

2026 Public Art Working Committee Annual Action Plan



Executive Summary

The purpose of this Public Art Strategy is to guide the work of the Town of Creston Public Art Working Committee in advancing public art initiatives that enrich Creston’s community life, strengthen downtown vibrancy, and foster community participation. Rooted in the Town’s Strategic Plan priority of Livability — Vibrant Arts and Culture, the strategy positions public art as both a cultural asset and a practical tool for community wellbeing, economic vitality, and social connection.

Creston already has a strong foundation of public art success, including collaborative installations such as *Wings of Change*, an expanding downtown mural program, and sculptural investments. These initiatives demonstrate strong local interest, effective partnerships, and a willingness among residents of all ages to participate in creative placemaking.

The strategy is organized around three core pillars:

- **Reconciliation:** with a commitment to centering Indigenous voices, stories, language, and artistic leadership in public art projects.
- **Downtown Vibrancy:** using murals, interactive installations, and cultural events to animate and revitalize the downtown core and support local businesses and tourism.
- **Community Participation:** ensuring public art is inclusive, low-barrier, and reflective of Creston’s diverse community through hands-on engagement opportunities and providing opportunities for local artists.

Priority actions for the coming year include one annual mural installation, planning for an art-integrated park space, installation of kindness metres, and continued support for the development of ʔakuḥni as an Indigenous-led public space. Future endeavors include a self-guided public art walking tour and a pilot downtown art festival. These projects are designed to be scalable, achievable, and adaptable to funding availability.

Recognizing financial constraints, the strategy emphasizes a diversified funding model focused on grants, partnerships, sponsorships, in-kind contributions, and alternative revenue sources, minimizing reliance on municipal tax dollars. This approach ensures public art investment remains sustainable while leveraging external funding and community support.

Ultimately, this strategy affirms that public art is not only an aesthetic enhancement, but a strategic investment in Creston’s livability, safety, reconciliation, and sense of belonging.

Introduction

Public art plays a vital role in shaping vibrant, inclusive, and connected communities. In Creston, art in public spaces has already demonstrated its power to bring people together, celebrate local identity, and enliven shared places. From murals and sculptures to collaborative installations, public art has become an accessible way for residents and visitors alike to experience Creston’s creativity, values, and sense of place.

This Public Art Strategy builds on that momentum. It outlines a clear, achievable framework for expanding public art in Creston in a way that is inclusive, fiscally responsible, and aligned with the Town of Creston’s Strategic Plan priority of Livability — Vibrant Arts and Culture. The strategy emphasizes reconciliation, downtown vibrancy, and community participation, while recognizing the realities of small-town capacity and budgets.

Through thoughtful planning, partnerships, and community-driven initiatives, this strategy aims to ensure that public art in Creston continues to reflect diverse voices, honour Indigenous heritage, strengthen civic pride, and enhance the quality of life for all who live, work, and visit here.

Vision Statement

To enrich Creston’s community life by celebrating creativity, culture, and connection through public art while honouring Indigenous heritage, inspiring civic pride, enhancing downtown vibrancy, and fostering community participation.



Past Public Art Successes in Creston

The Town already has a growing track record of community art initiatives that demonstrate local interest and impact. See Appendix A – Public Art Inventory.

Sculptures:

Public art isn't limited to paint — Creston now features several sculpture installations.



Murals:

Creston has been actively expanding its mural program, including a recent call for artist proposals to adorn the old Ambulance Building with vibrant art reflecting landscape and Ktunaxa culture. Community paint days invite all residents to contribute.



Community Projects:

Wings of Change

In 2024, Creston's Centennial Committee and local partners created "Wings of Change," a stunning installation of 400 painted birds that symbolized community diversity, inclusion, and connection to the land. Students and Cresteramics participants contributed, including elements featuring local bird species with Ktunaxa language, reflecting reconciliation and community pride.



These successes show a strong base of community interest, creativity, and partnerships — a great foundation for the coming year.

Strategic Pillars

Reconciliation

Commit to centering Indigenous voices, stories, and artistic expression in public art.

Actions

- Prioritize Indigenous artists for key projects.
 - Integrate Indigenous language and cultural elements into murals and installations.
 - Support ongoing art investment and interpretative storytelling at ʔakuḡni.
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Downtown Vibrancy

Use public art to animate downtown Creston as a lively cultural hub that attracts residents and visitors.

Actions

- Expand mural installations throughout downtown.
 - Install interactive elements (e.g., kindness metres) to encourage gathering and engagement.
 - Frame public art as part of downtown walking routes, shopping, and events.
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Community Participation

Ensure public art is participatory, inclusive, and reflective of community voices.

Actions

- Hold “community paint” events.
 - Involve schools, youth groups, seniors, and volunteer artists.
 - Use low-barrier opportunities to invite all ages into the creative process.
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2026 Projects & Annual Actions

Strategic Plan Alignment

- **Economic Health:** Downtown Vibrancy
- **Livability:** Vibrant Arts & Culture, Recreation

Annual Mural Installation



Objectives

- Beautify underutilized or high-visibility walls
- Showcase high quality murals
- Reflect Creston's culture, history, and diversity

Actions

- Identify one priority wall per year (public or donated private surfaces)
- Issue a low-cost call for artists (digital promotion only)
- Leverage in-kind support (wall prep, lifts, other accommodations)
- Seek grants and sponsorships

Art-Focused Park Space



Objectives

- Integrate art into parks and green spaces
- Create welcoming, creative gathering places

Actions (Year One)

- Identify potential park or small public space
- Develop a concept plan
- Explore temporary or modular art elements
- Develop a maintenance plan and budget

Note: Implementation may be phased in future years.

Kindness Metres



Objectives

- Promote positivity, generosity, and community pride
- Support local charitable causes

Actions

- Identify four to five downtown, indoor locations
- Partner with service clubs or nonprofits
- Use donated parking metres from the Lions Club
- Launch a public awareness campaign

Support for the Development of ʔakʷni



Objectives

- Advance reconciliation through meaningful public space
- Support Indigenous-led vision and storytelling

Actions

- Provide advisory and advocacy support to Council
- Assist with grant research and partnerships
- Ensure public art planning aligns with Indigenous leadership and protocols
- Liaise with Town Staff and Lower Kootenay Band

Future Initiatives

Strategic Plan Alignment

- **Economic Health:** Downtown Vibrancy
- **Livability:** Vibrant Arts & Culture, Recreation
- **Economic Health:** Business Friendly

Public Art Walking Tour



Objectives

- Increase public awareness of existing and new artworks
- Support tourism and downtown businesses

Actions

- Inventory existing public art and murals
- Create a **self-guided walking tour** (PDF + web page)
- Install low-cost signage or QR codes
- Partner with Visitor Centre and Chamber of Commerce

Downtown Art Festival (Pilot)



Objectives

- Animate downtown with arts and culture
- Provide opportunities for local artists and performers
- Encourage community gathering

Actions

- Organize a one-day art festival downtown
- Focus on local artists, musicians, and makers
- Use existing public spaces and streets
- Partner with businesses, nonprofits, and volunteers

Funding Models & Financial Sustainability

Recognizing the Town of Creston's limited financial capacity, the Public Art Working Committee will pursue a diversified, low-risk funding model that prioritizes grants, partnerships, and alternative revenue sources while minimizing reliance on municipal tax dollars.

Grants & External Funding

Grants will remain the primary funding source for public art initiatives.

Target Funding Streams

- Provincial and regional arts and culture grants
- Heritage, placemaking, and reconciliation-focused funding
- Neurodivergent accessibility grants
- Tourism and downtown revitalization grants

Committee Actions

- Establish a grant-writing sub-committee
- Maintain a rolling list of grant opportunities
- Align projects clearly with funder priorities (reconciliation, youth, livability)
- Support partner organizations in co-applications where appropriate

Partnerships & Sponsorships

Strategic partnerships are essential to delivering public art in a small-town context.

Key Partners

- Indigenous governments and cultural organizations
- Local businesses and property owners
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Service clubs and community groups
- Tourism and economic development partners

Partnership Models

- In-kind contributions (walls, materials, equipment, labour)
- Shared-cost project delivery
- Business sponsorship of murals, festivals, or walking tour elements
- Co-branded recognition (signage, digital materials)

Benefit to Creston

- Builds shared ownership of public art
 - Strengthens relationships between the Town, businesses, and community
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Alternative Revenue Sources

Potential Options

- **Paid Parking Allocation:**
Explore dedicating a modest portion of paid parking revenue (where applicable) to a Public Art Reserve or annual public art programming fund, particularly for downtown revitalization projects.
 - **Donations & Community Giving**
 - “Adopt-a-Mural” or “Adopt-a-Project” initiatives
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Conclusion

Local public art plays a vital role in shaping a safe, vibrant, and connected community. In Creston, art in public spaces contributes to increased perceptions of safety by activating streets, parks, and gathering places, encouraging foot traffic, and fostering a sense of shared ownership and care. Public art enhances downtown vibrancy, supports local businesses, and contributes to economic growth by attracting residents and visitors alike. It also serves as a powerful tool for storytelling - reflecting Creston's history, landscapes, and diverse voices, including Indigenous knowledge and lived experience. Through creative expression, public art can raise awareness of environmental values and stewardship, reinforcing Creston's connection to land, water, and place. Most importantly, locally driven art initiatives promote diversity, equity, and inclusion by ensuring that many perspectives are seen, valued, and celebrated. Investing in local art is therefore not only a cultural choice, but a strategic one—strengthening livability, resilience, and community pride across the Town of Creston.

Through thoughtful planning, collaboration, and creativity, the Public Art Working Committee will help realize Creston's vision of livability through vibrant arts and culture, ensuring public art remains accessible, meaningful, and reflective of the community it serves.



Appendix A – Public Art Inventory

Murals

Fresh Flowers, Art Space



Wetlands, Linda Dawn Jenson



Regeneration, Growth, and Gifts, Lacey and Layla Art



100 Years of Creston, Sergey Ryutin



Crestbrook Forest Industry, Darlene MacDonald



Food in the Valley, Cresteramics



Valley of the Swans, Creston Youth Advisory Council



Eagle, Creston Youth Advisory Council



Graduation, Prince Charles Secondary School



Centennial Park Shed Revitalization, Nadine Riehl



All Living Things, Golden Butter Murals



Sculptures

Bad Hair Day, Jerry McKellar



Lighthouse Fireball, Eva Asplin (Privately Owned)



Let's go, Rabi'a



Awakening, Mir Agol



The Old Dog, Nathan Scott (Privately Owned)



Steam Punk Owl, Heather Wall



Ale-Lien, Richard Tetz



Rock Dragon, Heather Wall



Call Across the Sea, Jim Unger



Salmon Dance, Peter Vogelaar



Mother Bear Prays for Earth Healing, Stewart Steinhauer



Rocky Mountain Music, Karl Lansing



Community Projects

Wings of Change, Creston Community



Stream of Dreams, Canyon Lister Elementary



Let's Paint, Sergey Ryutin, Creston Community

