

Public Art Policy – Policy #500.04

Established: July 7, 2026

Contact Department: Community Services

Guiding Principle

The District of Summerland recognizes that public art enriches community life, builds a sense of belonging, and supports local cultural expression. This policy supports the District's goals to enhance community vibrancy by integrating art into public spaces.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and transparent processes for the acquisition, installation, management, maintenance, and deaccession of public art.

Application

The Public Art Policy applies to public art projects and installations located on District property or that are otherwise under the District's control and custody.

Key Definitions

- **Public Art:** Artistic works created for public spaces, including murals, sculptures, installations, and functional art.
- **Acquisition:** The process of accepting an artistic work into the District's collection through purchase, commission, donation or other means.
- **Deaccession:** The process of removing an artistic work from the District's collection.
- **Public Art Advisory Representatives:** Identified volunteers with relevant expertise advising on public art matters.

Policy Statement(s)

1. Roles and Responsibilities

Public art located on District property shall be administered by the District of Summerland with support from staff and community art representatives or organizations as required.

1.1 Council

- Approve the Public Art Policy and future amendments.
- Approve major public art projects and permanent donations. Staff may also refer any public art proposal to Council for consideration.
- Approve public art funding through the municipal budgeting process.

- Identify organizations where Public Art Advisory Representatives will be selected to advise staff on public art matters as required.

1.2 Staff

The Director of Community Services or designate will be responsible for the administration of the Public Art Policy.

- Facilitate Public Art referral process, engagement, and input.
- Process public art proposals.
- Coordinate maintenance of the District's public art collection.
- Administer municipal public art projects.
- Liaise with community art organizations.

1.3 Public Art Advisory Representatives

- Through the referral process, provide input and advice on policy, proposals, acquisitions, installation locations, and deaccession as requested by staff or Council.
- Participate in jurying art as required.
- Assist staff with communications and engagement with the greater art community.

2. Public Art Proposals (Projects and Donations)

The District will accept proposals for public art projects or donations. Proposals are to be submitted in writing and include all required logistics. Project and donation application forms (or checklists) will be offered to support the applicant.

Proposals will be considered in accordance with Section 3.1 of this Policy.

Acceptance of donated public art will consider installation requirements, long-term maintenance obligations, liability considerations, and lifecycle costs.

Approved public art donations will be executed through a District of Summerland agreement.

The District reserves the right to relocate or deaccession the work as per Section 4 of the Public Art Policy.

3. Public Art Selection and Acquisition

The District will administer a fair and transparent process to select and acquire public art.

3.1 Consideration of Public Art Proposals

- Proposals will be submitted to staff for review and may be presented to Council through a staff report and/or delegation process.
- Proposals may be referred to the Public Art Advisory Representatives for input to be compiled in a Staff Council Report.
- Council will make the final decision on whether to proceed with major public art projects or accept permanent public art donations.

3.2 District of Summerland Requests for Public Art

- The District may use open or invitational competitive processes to select and acquire public art, where specific public art initiatives have been identified.
 - Requests for Proposals may be issued for projects with broad scope, community-based components, or where project specifics are largely undetermined.
 - Requests for Qualifications may be issued to shortlist or select artists for projects where site, budget, and project parameters have been established.
- A jury process with a panel from the Public Art Advisory Representatives is recommended to evaluate submissions based on predetermined criteria. Evaluation may consider artistic merit, durability, public safety, site suitability, and alignment with community values. Criteria may change depending on the project.
- Jury results will be presented to Council and Council will make a final decision on whether to proceed.

3.3 Public Art on non-District property

- The District will highlight the Public Art Policy with developers, community organizations, external agencies (e.g. Ministry of Transportation & Transit), private landowners, businesses, etc. that are considering installing public art in high profile locations.
- The District will ensure the artwork aligns with the Official Community Plan's applicable policies and form and character guidelines and complies with Zoning Bylaw requirements.
- The District may encourage private landowners with valued or historic public art assets to consider preservation and documentation prior to removal.

4. Deaccession

The District will deaccession public art where appropriate, including in cases of deterioration, damage, public safety concerns, site redevelopment, theft, changing community context, diminished visual impact over time, or due to the natural lifecycle of the artwork. The District may also decommission works that are no longer suitable for the site or public purpose, or that no longer meet overall collection objectives, in its sole discretion.

Deaccession options may include relocation, donation, sale, return to the artist, or disposal / removal.

Where public art must be removed (e.g., a mural on a building), the artist, if known, should be notified prior to removal. A photographic and historical record of the artwork should be created and retained by the District. Options for preservation should be considered where feasible.

Council may request that deaccession of public art be reviewed by the Public Art Advisory Representatives. Council will have the final approval for deaccession.

5. Public Art Maintenance

Unless otherwise noted in an agreement or subject to section 3.3 of this policy, it is the District's responsibility to maintain public art owned by the District and on District property. It should be visually inspected during regular grounds and building maintenance.

Issues such as damage, structural wear, graffiti, and safety concerns should be reported. Maintenance will be undertaken subject to available resources and budget approval.

Public art installations in parks should not interfere with maintenance and use (e.g. irrigation, plant growth, tree health, garden beds, snow plowing, sports fields, etc.) and should be durable for outside weather conditions and power washing or scrubbing (graffiti removal, bird droppings, etc.).

Major repairs should be reported and considered through the annual budget process. Deaccession may need to be considered.

6. Public Art Funding

Council will consider allocating funding toward a **public art reserve fund** for public art projects and commissioning new public art. The allocation amount will be confirmed annually during budget deliberations. Any funds not used within the budget year would be carried forward.

Public art should be considered in all District of Summerland major capital projects for project integration and budgeting.

Opportunities for financial contributions from the community should be highlighted. Alternative funding sources such as grants and sponsorships should also be explored.

7. Public Art Plan

Council or staff may develop supporting plans, inventories, guidelines, strategies, or other administrative tools to support implementation of this policy. A Public Art Plan will be reviewed and endorsed by Council.

Amendments/Reviews

Date of Council Consideration	Resolution/Report	Description