



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

**To:** General Purposes Committee **Date:** April 1, 2008  
**From:** Kate Sparrow **File:** 11-7000-09-20-053/Vol 01  
 Director, Recreation & Cultural Services  
 Greg Scott, P. Eng., LEED A.P.  
 Director, Major Projects  
**Re:** Richmond Oval Precinct Art Plan 2008 Update

Staff Recommendations

1. That the Oval Precinct Art Plan 2008 Update as outlined in this report be endorsed; and
2. That the change in the colour of the glass in the lobby to clear glass on the lobby stairways and to translucent white on the elevator shafts be approved.

Kate Sparrow  
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services

Greg Scott  
Director, Major Projects

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>		<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>		
Parks Planning, Design & Construction...	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>REVIEWED BY <sup>Acting</sup> CAO</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

## **Staff Report**

### **Origin**

In June 2006 Council adopted the Richmond Oval Precinct Art Plan as the guide for incorporating art opportunities in the Oval site and Olympic Gateway Neighbourhood. This report provides an update on the Richmond Oval Precinct Art Plan and the implementation of the next phase of projects.

The report also responds to a council referral motion of July 24, 2006:

*That staff:*

- a) review the issue to determine how to incorporate an outline of the history of Richmond, including using etched glass; and*
- b) undertake a further analysis of the garden plan within the art budget.*

### **Analysis**

The Oval Precinct Art Plan recommends a series of artworks integrated with the landscape and building to create a strong sense of place and a memorable experience for the Oval users and visitors to the site.

Due to the significance and impact of the currently approved three artworks, below, and following the staff review of the referrals concerning the history of Richmond and an analysis of the garden plan, a review of the Art Plan has been conducted.

### **Projects Completed or Currently Underway**

The following projects are completed or currently underway:

- *Concrete Buttress Runnels*, by artist Susan Point, are completed;
- *Skate Blades at Hollybridge Way Canal Bridge*, designed by artist Buster Simpson, currently being fabricated and will be installed later this spring; and
- *Water Sky Garden*, by artist Janet Echelman. The work is being developed in conjunction with the landscaping on the east side of the Oval. Completion is anticipated to coincide with the opening of the Oval.

### **Lobby Glass Art & the History of Richmond**

Staff have explored the opportunity for a *Lobby Glass Art* project, to tell the story of Richmond. The project would incorporate text and images that would tell the story of Richmond using the building glazing or glass balustrades in the Lobby. This concept has been further reviewed by the Public Art Commission and the Oval Design Team. They have identified limitations to this approach, including:

- an integrated building component does not fully take advantage of the functional, programmatic and architectural qualities of the Lobby as a "lantern" for the building and main entrance to both the building and the precinct;
- visibility into the space would be reduced;

- views out of the space would obstructed;
- difficulties in seeing the work on the glazing, due to the height of the space, viewing locations on three floors, and varying sunlight and artificial lighting conditions; and
- lack of integration and cohesion with the overall Art Plan and scale of the building.

Staff have explored this exciting glass art opportunity, but have concluded that it is not viable. In a workshop in January, it was concluded that what was most important was the telling of the story of Richmond, with the art medium of glass of secondary importance.

#### **Garden Plan**

VANOC has allocated funding to ensure the presence of First Nations art at each of the 2010 venues. Staff have started discussions with VANOC on opportunities for collaboration. One possibility is for a First Nations master artist to work on site with aboriginal youth-at-risk. Another project could be the identified Water Sky Viewpoint and medicinal gardens. These projects will require additional time in order to develop a comprehensive program. Staff will report back to Council with the progress of these opportunities.

#### **Art Plan Review**

To ensure that all current and potential works are considered in relation to each other so as not to appear piecemeal or ad hoc, staff have undertaken a review of the Art Plan.

This review considered the referral from Council to determine how to incorporate references to the history of Richmond within the Oval and surrounding area and has researched opportunities and provided suggestions for implementation. Particular consideration has been given to developing opportunities for telling the stories and histories of Richmond with each individual project.

Additionally, the review considered the proposed garden plan on the site and opportunities for collaboration with VANOC.

The following are the projects for implementation in 2008, as summarized in Table 1: Oval Precinct Art Plan 2008 Update (**Attachment 1**):

#### **Suspended Oval Lobby Artwork & Legacy Plaza (Phase 1)**

It is recommended that the Oval Lobby Suspended Sculpture and the first phase of the Legacy Plaza, as proposed in the 2006 Oval Art Plan, be combined as a single integrated art opportunity. This artwork would focus on a coherent path from the arrival plaza through the front lobby (and towards the future neighbouring development), and would be an opportunity to tell the story of Richmond, focusing on the historical and cultural context, including the Olympic legacy.

In particular, it provides:

- opportunities for a strong, large scale, cohesive work to herald the precinct's "front door";
- options for art media to include glass, electronic media, photography, light, in addition to traditional sculptural media;
- ability to tell the "story" through a linear path or series of installations/images; and
- extension of the suspended artwork through exterior and interior spaces, with a greater scale and presence on the site, without restricting pedestrian flow.

Staff will report back to Council with a recommended concept design in summer 2008. Funding is allocated in the 2008 approved capital budget.

### **Interior Lobby Glazing**

To assist in providing the artist flexibility in the lobby artwork, including art integration, legacy equipment, feng shui issues, and interior glazing tendering, it is advisable to re-think some accepted features of this important interior space. The focus of this particular commentary is the colour scheme.

The approved design direction is to install vibrant colour to the interior glazing in the stairs and elevator space. This design direction was proposed and adopted because it was seen a way of 'heating-up' the uniqueness and visibility of the lobby space from the exterior and increasing the vibrancy of the space on the interior.

The colours are designed to be applied to the glazed panels on the elevator shafts of both, the public and the 'control' elevators, as well as the stair balusters and balcony edge guards. The glazed panels on the elevator shafts are to be a single pane of glass backed with a coloured, opaque emulsion. This colour was to be intense 'orange'. The stair baluster and guard colour was to be 'acid green'.

For several reasons, the intense colours specified to date may no longer be the best design solution. Firstly, a Request for Proposals for an integrated art installation that is likely to be a major feature of the lobby is about to be released. We will not have a clear idea about what this installation is to be for some time yet, but it would be prudent to allow the maximum impact for the art by 'simplifying' the lobby space. If too many intense colours jostle for attention, they may have a negative impact on the installation.

Secondly, this impressive, but spatially compressed space will contain a significant amount of information display terminals, video display boards and an optical 'water feature' installation all of which rely on a fairly accurate colour ambiance and surface colour rendering. The high likelihood of having the coloured, translucent balusters infuse the interior with green light may impact the video display terminal acuity.

The alternative of having the balusters as opaque, glazed panels (similar to the elevator shaft surfaces) is not recommended since having the stairs visually open and transparent is a critically important part of the lobby design - creating spaciousness and visual accessibility.

As a result of the above considerations, Cannon Design proposes and staff agree that the stair balusters and guards be revised to clear, transparent glass. Once the intense 'acid green' colour is removed from the environment, it will be prudent to also investigate the colour of the elevator shafts.

Staff recommend that translucent white glazing panels be considered for these surfaces as an alternate colour.

### **Riverfront Gathering (Phase 1): Telling the Stories of Richmond**

The 2006 Oval Precinct Art Plan and the Landscape Design identified the *Riverfront Gathering* area as a signature location for community gatherings of various sizes and events. Art works may be of various scales and cost. Additionally, the Art Plan recommends various strategies for educating the public about Richmond, at multiple locations within the precinct.

The Oval Precinct Art Plan 2008 Update recommends that the initial phase of *Riverfront Gathering* be directed towards an interpretive program to be integrated throughout the site, to be named *Telling the Stories of Richmond*. This art project will include:

- an interpretive program, *Telling the Stories of Richmond*, by a commissioned Canadian artist-in-residence familiar with the City and region;
- presentation opportunities to include documentary media and new media (web site; documentary video; electronic kiosk; lobby video screens; an on-site, multiple location cell phone audio tour guide; brochures; light projections; etc.) for both interior and exterior locations on site; and
- creation of an archive of historical and documentary information, to be available for future curated art exhibitions, and as source material for artists to develop films, books or other types of art projects.

Phase 1 funding is allocated in the 2008 approved capital budget.

### **Water Sky Viewpoint & Medicinal Gardens**

*Water Sky Viewpoint* and *Medicinal Gardens* are conceived as an opportunity to develop a quiet mediation place at the river's edge and to provide medicinal gardens with a focus on Musqueam and world culture healing traditions. These projects will be developed in collaboration with VANOC.

At this time, funding is allocated in the 2008 capital budget allocation for site infrastructure (gas, water, power) to prepare for future artworks at this location.

### **Site Furnishings**

*Site Furnishings and Lighting* is identified in the 2006 Art Plan as an art opportunity to create unique furnishings throughout the grounds, including lighting, tree grates, seating, garbage receptacles, and paving. Work needs to begin on this project immediately in order to keep pace with the Oval Precinct construction schedule, and have works in place prior to February 2010.

In particular, the *Site Furnishings* project will:

- create unique furnishings, human scaled touches and beautiful materials to add a richness of experience to the site;
- be an open competition directed to design teams from the Pacific West Coast region;
- consider integration with the site and building to avoid confusion of elements; and
- coordinate with the Oval construction schedule.

Funding is allocated in the 2008 approved capital budget.

### **Experiential Walks**

The Art Plan recommends programs to *Activate the Oval as Peoples' Space*. Staff recommend including an artist as part of the design team for the *Experiential Walks*, an environmental and landscape project throughout the Oval Precinct. This project will:

- suggest ways to create a narrative or evoke stories about local history, sustainability and water;
- explore layers of cultural history on the site; and
- discuss the environmental ecosystem of the Middle Arm.

Funding is allocated in the 2008 approved capital budget.

### **Telling the Stories of Richmond**

A principal goal of the Art Plan is to tell the many and varied stories and histories of Richmond through the public art within the Oval Precinct. This has been realized to various degrees in all of the works to date:

- Susan Point's *Buttress Runnels*, evoking the spirit of the natural life of the region as well as the tradition of aboriginal design and its relation to nature;
- Janet Echelman's *Water Sky Garden*, using large net sculptures that reference the fishing industry and aviation wind socks, and the water gardens and red walkways refer to both Chinese and Japanese garden traditions; and
- Buster Simpson's *Skate Blade* lights for the Hollybridge Canal bridge will be a permanent homage to the speed skating events for which the Oval was created.

Staff recommend that telling the stories of Richmond remain as a prominent theme for all the future artworks. In some works, the stories will be told in a subjective and interpretive form. However, to ensure that stories are also presented in a documentary and narrative format, specific projects are recommend for 2008, as described above, including:

- *Telling the Stories of Richmond*, to develop a rich archive of personal stories of the people, places and histories of Richmond;
- *Suspended Lobby Artwork & Legacy Plaza*, for art media to include glass, electronic media, photography, light, in addition to traditional sculptural media with the ability to tell the "story" through a linear path or series of installations/images; and

April 1, 2008

- 7 -

- *Experiential Walks*, to engage and educate the public in the delicate ecosystem of our island community.

The Oval Precinct Art Program provides an excellent opportunity to develop materials that will tell the stories of Richmond and be part of the Olympic legacy. Funding is allocated in the 2008 approved capital budget.

### Financial Impact

There is no financial impact. The proposed costs for the recommended projects are within the public art budget for the Oval Precinct as approved in the 2007 (\$1,776,250) and 2008 (\$1,771,650) Capital Budgets.

### Conclusion

Staff have reviewed the 2006 Art Plan and the Council referrals in the context of works completed or under way, and have identified opportunities to continue implementation of this extraordinary program for public art in the Oval Precinct. Committed funding to continue implementation of the plan is in place.

To achieve this vision, it is recommended that Council endorse the Oval Precinct Art Plan 2008 Update, and that staff:

- proceed with the artist proposal call for the redefined lobby art opportunity, *Lobby Suspended Artwork & Legacy Plaza*, with funds allocated in the 2008 Capital Budget for Oval Precinct Public Art;
- proceed with the artist proposal call for the redefined community art opportunity, *Telling the Stories of Richmond*, with funds allocated in the 2008 Capital Budget for Oval Precinct Public Art;
- proceed with the artist proposal call for the art opportunity, *Site Furnishings*, with funds allocated in the 2008 Capital Budget for Oval Precinct Public Art; and
- continue to work with VANOC to identify opportunities to collaborate in VANOC's First Nations art program.

To achieve flexibility and balance in the Oval lobby between the various building elements, informational displays and the *Suspended Lobby Artwork & Legacy Plaza*, staff recommend that the change in the colour of the glass in the lobby to clear glass on the lobby stairways and to translucent white on the elevator shafts be approved.



Eric Fiss  
Public Art Planner  
(4612)

EF:ef



Jane Fernyhough  
Manager, Culture & Heritage Services  
(4288)

Attachment 1

TABLE 1: OVAL PRECINCT ART PLAN 2008 UPDATE  
SUMMARY OF WORKS APPROVED, AND PROJECTS FOR 2008

Item	Adopted Oval Precinct Art Plan, 2006	Approved Projects 2006-2007	Oval Precinct Art Plan 2008 Update
<b>Oval Building</b>			
1A	Polycarbonate Skin - Luminosity and Colour	Project did not proceed	-
1B	Concrete Buttresses	<i>Buttress Runnels</i> , Complete	-
1C	Lobby Suspended Sculpture	-	<i>Lobby Suspended Artwork &amp; Legacy Plaza – combined opportunity</i>
<b>Oval Grounds</b>			
2A	Pedestrian Bridge	Combined project: <i>Water Sky Garden</i> Completion 2008	-
2B	Water Works		
2Ca	Water Sky Viewpoint	-	Discuss collaboration with VANOC
2Cb	Medicinal Gardens	-	
2D	Riverfront Gathering	-	<i>Telling the Stories of Richmond</i>
2E	Legacy Plaza Sculptural Work	-	Phase 1 in combination with Lobby Suspended Artwork, above
2F	Site Furnishings, Lighting	-	<i>Site Furnishings</i>
<b>Other Identified Opportunities</b>			
	Activate the Oval as People's Space	-	<i>Experiential Walk</i>
	Hollybridge Canal Bridge	<i>Skate Blades</i> , Completion 2008	-