



**2013 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
Category Worksheet**

**PARTNERSHIPS**

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**Name of Local Government: City of Castlegar**

**Project/Program Title: Castlegar Sculpturewalk**

**Project Summary Paragraph**

Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk is an exciting example of how the Creative Economy can be harnessed to benefit the community's general economy. In 2011, the City partnered with Columbia Basin Trust to provide an organizational framework including an Executive Director for Castlegar Sculpturewalk. Sculpturewalk has rapidly become one of the premiere arts events in BC, showcasing over thirty outdoor sculptures from both local and international artists in a self-guided tour through Castlegar's downtown core. Residents and visitors are encouraged to vote for their favourite sculpture via ballot - the People's Choice sculpture is then purchased by the City of Castlegar for its permanent collection.

The benefit to the community within this short time has been remarkable: downtown foot traffic has increased dramatically, new businesses are springing up in the downtown, and tourists are flocking to Castlegar to take the "Sculpturewalk".

**Project Analysis**

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked. Remember to include measurable results whenever possible.

**1. OBJECTIVE**

Please explain the decision-making and thought process behind your decision to take on this initiative

The City of Castlegar was originally approached by a local artist (Pat Field) who had shown his work in the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Sculpturewalk. This program was created to revitalize their downtown core, which was under-utilized, economically depressed, and was becoming an eyesore.

The City of Castlegar recognized the similarity in the two communities and the benefits that such a project could offer, and researched the feasibility of taking on such an initiative. We realized that that Kootenays was unique in the stable of high-level artistic talent available, and by modeling the Sioux Falls program, and partnering with them, we could take on this initiative. Initially led by a dedicated team of volunteers, with City of Castlegar support, this project rapidly took off.

Please see GOALS (below) for our full objectives.

## 2. CHALLENGES

Please provide examples of challenges you faced in taking on this program/project and how you overcame them.

There were many challenges including:

1) Political: funding of public art, particularly during difficult economic times, can be a hard sell. We realized that the Sculpturewalk project was part of a bigger picture – i.e. funding the Castlegar Creative Economy. This project would require community buy-in and as such we would need to present it in a way that made it clear the benefits, both economically and socially were enhanced through this project. Quality of life can be hard to quantify, but studies have shown that community with multiple strengths, including a strong focus on the arts, leads to a vital and vibrant community. Most importantly we politically placed the project as part of the City's efforts to diversify its economy away from its historic one-industry (pulp) economy.

2) Organization: the Sculpturewalk program needs to become financially self-supporting with year round staffing to secure a stable enterprise which would continue to attract financial support and community support. As such, we successfully approached the Columbia Basin Trust, a regional funding body, for funding (see Sustainability, below).

## 3. BENEFITS

Please provide examples of how this program/project benefited the community.

Sculpture Walk has benefited Castlegar's aging downtown by providing a very strong attractant for visitors and residents alike to walk through our downtown and in so doing, visit the businesses there.

Since Sculpturewalk has been underway, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of new businesses that have sprung up in the previously under-utilized downtown. Opposite the Sculpturewalk offices there is a hotel which has been closed for many years – in 2012 this was purchased and is currently being renovated (their restaurant has already opened). There is anecdotal evidence that walk in business in the old downtown has increased by 30% within these few years. Foot traffic has increased noticeably.

- the number of applicants from artists has increased app. 15% per year
- the number of ballots received from public voting has increased app. 10% per year
- the number of sponsorships has increased app. 7% per year
- the number of purchases has increased app. 5% per year
- the number of sculptures leased has increased app. 10% each year

We are currently exploring a partnership with Selkirk College to obtain a detailed evaluation study and matrix.

## 4. INNOVATION

Tell us why you consider this project/program to be an innovative and/or creative initiative.

It is highly unusual for a city of Castlegar's size (app. 7,800 people) to take on a project of such scale and scope. Showcasing over thirty outdoor sculptures (from both regional and international artists) on a yearly rotating basis is a huge project, and would usually be something initiated by larger urban centres such as Vancouver. With this in mind, it is remarkable that Castlegar Sculpturewalk has, in fact, become one of the largest outdoor galleries of public art within BC, if not Canada.

## 5. GOALS

What did you set out to accomplish with the program/project? How effectively did you meet your goals?

We had several goals for this project:

- to help diversify the local economy by engaging the creative economy with the traditional downtown retail economy
- develop a unique identity for the City of Castlegar (i.e. *The Sculpture Capital of Canada*)
- to encourage tourism
- to attract investment opportunities by attracting mobile professionals to settle, more importantly, stay in the community
- to support the revitalization of the downtown core, increasing densification and beautification
- to support regional artists, giving them a place to display and sell/lease their work
- to support citizen engagement and promote community-building through an increase in community pride
- to encourage partnership between businesses, cultural providers, and communities within the West Kootenay region

We have effectively met and/or are meeting all of these goals. Castlegar has never had the reputation of being an arts hub, yet with the success of Sculpturewalk this is exactly what has taken place: our reputation as an arts-supporter and indeed an arts *innovator* has grown by leaps and bounds. We have been approached by other cities in the region (Nelson, Rossland and Trail) wishing to partner with us and increase their own public art – which was also one of our initial goals (partnering with other communities and cultural institutions in the region). Kootenay Rockies Tourism has recognized our potential and provided us with funding in addition to promotion. Tourists are earmarking Castlegar for a special visit, just to see Sculpturewalk.

We have a core group of regional artists who apply to Sculpturewalk each year, and each year the reach and scope of our applications is growing: this year we shipped in a sculpture from Quebec, and the artist came out for the opening, too!

Most importantly of all, our community is changing for the better. Downtown revitalization is something that we can see in front of our very eyes – community pride in this project and in the city has increased dramatically.

## 6. SUSTAINABILITY

What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of this initiative? (e.g. *staff time, resources, financial*)

The City of Castlegar has established an annual budget of \$25,000 and has also provided significant staff support for sculpture placement and site preparation. The City has also partnered with the Columbia Basin Trust, a regional funding body, to support this initiative on the basis that it will stimulate the Castlegar Creative Economy, from both a community and tourism perspective. The Columbia Basin Trust committed \$60,000/year to the City to fund this project, which enabled the hiring of an Executive Director in 2011.

The City of Castlegar's Public Works department has also committed to this program, providing invaluable work towards the installation and takedown of the sculptures (i.e. pedestal construction, site preparation, staff time, etc.).

## 7. TRANSFERABILITY

How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

Castlegar Sculpturewalk itself was originally based on a model begun in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. We solicit applications from artists locally, nationally and internationally. Local and national artists deliver their work to the program (travel expenses are reimbursed), while our partnership agree with Sioux Falls enables us to ship approximately 10 sculptures up from US artists for display each year (via delivery truck), while at the same time bringing down Canadian works from our program for display in the Sioux Falls Sculpturewalk.

This partnership enables us to access an expanse of new work from new artists each year,

and gives the Canadian artists exposure (and a selling opportunity) for their work here and in the United States.

Based on this model, the Sculpturewalk program is transferable to other local governments. As an example, in 2013 the City of Nelson (app. 35 minutes from Castlegar) approached Sculpturewalk, wishing to increase public art within their downtown. Castlegar Sculpturewalk sold one sculpture and leased five to the City of Nelson, an ongoing relationship which will be continued each year (the leased sculptures will be replaced with new sculptures each year in a rotating gallery). Similar agreements with other cities in the region (Rossland and Trail) are currently being discussed.

In these partnerships, Castlegar Sculpturewalk will act as the overall hub for the sculptures and the program, and take an administration fee as such.

## 8. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

We would be happy to discuss with other cities the administration and project management models behind Sculpturewalk. Ideally, we would consider partnership opportunities with other BC municipalities (with Castlegar Sculpturewalk acting as the overall hub), rather than separate Sculpturewalks starting within the region.

## 9. TELL US MORE

Please share any other information you think may help us better understand your submission.

Our community is excited about SculptureWalk. And while the program offers many tangible benefits to our economy, it equally adds to the intangible quality of life enjoyed by our residents and businesses. It offers exposure to the creative talents of regional and international artists. It empowers our residents to pick and choose which piece they want Council to add to the City's permanent collection. They are proud to be leading the way in supporting our creative artists and the creative economy. Businesses can solicit new employees with the promise of not only a clean and safe community but one that is reaching beyond the traditional one industry communities. We believe that the intangible benefits are at least equal to, if not stronger than the direct economic spinoffs from this project. It is true community building from all perspectives one that is helping our community redefine itself. We invite you to view a brief video on Sculpturewalk on You Tube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN6ucpEJBgc>

## 10. PARTNERS

a.) Please list all the partners involved in this initiative. (no word limit)

- 1) Columbia Basin Trust
- 2) Regional District of Central Kootenay
- 3) Province of British Columbia
- 4) BC Gaming
- 5) Kootenay Rockies Tourism
- 6) Black Press/Castlegar News
- 7) Mountain FM/103.5 The Bridge
- 8) The Kootenay Gallery of Art, History & Science

9) App. 30 local businesses, organizations and individuals who sponsor and/or lease sculptures each year – See attached pdf on local sponsors including leasees.

b.) Why did you choose to work with this/these particular partner(s)?

The Columbia Basin Trust, RDCK, Province of British Columbia, BC Gaming and Kootenay Rockies Tourism all provide granting funds.

Black Press/Castlegar News and Mountain FM/103.5 The Bridge are Castlegar Sculpturewalk's Media Partners and provide approximately \$30,000 of in-kind media coverage per year.

The Kootenay Gallery of Art hosts our Opening Gala each year and also provides promotional services for us (an reciprocal agreement).

We have received a great deal of support from local businesses, organizations and individuals for Sculpturewalk: sculpture sponsorships are available for \$1000/year, and sculpture yearly leases are available for between \$1500-\$3000/year. We also sell approximately 5 sculptures per year.

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