

# Arts Policy Report and Recommendations

## November, 1993

### Preamble

The formal provision of Recreation services in the City of Vancouver began through the Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation and the operation of community centres. That was 40 years ago. Today the Board operates 21 community centres in joint partnership with local community centre associations and there are about 170 parks. Arts related programs, activities and initiatives have been a part of this development, although without the benefit of a specific arts policy.

In this same period, the city has also been undergoing considerable change. In the arts field, for example, there has been a large increase in the number of professional artists and arts organizations, the arts have become a significant contributor to the economy and, in the socially diverse population, the arts have proven to be an effective bridge between people and communities.

These changes create both challenge and opportunity. The CPRA stated in 1989, that "Municipal authorities must begin to acquire detailed knowledge of the range, quality and the needs of the arts in the communities and define their own objectives and policies for artistic development". The Board, to continue with a relevant service in light of these new times, requires a more coordinated and directed focus. In recognition of this need the Board established an Arts and Cultural Task Force, in April 1992, which formed an Arts Policy Working Group. This policy report and recommendations are the result of their work.

These policy recommendations, when implemented, will provide the structure within which the scope of arts activity can increase. They will provide direction for a community development approach that will reinforce existing relationships and signal an openness to collaboration on new initiatives with new community partners. Staff, association boards and volunteers will have opportunities to broaden their base of understanding of the arts. Facility and park planning will be enriched by a further inclusion of artists and representatives of the arts community through a consultation process.

The result will be a wider range of opportunities for participation in the arts and for interface between professional artists and the community. Staff will have more resources, skills and confidence. Facilities and parks will be more accommodating of arts programming. Participants will develop a greater appreciation of the arts and a wider range of skills. The greater exposure to and involvement in a variety of art forms (including dance, music, visual, theatre, craft, celebrations, media) will assist in the development of future audiences. Most importantly these advancements will bring new and diverse communities together with mainstream artists and arts organizations under the umbrella of community cultural development.

This policy will require the commitment of community centre associations, the Arts Team and the Park Board Recreation, Operations and Planning divisions staff. This commitment is essential to the realization of the goals and objectives.

Most importantly the Arts Policy working group has noted that the policy is a reference point to serve an ongoing process of learning and a greater development the arts at a community level in the community.

## **Introduction**

### **Existing Policy**

*“Vision for the Future”, the Strategic Plan of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, states the following two goals:*

- *“To provide, or facilitate the provision of, facilities to offer all citizens the opportunity for recreation activity.”*
- *“To provide or facilitate the provision of physical, social, cultural, artistic, and intellectual recreation activities that meet the needs of all segments of the population.”*

### **Park Board Mandate**

In November 1992, the Board adopted this mandate as a part of the process in the development of the Arts Policy.

*“The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation recognizes the arts as an essential element in a vital, creative, and balanced community, and, through its own jurisdiction, seeks to actively facilitate participation in and access to the arts for all citizens.”*

### **Vision**

The consultations, research, focus groups and workshops related to the development of the Arts Policy led to a vision of the role of the arts in our communities.

The vision is of a city where the arts are a part of everyday life; where the Board, through its community centres and parks, plays an active role in enabling citizens to learn and create; and where the city becomes a place in which the individual can experience a sense of belonging, see cultural traditions respected, and participate in building community.

### **Principles**

As a result of the Arts Policy consultation process and deliberations, a number of principles emerged as common to all the issues. These are fundamental to the Arts Policy:

#### **Diversity**

Cultural diversity is a fundamental aspect of our identity as a city and it is a resource to be drawn upon.

#### **Participation**

Participation enhances the self-esteem of the individual and empowers communities to determine their own priorities and to make change.

#### **Learning**

Learning is a life-long process and the quality of life in a community is affected by the ability of its members to learn and to grow.

## **Collaboration**

Resources are used most effectively when individuals and groups work together. The broader the base of collaboration, the greater the likelihood of success.

## **Goal #1**

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

## **Rationale**

It is recognized that:

- Recreation, being the act of recreating oneself through pleasurable and engaging pastime or occupation, includes spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural and physical renewal.
- Arts experience increases coping skills, improves social, emotional and spiritual health, and develops creative thinkers.
- Play in a variety of media stimulates children's creative potential. Studies of different cultures indicate a relationship between the nature of play and the diversity of media in children's play and the complexity of the adult culture as well as the level of creativity and problem solving skills in adults.
- Creativity is a basic and powerful human capacity.
- Education is a life-long pursuit, and all society benefits from the increased learning in the individual.

All community centres offer some arts programming but there are currently no organizational structures to regulate the quality of arts instruction. Many programs offer introductory levels only. Traditional 8-12 week program formats may not be suitable for all community members.

## **Recommendation 1.1**

Enhance the quality and expand the range of artistic disciplines available in community centres.

## **Strategies**

- 1.1.1 Establish criteria for instructor/performer assessment.
- 1.1.2 Maintain and circulate to all centres a resource list of qualified arts instructors and performers.
- 1.1.3 Expand types of programming formats (e.g. weekend workshops; programs in artists' studios; open studios in centres).
- 1.1.4 Seek out and develop programs/workshops that incorporate changing and emerging art forms.
- 1.1.5 Work toward specialization for different disciplines in some centres in order to develop progressive levels and to provide complementary rather than competitive

programming. Identify 3 community centres in geographical proximity and initiate a pilot project.

### **Recommendation 1.2**

Encourage community associations to form arts/culture committees to be advocates for and advise on arts programming.

### **Strategy**

1.2.1 Work with the arts community, the Arts Team and community associations to identify resources in each community.

### **Recommendation 1.3**

Facilitate “art talks”, public readings, art appreciation workshops and art tours.

### **Strategy**

1.3.1 Collaborate with arts organizations and other civic departments to identify potential program opportunities and resources for implementation.

### **Recommendation 1.4**

Develop staff competency in arts programming.

### **Strategies**

1.4.1 Develop a series of training workshops to include methods of exhibiting art, starting a community arts/culture committee, accessing cultural resources in the community and assessing instructor qualifications.

1.4.2 Seek to recruit staff with arts training or experience.

1.4.3 Explore opportunities for staff to do co-programming, or to receive an internship with arts organizations.

1.4.4 Develop training for existing program leaders and instructors to improve skills and knowledge, (e.g. the arts as a technique for integrating special needs children).

1.4.5 Support staff training in the arts through existing funds. Encourage community associations to support additional training for their appropriate staff.

1.4.6 Develop a consultation process for the Arts Team with members of the arts community in to set and evaluate annual goals and objectives.

1.4.7 Encourage program development and delivery in partnership with arts organizations.

1.4.8 Explore strategies with education and recreation authorities on ways to recruit to the recreation field students with arts interest and experience and ways to develop arts programming in the curriculum.

## **Goal #2**

### **To develop a broader role for the artist within communities.**

#### **Rationale**

It is recognized that:

- Artists have a role in community life to help people define customs and beliefs, to establish cultural identity, and to challenge, distract and enlighten.
- The arts support an exploration of values and are an essential cross-cultural communication tool.
- Artists, as key contributors to many aspects of community life, must be paid for their work.

Typically, artists have been involved with the Park Board as instructors in community centres. Involving artists in policy-making, planning, programs and projects will enhance the Board's ability to support cultural and arts activity.

#### **Recommendation 2.1**

Facilitate temporary art installation in parks.

#### **Strategies**

- 2.1.1 Collaborate with the Office of Cultural Affairs in developing criteria for exhibiting art and a process as well as a list of responsibilities for all concerned parties.
- 2.1.2 Explore possibilities of a sculpture park (e.g. at Roundhouse site).

#### **Recommendation 2.2**

Increase ways to develop new audiences' strategy.

#### **Strategies**

- 2.2.1 Exhibit art and develop informal performance opportunities in those community centres with adequate facilities.
- 2.2.2 Promote the development of facilities suitable for exhibiting art and for informal performances including large lobby areas and encourage the use of existing spaces for exhibits and performances.
- 2.2.3 Encourage the principle of paying artists for exhibiting or performing (as other professional services are paid for).
- 2.2.4 Collaborate with arts organizations to provide training on ways to exhibit art and to develop criteria for establishing a community gallery.
- 2.2.5 Support and facilitate the celebration arts and community festivals.
- 2.2.6 Encourage the use of community centre space by artists in exchange for workshops, performance, and exhibits.

### **Recommendation 2.3**

Recognize the needs of artists from diverse cultures.

#### **Strategies**

- 2.3.1 Seek out co-programming opportunities with these artists.
- 2.3.2 Develop liaisons between community centre staff and ethnic organizations, cultural centres, and/or immigrant integration agencies in communities.
- 2.3.3 Encourage the planning of ethnic celebrations in community centres with artists from the ethnic community.
- 2.3.4 Seek representation from diverse cultural groups to serve on arts/culture committees.
- 2.3.5 Identify emerging artists from different cultures and develop programs/projects for their involvement.

### **Recommendation 2.4**

Support the nomination of artists-in-residence by Community Associations.

#### **Strategies**

- 2.4.1 Dedicate existing funds to be matched for artist- in-residence program (1994-\$5,000.00).
- 2.4.2 Explore tri-lateral sponsorship for an artist-in- residence program with the O.C.A. and the School Board (as recommended in the Arts Initiative Report).
- 2.4.3 Promote the artist-in-residence program through the Live Art Newsletter.
- 2.4.4 Assist community associations, through the Arts Team and other collaborative partners, to assess and develop residency criteria.

### **Goal #3**

**To create links between the arts and the everyday lives of people through a community cultural development process.**

#### **Rationale**

It is recognized that:

- in a large, rapidly changing city, community life plays an increasing role in supporting and nourishing the individual;
- the arts are an important resource for community development;
- arts practice which deals with the issues of the day can contribute to our understanding of ourselves and the world;
- participation in the arts produces creative, innovative and productive communities through developing confidence in the ability to make change.

Community Cultural Development (CCD) is a collaborative process of artists and community members working together to develop projects that deal with the values, frustrations and dreams of the community. It is a process effective not only in developing community but also in encouraging participation in the arts and in demonstrating the relevance of the arts to everyday life.

Examples of CCD might include a visual artist working in the community to develop a mural expressing community identity, a ceramic artist working with a group to make a park more familiar through the creation a fence with ceramic tiles made by neighbourhood children, or a photographer working with youth on impressions of the community.

### **Recommendation 3.1**

Initiate or support community cultural development projects.

#### **Strategies**

- 3.1.1 Initiate a CCD pilot project by defining the partners and the role of participants, including that of a community cultural development facilitator. Focus on principles of diversity, participation, and collaboration.
- 3.1.2 Develop processes for assessment, implementation and evaluation.
- 3.1.3 Establish funding criteria.

### **Recommendation 3.2**

Establish a budget for CCD projects.

#### **Strategies**

- 3.2.1 Dedicate existing funds to seed projects (1994 - \$10,000.00).
- 3.2.2 Examine opportunities for the re-allocation of existing funds in the annual budget-setting process toward the realization of these recommendations.
- 3.2.3 Explore with community associations additional funding sources and grants.

### **Recommendation 3.3**

Provide training opportunities in CCD for staff, community associations and artists.

#### **Strategies**

- 3.3.1 Investigate existing resources on community development.
- 3.3.2 Develop workshops on the role of the arts in community development through collaboration with the art community.

### **Recommendation 3.4**

Develop and expand information based on CCD.

#### **Strategies**

- 3.4.1 Develop a database of community artists and an information file on CCD projects including slides, videos and printed material.
- 3.4.2 Collaborate with the arts community, community associations and City and Park Board staff.

#### **Goal #4**

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

#### **Rationale**

It is recognized that:

- Community centres and parks are valuable resources to all members of the community.
- The design of parks and facilities is crucial to accommodate and encourage participation in the arts.
- A consultation process that includes artists facilitates the development of opportunities for arts initiatives.
- The ambience of parks and facilities is as important as their functions.
- Artists have a capacity to enrich community life and to advance social development through public art.

Park Board planning involves consultation with Community Centre Associations as a means of consultation with the local community.

Many facilities are centred on sports and physical recreation. Artists in the community may not have seen the relevance of involvement with Community Centre Associations as a way for greater inclusion of the arts. Arts activity is often limited by the facility design of existing community centres. There are no special facilities built into parks to accommodate festivals.

Through its parks and facilities the Board can effectively contribute to a “sense of place” or the feeling of attachment people have to the historical, physical and social features that establish the identity of a place. Feeling a “sense of place” is important to community building.

#### **Recommendation 4.1**

Develop an inventory of Park Board facilities suitable for arts purposes.

#### **Strategy**

- 4.1.1 Work with the Arts Team and the City's Office of Cultural Affairs to define categories and requirements.

#### **Recommendation 4.2**

Include the arts community in the consultation process for the redevelopment of, and the planning for, facilities and parks.

## **Strategies**

- 4.2.1 Encourage the development of community association arts/culture committees.
- 4.2.2 Encourage collaboration between community associations and arts organizations.
- 4.2.3 Maintain and develop relationships with artists and arts organizations.
- 4.2.4 Consult festival organizations on park development.

### **Recommendation 4.3**

Develop a process for Park Board implementation of the Civic Public Art Program.

## **Strategies**

- 4.3.1 Develop a plan for public art in existing parks considering types of parks, site, intent of projects, park integrity and design, area history and composition of community.
- 4.3.2 Maintain liaison with the City's Public Art Committee and the Public Art planning staff committee.

### **Recommendation 4.4**

Develop an inventory of public art in parks.

## **Strategy**

- 4.4.1 Collaborate with the City Office of Cultural Affairs staff to establish parameters for public art projects.

### **Recommendation 4.5**

Find ways to increase the resources available for the arts in development of facilities and parks.

## **Strategies**

- 4.5.1 Develop constituencies that will lobby for a larger share of capital plan funds allocated to the development of arts facilities in building and parks.
- 4.5.2 Explore implications of non-profit, corporate and private investment in community centres or parks to meet arts needs.
- 4.5.3 In collaboration with the Office of Cultural Affairs, explore the potential establishment of an Arts Trust Fund.