculptures. Further, artists may be best suited to doing remedial work on the pieces they have created.

- **Recommendation:** Waive the purchasing process, if maintenance or restoration on art work is required, to allow the original artist to perform the work within the specified budget. In cases where the original artist is unavailable, the arts and culture unit will select a suitable professional consultant through an RFP process.

**Storage**

The city has no dedicated art storage space. Such space would need to be secure, climate-controlled and equipped to accommodate a range of art work types and sizes. Until such time as dedicated, secure and climate-controlled storage for art works is established, projects must be (1) permanently sited, or (2) installed for a specific length of time with the understanding that the art work will not be stored thereafter. The exception to this approach is digital media works that can be stored in an office setting as well as electronically.
Recommendation: Public art works must be (1) permanently sited, or (2) installed for a specific length of time with the understanding that the art work will not be stored by the City thereafter.

Procedures
Ensuring that EOI’s/RFP’s for construction projects include information about the public art requirement helps project sponsors, managers and consultants with planning for public art opportunities in the early design of facilities, and thus offers artists design opportunities that are not possible once actual construction has begun.

This principle has been applied with a degree of success in Victoria Park and Kitchener (Main) Library. Community Services’ “Project Management Process Guide” contains instructions for public art discussions in the early planning stage of any Community Services Department construction project for the purposes of policy compliance, budgeting and other necessary inclusion steps.

Recommendation: Public art policy compliance should be built into the project management processes of all affected civic construction projects.

Strategy Six: Promotion and Public Education
We now see the public art collection on the new city website. Other important initiatives are 1) the publication of a public art tour brochure, 2) preparation of an information guide for private developers to be distributed through the Planning Department, and 3) interpretive signage at public art sites.

Recommendation: Develop promotional and educational tools in various media to educate and inform both the general public and sectors of interest.