

Decision Note

Title: Civic Art Collection – Urban Art Gallery

Date Prepared: June 4, 2025

Report To: **Committee of the Whole**

Councillor and Role: Councillor Sandy Hickman, Arts and Culture Advisory Committee

Ward: Ward 2

Decision/Direction Required:

To approve the City's Urban Art Gallery initiative on participating Water Street properties, located within the Downtown Pedestrian Mall footprint.

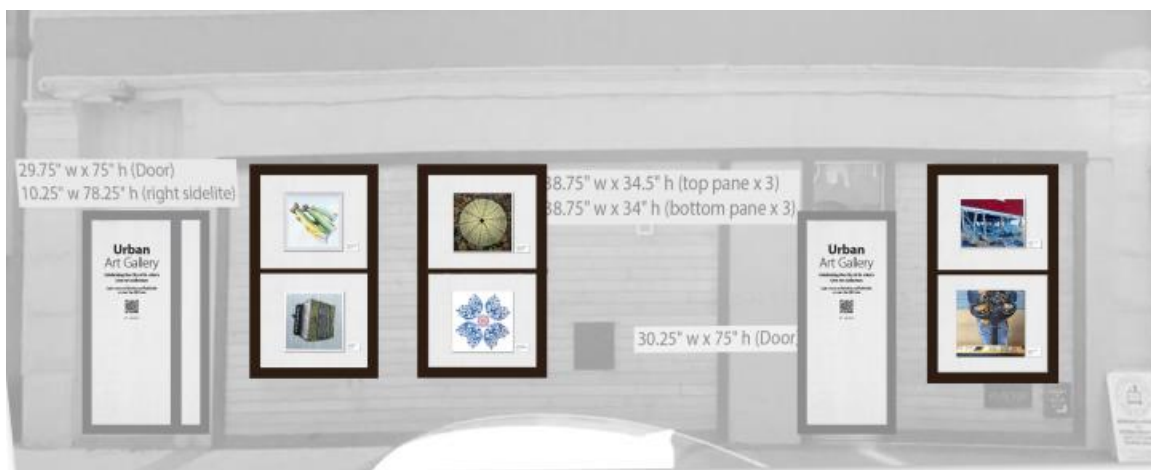
Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The Urban Art Gallery initiative will bring the City's Civic Art Collection to Water Street. City staff will oversee the installation of vinyl decals featuring images of City-owned artwork on the windows of select downtown buildings. This project will promote the City's Art Procurement Program and Civic Art Collection, enhance the aesthetic appeal of the properties, add visual interest, and contribute to an enriched downtown experience for both residents and visitors. A previous window decal project was successfully carried out on Water Street as part of the Great Fire of 1892 commemorative activities in 2017.

Sign By-Law

Pursuant to the St. John's Sign By-Law, the proposed decals are classified as temporary signs. A temporary sign means "a sign intended for a limited period of display for special events or functions".

Section 27 of the Sign By-Law states that the "approval of temporary signs, including their size, design, location and duration of placement, shall be at the discretion of Council." It is anticipated the Urban Art Gallery initiative will remain in place for at least 6 months. Decals are intended to cover the entire windows of the vacant buildings and information about the project will be placed on the doors. Below is an example of what is planned for 157 Water Street. A similar approach would be applied to other participating properties along Water Street.



In Heritage Areas, window signs “may be affixed or applied to the interior or exterior of a window and shall not occupy more than 50% of the window area in which they are affixed or applied.” Since the proposed window decals would cover more than 50% of the window area, Council approval is required under section 59 of the Sign By-Law.

Section 59 states, “Notwithstanding any provision contained herein, the Heritage Advisory Committee may recommend to Council the acceptance of certain non-conforming signs whose particular design or situation merit such consideration, and Council may accept or reject the recommendation.”

The Built Heritage Experts Panel reviewed the Urban Art Gallery proposal and recommended Council approve the installations for participating buildings on Water Street. Staff agree with this recommendation.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Budgeted as part of Clean St John’s initiative.
2. Partners or Interested Parties: Arts and Culture Advisory Committee, Destination St. John’s, Downtown St. John’s
3. Is this a New Plan or Strategy: Yes

If yes, are there recommendations or actions that require progress reporting? No

If yes, how will progress be reported? (e.g.: through the strategic plan, through Cascade, annual update to Council, etc.)

4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Connected City: Develop and deliver programs, services and public spaces that build safe, healthy and vibrant communities.

A Connected City: Increase and improve opportunities for residents to connect with each other and the City.

5. Alignment with Adopted Plans: Planning for a Creative Future: The City of St. John's Municipal Arts Plan; St. John's Sign By-Law.
6. Accessibility and Inclusion: N/A
7. Legal or Policy Implications: N/A
8. Privacy Implications: N/A
9. Engagement and Communications Considerations: The City of St. John's will use various communications and outreach to promote the initiative.
10. Human Resource Implications: N/A
11. Procurement Implications: N/A
12. Information Technology Implications: N/A
13. Information Management Implications: N/A
14. Other Implications: N/A

Conclusion/Next Steps: This initiative will help to engage more residents and visitors with the Civic Art Collection and the artists whose work make it up, while enhancing the Water St. streetscape. Installation is set to take place before the end of June.

Recommendation:

That Council approve the Urban Art Gallery initiative on participating Water Street properties, as proposed.

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Approved by: Erin Skinner, Manager of Tourism, Culture & Business Development