

# Arts Development Advisory Committee

## 2024 Year End Report

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## **ARTS DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE - ADMINISTRATION**

### **Public Art Policy**

In January 2024 ADAC recommended that the existing Public Art Policy be rescinded, as it was out of alignment with current City policies and committee structures.

City Staff and ADAC drafted a new Public Art Policy which was approved by City Council on May 21, 2024. At the heart of this policy is the City's commitment to building a diverse Public Art collection that contributes to the community's sense of belonging, wellbeing and wonder.

The new policy provides a framework to ensure a consistent, ethical and transparent approach to acquiring and caring for public artwork on municipally owned buildings and properties. Some highlights include:

- Clear definition of the roles City Council, the Arts Development Advisory Committee, the CAO and City Administration play in supporting and facilitating Public Art within our community.
- Defining procurement processes and maintenance expectations through service standards and expectations
- Establishing the Selection Committee Roster, where citizens can apply to serve as jurors on Public Art selection committees.
- Annual ongoing funding for Public Art through transfers from the Capital Reserve Fund to the Public Art Reserve Fund.

The final policy is available publicly [online](#).

### **The Young Artist Legacy Awards**

The Lieutenant Governor Young Artist Legacy Awards Program is designed to assist in the development of young aspiring artists from the St. Albert community through small grants. This grant program provides funding to young artists to pursue education, training, or career opportunities.

The 2024 Young Artist Legacy Award was given out to three local youths and one group. The arts opportunities that were funded included:

- International Ballet Summer Workshop in Estonia
- Domaine Forget Saxophone Session in Quebec
- Alberta Children's Choir in Calgary
- Poetry in Voice Nationals in Ottawa (group)

Total funding requested and awarded was **\$1,400.00**

## **PUBLIC ART - COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The care and maintenance of the City of St. Albert's Public Art Collection is an ongoing responsibility for the Community Services team. Several projects that were started in 2023 continued to develop or were resolved in 2024.

### **St Albert the Great by Al Henderson**

On March 14, 2023, *St. Albert the Great* by Al Henderson was reported stolen from his home in Founder's Court, between 14 and 18 Perron Street. City Staff, on the recommendation of ADAC, are working with Al Henderson to have a new work commissioned to replace the stolen work. The new piece will be smaller in scale, and housed inside St. Albert Place, near the St. Albert Library. Al Henderson submitted designs for the new piece, and of the three possibilities, one was selected through unanimous consent. The committee was inspired by the intention, symbolism and emotional resonance of the new work. The piece feels like a continuation of the original work, while also recognizing the loss felt by the community at the theft of the original work.



*"The bird was at the centre of the Saint who in turn stood in the heart of our city for so many quiet years. Allowing the bird to fly away acknowledges loss, for me personally, and for all those who miss that original work of art."* – Al Henderson, 2024

In addition to funds from the artwork's insurance, ADAC approved \$30,000.00 be pulled from the Public Art Reserve to fund the creation of this new work. The estimated date of completion is for the fall of 2026.

### ***Tribute to the Sisters of Charity Grey Nuns St. Albert* by Louis Lavoie**

An expansive mural created by Louis Lavoie was removed from Founder's Court in the fall of 2023. After 22 years in the elements, the work had deteriorated significantly. At the time ADAC recommended that \$9,000.00 be withdrawn from the Public Art Lifecycle and Maintenance Fund for the removal and storage of the work, and remediation of the wall. A condition report noted significant paint loss and wood panel deterioration. City Staff consulted the artist, and ADAC, and it was decided that the work be deaccessioned from the collection in 2024 and returned to the artist, as per the artist's wishes.

### ***Colour Fields II* by Angela Grootelaar**

In June 2024 *Colour Fields II* by Angela Grootelaar was removed from 2003 St. Joseph Street. The work had been displayed on a privately owned building, and an agreement to keep the work in place was not renewed. ADAC recommended that \$14,000.00 be pulled from the Public Art Lifecycle and Maintenance Fund to remove the work for storage and remediate the wall where it was displayed. The work will remain in storage until a suitable location can be found to host the piece.

### ***Healthy Communities* by Bella Totino-Busby**

In June 2024 *Healthy Communities* by Bella Totino-Busby was removed from 12 Perron Street. The work had been displayed on a privately owned building, and an agreement to keep the work in place was not renewed. ADAC recommended that \$10,000.00 be pulled from the Public Art Lifecycle and Maintenance Fund to remove the work for storage and remediate the wall on which it had hung. A comprehensive condition report on the piece revealed significant deterioration after 25 years in the elements. Conservation of the piece would be prohibitively expensive.

After discussion with City Staff, and informed by conversations with the artist, ADAC recommended to Administration in September 2024 that *Healthy Communities* be deaccessioned from the collection and destroyed, as per the artist's wishes.

## **PUBLIC ART – COMPLETED PROJECTS 2024-2025**

### **Fowler Athletic Park Mural**

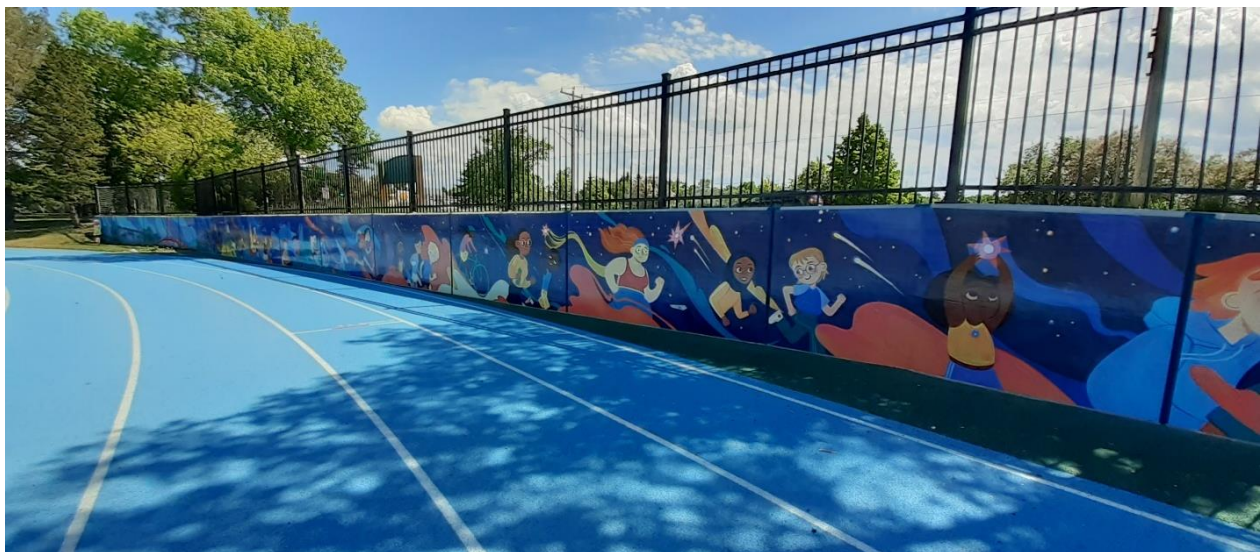
In the spring of 2024, the Fowler Athletic Park Mural was installed. Fowler Park is used by local schools, the St. Albert Track and Field Club, local organizations, and the public to get outdoors, train in track and field, and to get active. The Park underwent

refurbishments in 2021, and a new concrete retaining wall was identified as an ideal space to host a temporary public artwork.

A public call for submissions was held, with 66 artists proposing work by the deadline of June 22, 2023. In early 2024, a selection committee chose *Soaring* by Kalina Hanson for the project. Kalina Hanson is a freelance artist and illustrator who grew up in St. Albert, attending both Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Lorne Akins schools.

*“The piece is very character-focused, so you see the classic characters you would expect to see using Fowler Athletic Park- young students in gym class, high schoolers during track and field day, etc. But on a closer look, you see families, senior citizens, people walking their dogs... Many of the characters in the mural are inspired by people in my life; kids I went to school with and people I’ve met along the way.”* Kalina Hanson, 2024

The work was installed in the spring of 2024 and will stay in place for at least 5 years.



## Downtown Banners Project

In early 2024, Jacilyn Blackwood proposed a new public art initiative to ADAC. The project proposed 80 art banners showcasing the work of three artists to adorn light poles and banner arms in downtown St. Albert starting in March 2025. The banners would run along St. Anne Street (by St. Albert Trail), Perron Street, St. Thomas Street, and St. Michael Street.

This pilot project will run for three years with the banners on display for 10 months of the year. The goal of this project is to enhance the downtown’s vibrancy by incorporating artwork created by local artists that speaks to, and of, our community’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.



In 2018 Council authorized the transfer of funding for a diversity and inclusion project totalling \$90,000.00 from the Public Art Lifecycle Fund. This project would utilize approximately \$35,000.00, and the remainder will be used for a future project.

### Selecting artists and art creation

The project was looking primarily for artists who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, and citizenship status. ADAC was enthusiastically in support of this project, inspired by its intention to create a welcoming and inclusive space at the heart of our community.

A Call for Artists – Request for Qualifications was opened on June 10, 2024, with 28 artists submitting before the closing on August 25, 2024. Artists were asked to submit a portfolio of works that demonstrated their technique, style, materials and artistic voice.

A selection committee chose three artists – Eunju Park, Melanie Hsiao and Jasper June, who were hired to create four new pieces each. The three artists met with City staff to discuss the project, their practices and inspirations, and then got to work.

### Completion and celebration

By the end of 2024, twelve stunning artworks had been created for this project. Eunju Park worked with Hanji (traditional Korean mulberry paper), Melanie Hsiao used a mix of painting and pressed flowers, and Jasper June's medium was embroidery. The twelve original artworks are now part of the City's Public Art Collection. Photographs of the artworks were then sent to the banner fabricator, which were printed and installed in March 2025. A celebration of the artists, their work and this beautiful project is scheduled for Friday May 2 from 6-8 pm at St. Albert Place.



## Children's Festival 2025

Children's Festival is a celebration of art, performance, community and childhood. In past years, large scale ready-made public art projects were brought in to add visual arts to the festivities, including *Walk Walk Dance* in 2022 and *Daedalum* in 2023.

For 2025, an Alberta-based artist has been commissioned to create work that activates the interior of St. Albert Place for the duration of the festival. Through portals, pathways and interactive artworks, Kelsey Fraser will guide visitors through site-specific activations and installations within the building and throughout the grounds of St. Albert Place. With a sense of curiosity, Kelsey invites visitors to discover what awaits around corners and in unexpected places, creating moments to wander and wonder while discovering the magic of the International Children's Festival of the Arts!

ADAC recommended that \$12,000.00 be pulled from the Public Art Reserve Fund for this project. Upon presentation to City Council, Council recommended that an annual allotment of \$20,000.00 be set aside to allow for an artist installation / activation to be part of the festival annually.



## BMX Mural

During the summer of 2024, City Administration was approached by the license holder of the St. Albert BMX track and the City's liaison about the possibility of adding a mural to the BMX jump that faces Riel Drive. The BMX track is a world-class Supercross track featuring some of the most incredible jumps and obstacles in Canada and is set to host national and international competitions. This positions St. Albert as a host, drawing tourism, and international attention to the users of this space.

ADAC was very keen to support this project, recommending that \$30,000.00 be pulled from the Public Art Reserve Fund to support the initiative. The wall that will host the mural is highly visible, and the committee was excited by the opportunity to have an artist create a new work crafted through engagement with the community and track users. The intended lifespan for a mural is temporary, typically lasting up to 15 years.

## Selecting artists, community engagement and art creation

Using a similar process to the Downtown Banner Project, a Call for Artists – Request for Qualifications was opened on February 3, 2025, with 43 artists submitting before the closing on March 16, 2025. Artists were asked to submit a portfolio of works that



demonstrated their technique, style, materials and artistic voice. A selection committee met in March 2025 to select one artist for this project.

### Next Steps

Once a contract is in place with the selected artist, they will proceed with community engagement, supported by City Administration. Engagement between the artist and the community could take many forms and will be specific to the artist's practice. Engagement will allow the artist to get to know the community who uses the track and the energy of the space. The artist will then design a mural informed by their engagement, inspired by and specific to the site.

The mural will be painted during the summer of 2025, with the goal of being completed before the site hosts a major national competition in August.



### Transit Project

The upcoming transit project, affectionately known as Art Buses, is the companion project to the Downtown Banners. In 2018, Council authorized \$90,000 from the Public Art Reserve fund for a diversity and inclusion project, \$35,000.00 of which was allocated to the Downtown Banner Project. ADAC strongly supported the use of the remaining \$55,000.00 for the Art Buses.

This project proposes to wrap the exterior of two St Albert Transit buses in artworks, accompanied by works created for the interior placards (generally used for advertising inside the bus). Two artists would be commissioned to design new works specifically for this project, engaging with the 10 priorities identified in the Community Social Needs Assessment (CSNA). The project aims to make public art accessible throughout St. Albert, raise awareness of available services within the community, and encourage transit use.

### Project Timeline

Administration developed a call to Artists and Illustrators - Request for Qualification (RFQ), outlining an invitation for artists to create an artwork that envisions a place where all belong and thrive. Artists in all career stages will be welcome to apply and must reside in Alberta. The call opened on February 10, 2025, and 46 artists applied by

the closing date of March 23, 2025. A selection committee will meet in April 2025 to select two artists for this project.

### **Next Steps**

After artists are chosen by the selection committee, and contracts are put in place, administration will collaborate with Public Operations to guide the artists from selection through to project completion. Importantly for this project, the selected artist must conduct a period of community engagement. This could take many forms and will be specific to the artist's practice. Engagement will allow the artist to get to know the transit ridership, the St Albert Transit staff, and wider community, to inspire and inform their work, alongside the project goals.

The current timeline strives to have the Art Buses completed and in the community by the fall of 2025. With routes that change daily, the wrapped buses will offer increased access to public art for all community members, while supporting the City of St. Albert's organizational vision and commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

If well-received, it could open future projects featuring different themes and artists. When the current bus wraps need replacing, new artwork would be commissioned, ensuring the ongoing display of public art and continued vibrancy.

## **PUBLIC ART IN CAPITAL PROJECTS – 2025 AND FORWARD**

Administration has been working collaboratively with internal stakeholders to identify opportunities for art and artists to add to the vibrancy of our community. In November 2024, ADAC recommended that funds be allocated for two ambitious, multi-year projects, designed to integrate Public Art into upcoming Capital Projects. As Public Art funding is separate from Capital Project funding, Administration needed to secure funding for these projects early to align with existing project timelines.

For larger scale projects, Community Services would like to ensure that artists are brought into Capital projects early, to give them a full understanding of the scope and intention of the project, while also providing opportunity for have meaningful engagement with the public.

For both projects, the proposed budget is comprehensive, including the projected costs for the call for artists, selection committee, artists scope of work including community engagement, materials, fabrication, installation, contingency, and maintenance.

### **Elements Park**

With continued development taking place in Erin Ridge, the City is planning for a new park space on Element Drive: Element Park. One of the design features was brought to

ADAC's attention in June 2024 as an opportunity to include public art. The planned climbing wall is envisioned as both an entrance way to the park and interactive play structure. It is an ideal structure to host a largescale mosaic, a mural created from ceramic tiles.

A selection committee will select an artist who will work with the project team to create an integrated mosaic tile piece. The artwork will be incorporated into the design as part of the Capital Projects tender. The tender will allow for collaboration between the contractor and the artist to identify how the mosaic tilework will be embedded into the design.

Administration released a Call to Artists early in 2025, which is set to close on May 8. An artist or artist team will be selected by the end of June 2025. Guided by the Community Services and Parks and Recreation teams, the artist will have one year to engage with the community and plan the work. Construction of the park is planned to begin in 2025 with the Public Art component being installed in the Fall of 2026.



ADAC recommended that \$165,000.00 be pulled from the Public Art Reserve Fund to support this project, which will be a permanent addition to our community. This is a wonderful opportunity to expand our public art collection across our City, potentially making this park a destination for locals and visitors in the years to come.

## Red Willow West Meadowview Phase 3

The Grey Nuns White Spruce Park (GNWSP) is located along the east side of Ray Gibbon Drive and on the north side of the Sturgeon River, south of the Riverside neighborhood. The Red Willow Park West Meadowview project will ultimately connect residents from Ray Gibbon Drive to the downtown core and existing Red Willow Trail System.

As part of Phase 3 of this plan, funding was requested to support the inclusion of Public Art in the interpretive plan for this project. This is a multi-year project which extends over several kilometers and will include one or more Public Art installations throughout the park or integrated into park infrastructure. The interpretive plan for this project is designed to collect historical, cultural and environmental information about the region, and share that knowledge with the community throughout the trail system.

The Call for Artists- Request for Qualifications will focus on securing an environmental artist who will develop a project plan that would detail opportunities for themselves and potentially additional artists within the project budget. The artist(s) would create works that reflect the land and human interaction, promoting stewardship to park users.

In support of this project, ADAC recommended that \$300,000.00 be pulled from the Public Art Reserve Fund. The project blends many of the priorities that have been identified by the municipality and community members. The public art enables the sharing of knowledge about the land and landscape, as well as the deep, rich history and culture that has shaped our community. ADAC members were inspired by this project's intentions to encourage stewardship of our precious natural resources, and a celebration of the beauty of this area.

## Public Art Reserve Fund

As of May 2025, after the allocation of funds for all the above-mentioned projects, the Public Art Reserve Fund's uncommitted funds are:

Acquisitions and Public Art Projects: \$280,000.00

Maintenance: \$642,000.00