

Inspiring Thoughtfulness, Creativity, and Togetherness in Communities: The Role of Public Art Master Plans in Facilitating Placemaking

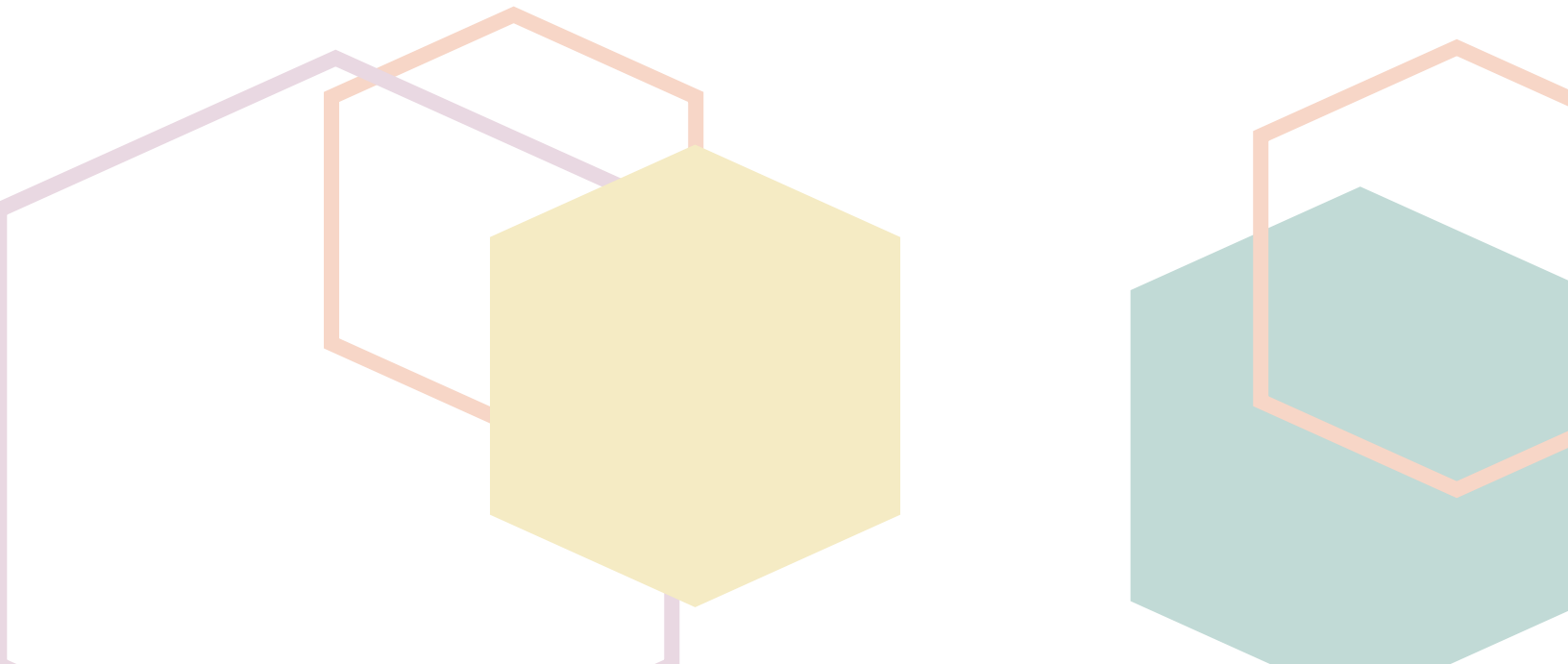
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Executive Summary

Introduction

Public spaces are important components of communities and can be improved through placemaking. Placemaking refers to improving public spaces so they can better reflect the values and ideas of communities. This contributes to the creation of a shared community identity and a strengthened sense of place. The integration of public art into a space represents one approach to placemaking. The purpose of this report is to examine the relationship between placemaking and public art, as well as the importance of public art policies. To accomplish this, the public art master plans of four Ontario municipalities were selected and analyzed in order to identify the critical elements and characteristics which could ultimately be used to support placemaking. This information was used to develop a set of recommendations for the City of Peterborough as the City is working to update current public art practices integrate more public art into the City. Through the creation of a public art master plan that adequately plans for public art and placemaking, the City of Peterborough can increase public art while contributing to placemaking.

Methodology

A qualitative, textual approach was used to complete this research. A case study analysis was completed in order to select the municipalities that would be used for this research. The municipalities were selected based on their demographic profiles as well as the comprehensiveness of their public art master plan. The cities of Kingston, Burlington, Hamilton, and Mississauga were ultimately selected as case studies for this research.

The second method used to complete this research was a document analysis. The following public art master plans were included in this research:

- Kingston Public Art Master Plan (2014-2019)
- Mississauga Public Art Master Plan (2016)
- Burlington Public Art Master Plan Update (2019-2028)
- Hamilton Public Art Master Plan (2016)

A two-prong approach was used for this analysis, as both the content and approach to placemaking of each of the public art master plans were analyzed and compared. First, the analysis methods used by Johnathan Hollinger in “Public Art Master Planning for Municipal Governments: Core Components and Common Practices,” was used as a precedent. The common elements of each of the four public art master plans were identified and compared in order to context regarding the required content of a public art master plan. Second, the “Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places” from *Project for Public Spaces* were used to examine the ways in which the four municipalities incorporated placemaking principles into their public art master plans. This two-prong approach to the document analysis allowed for

the resulting recommendations for the City of Peterborough to pertain to both the content of public art master plans as well as strategies for incorporating placemaking principles.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the content of the public art master plans, the key ideas, themes, and sections of each plan were summarized separately. All of the plans were then compared based on their content. The key categories of purpose of the plan, definition of public art provided by the plan, the role of placemaking, public engagement, site selection processes, conservation and maintenance strategies, examples of local public art, and examples of public art from other locations were examined and compared in order to inform recommendations regarding public art master plan content.

The plans were then examined through the lens of the “Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places” from *Project for Public Spaces*. The plans were examined based on their alignment with the following principles:

- The Community is the Expert
- Create a Place, Not a Design
- Look for Partners
- You Can See A Lot Just by Observing
- Have a Vision
- Experiment: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
- Triangulate
- They Always Say It Can't Be Done
- Form Supports Function
- Money Is Not the Issue
- You Are Never Finished

These principles were used to determine how well each of the four public art master plans incorporated elements of placemaking. The results of this analysis were used to inform recommendations regarding incorporating placemaking into public art master plans.

Recommendations

Recommendation: Provide a strong and clear definition of public art and public space

Recommendation: Provide a clear purpose and vision for the plan.

Recommendation: Clearly identify and describe the benefits of public art

Recommendation: Ensure transparency across the entire public art selection and installation process.

Recommendation: Provide opportunities for frequent and meaningful public participation throughout the creation of the public art master plan as well as the public art selection process.

Recommendation: Establish a set of site selection criteria used to locate public art projects.

Recommendation: Complete regular updates to the public art master plan.

Recommendation: Include a maintenance plan to ensure public art is protected and conserved over the long term

Recommendation: Utilize the public art master plans of Kingston, Burlington, Hamilton, and Mississauga as precedents for the creation of a public art master plan

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to provide the City of Peterborough with guidance regarding the creation of a public art master plan. The plans of the cities of Kingston, Burlington, Hamilton, and Mississauga were examined and found to be excellent precedents for the City of Peterborough to follow. Both the content and approaches to placemaking of each of the plans were examined and used to create recommendations for the City of Peterborough. Peterborough can learn from the content and approaches to placemaking of the public art master plans examined in this research. With the creation of a robust public art master plan, the City of Peterborough can successfully achieve their goal of increasing the amount of public art in the City while contributing to placemaking.