

Public Art Fact Sheet

Definitions

Public Art: Publicly accessible original art that enriches the city as it evokes meaning in the public realm. It can be of a variety of forms and takes into consideration the site, its location and context, and the audience. Public art may possess functional as well as aesthetic qualities; it may be integrated in its site or discrete. Artists may work in partnership with other design professionals or members of the community, however, the artist is directly involved in the concept, design, or creation. Performances, installations, events and other temporary expressions are included in this definition.

Note: Art in public places refers to any art placed in public (typically visual art forms, such as murals or sculptures) without regard to the context of its setting, whereas public art typically considers the context of its site, its audience, and the various site stakeholders (owners, neighbors, etc.).

Public Places: All privately or publicly owned spaces, indoors or outdoors, which are generally accessible (physically or visually) to the public free of charge. Public spaces should be accessible to the public a minimum of 12, and preferably up to 18, hours a day. Also referred to as the public realm.

Design: the act of giving visual form to ideas or concepts, usually pertaining to spatial relationships and compositions. Design utilizes aesthetic judgment, creativity, balance, artistic ability and communications.

Note: A design professional is an individual professionally trained in design, such as architecture, landscape architecture, art, graphics, urban design, and planning; also graphic, industrial, interior, and clothing design.

Design team collaboration: Projects created through the co-equal cooperative design efforts of design professionals, such as artists, architects, and landscape architects.

Public Improvement Project: Any construction, remodeling or renovation of a public building, roadway, school or other facility. A construction or capital improvement project paid for wholly or in part by the state, county or city to build, rebuild or

improve any decorative or commemorative structure, park, parking facility or any building.

Types of Projects Covered by This Framework

- Permanent works of art, such as murals, mosaics, sculptures, memorials, etc.
- Temporary installations and events, such as sidewalk displays, parades, festivals, etc.
- Integrated artworks, such as artist-designed stairs, railings, windows, floors, etc.
- Design teams, including efforts to engage artists early on in the planning and design of public improvements.

Note: The focus of this document is publicly funded public art (as opposed to privately funded art on private property).

National Overview

There are over 300 public art programs nationally, primarily consisting of percent-for-art programs within state, county or city governments, or housed within public agencies such as redevelopment authorities, libraries or transit agencies. Percent for art programs, in which a percentage of a capital budget is set aside for public art, began in Philadelphia in 1959. During the 80s and 90s they grew in numbers (the city of Des Moines is one of the most recent cities to adopt an ordinance, in 2001).

Most of these programs were set up to commission permanent visual art forms, such as sculptures, murals, or decorative elements as part of public improvement or civic construction projects. Memorials and monuments are found throughout the country, including dozens in the nation's capital. Most federally funded public art is handled through the General Services Administration.

Several non-profit organizations sponsor public art activities, offer educational programs, and support temporary events and installations. Several dozen colleges and universities have art on campus

programs, and a few host public art courses or degree programs for artists or administrators seeking to enter the field. Several art museums and independent non-profits have sculpture parks or gardens, or manage art programs in the community.

In addition, many corporations, businesses and places of worship have public art collections, including artist-designed plazas and courtyards accessible to the general public.

Funding Options

- **Percent for art:** a portion—typically between .5 - 2%—of the capital budget for building construction or remodeling, or infrastructure improvement, allocated for art; use of funds can include design fees, fabrication, installation, conservation, and other associated costs. Typically events, educational programs, and administrative expenses are not allowable expenses. The policy directing percent funding usually takes the form of a mandatory ordinance, requiring participation by all departments; yet some are voluntary, such as the one at the State of Minnesota.
 - **Direct allocation or appropriation:** funds set aside for public art out of the capital budget or general fund determined annually or biannually; use of funds can vary, depending on source and pre-determined restrictions, including administration, education, events, and promotion.
 - **Department allocation:** funds set aside by operating departments for projects situated within their jurisdiction; typically public works, parks, and community services.
 - **Hotel/motel tax:** funds allocated from annual revenues; typically divided among several program areas. If allowed, funds may be used for activities serving tourism, cultural events, beautification efforts, performance events, etc.
 - **Sales tax:** A portion of revenues collected from sales tax allocated to commissioned artworks, events, program management, etc.
 - **Use tax:** A portion of taxes collected from out-of-
- state purchases; used to establish trust funds, commission artworks, events, etc. Other tax strategies may be utilized by county and municipal governments, usually through permission obtained from the state legislature.
 - **Enterprise funds:** a percentage of fees paid by public utilities (water, sewer, drains, electricity, storm water, etc.) used for public art activities. These funds usually operate under narrow public purpose clauses that dictate how capital bond funds can be spent.
 - **Development fees:** All development initiatives (including projects funded by the city or the city in partnership with developers) are required to allocate a percentage to a public art component or “project art plan.” All hard and soft costs related to the development of the project are subject to an agreement with the city’s development agency, with program management typically overseen by the city’s public art program.
 - **Grants and Gifts:** Contributions made to public agencies by foundations, corporations, individuals, etc. including donations or in-kind gifts of materials, existing artwork, or private collections (art or historical artifacts). Occasionally federal or state grants are available to support public art or emergency repairs or conservation efforts.
 - **Corporate Sponsorships:** In addition to donations, some corporations utilize sponsorship strategies to gain public relations benefits from their support of a public art effort; these range in type and size, and are usually open to negotiation with the recipient.
 - **Benefit Events or Sales:** Fundraising activities which allow donations to be made, or sales or auctioning of items to generate support for specific causes. Recent examples include the “Cows on Parade” project in Chicago or the Snoopy statues auctioned to benefit a Charles Shultz memorial in St. Paul.
 - **Cultural Trust Fund:** A fund established through the donation of private land or property, in most cases allowing the building to remain in private hands. Funds acquired from the interest earned from

the donated land (as the land value appreciates) may be used by the city to finance arts or cultural initiatives. Pittsburgh's Cultural Trust was established by the Hines Corporation using its downtown property.

Governance

Public art programs are typically governed under the auspices of a state, county or municipal government, and therefore are structured to operate effectively within those systems according to rules and regulations established by those entities. In several instances, public art programs are managed for government entities by private non-profit corporations with a governance system mutually agreed upon; this is effective in serving government agencies lacking departments of cultural affairs or arts staff.

Public art programs are typically housed within larger departments of cultural affairs, or arts commissions, and therefore follow policies and procedures established by the operating department or agency. Arts Commissions usually include volunteer commissioners (from 9 to 21 members) and include several committees (Executive Committee, Community Arts Programming, Public Art Committee, Communications and Education, etc.) Terms range from staggered 2-3 years with two or three terms allowed. Programs follow plans established by the Commission; major initiatives often require additional committees for implementation.

Committee/Commission members are usually composed of mayoral or council/commissioner appointees, a designee of the City/County Manager, plus appointees from a Board of Supervisors or Arts Commission (or both). Selection committees assembled to review submissions for projects often include a mix of expertise pertaining to art, design, fabrication, conservation, and community. Art selection committees should develop criteria which they will use to select artists and designs. These may include excellence and appropriateness, innovation of design as it relates to the site, designer's/artist's ability to successfully complete project, willingness to communicate with community and appropriateness or accuracy of the proposed budget.

Properly organized and executed public art and design programs require a commitment of time, energy and enthusiasm from all participants to make them successful. Successful projects have demonstrated that individuals directly involved in or affected by the project should be kept informed during all phases of the project. In all instances, participants should seek the highest standards of excellence. For planning purposes, programs are often conducted in the following manner:

Preliminary Planning Phase

- Appoint qualified members to the committee;
- Determine needs;
- Obtain facts;
- Implement program.

Project Planning Phase

- Determine the selection process, approve a program call-for-entries and rules;
- Determine the project budget and estimated costs to administer the program;
- Determine design award and fees;
- Determine the project time line and procedures for implementing the program;
- Review and make recommendations to appropriate principals involved in the project.

Management

Administration of percent-for-art programs usually involves both paid staff and volunteers engaged in a variety of activities. In most cases at least one full-time public art program director oversees the program and works with various committees to implement objectives annually. As staff increases in size, project managers are added to oversee specific large-scale or long-term efforts. Support staff is typically provided by the host agency (the department of cultural affairs, the mayor's office, community services office, etc.), including access to offices, copier, supplies, etc.

Many public art programs contract for services from outside vendors, including art consultants, conservators, marketing/public relations firms,

writers/researchers, photographers, and planners. Some contract with non-profit agencies to provide management services for their public art programs. Some non-profits are established specifically for this purpose, however independent organizations also provide such management services as special programs, with the advantage of being able to secure private funding from non-governmental sources to augment budget.

Managing public art programs involves establishing and maintaining effective relationships with various public agencies and stakeholder groups, such as public works, street maintenance, the city attorney, arts organizations, artists, and many others. Effective management may be accomplished by either a staff person familiar with the bureaucracy, or an outside consultant with the freedom to move easily between the public and private sectors. In either case, changes in personnel, leadership, and fund allocations can affect the long-term success of any program.

Maintenance

Public art collections are growing nationally and so are the costs of maintaining them, from prevention to emergency repairs. Funding sources for maintenance vary from capital budgets and general funds to state heritage preservation funds, donations and, in one case, a fine arts insurance policy. The average amount of funds spent annually on maintenance or conservation ranges from \$20-85,000. Common strategies for funding maintenance include agency set-aside, either from the capital budget (up to 15-20% of the art allocation) or from general funds on an as-needed basis.

In many cases, the “owner-agency” is contractually obligated for maintenance and conservation. The responsibility for finding funds for maintenance and repairs is thus transferred from the art agency to the city or county department on whose property the artwork is located. However, some feel these agencies should not be in charge of maintaining artworks, since they don’t have the expertise and will inevitably prioritize the expense lower than other projects. In most cases, the arts agency is in charge, making it easier to guarantee the expanding collection will be taken care of.

Maintenance budgets naturally increase as more artworks are commissioned, however some public art programs have been scaled back due to the economic recession. The need to calculate the conservation and maintenance requirements prior to entering into contracts for fabrication and installation of individual artworks is becoming increasingly urgent to ensure that resources will be available. Financial hardship has forced many programs to limit their expectations of how long a project can reasonably last and establish clearer deaccessioning criteria. Some works will be moved into storage while future restoration funds are sought, and some will require disposal. Indeed, if the cost to repair or replace is beyond the reach of current budgets, and outside help does not materialize, it makes sense to consider removing problem works. These are hard facts that most public art programs have to deal with sooner or later.

Local Public Art Infrastructure

Public agencies

- The State of Minnesota adopted their percent-for-art program in 1984, managed by the Minnesota State Arts Board. Over 100 projects have been completed.
- Hennepin County adopted a percent-for-art allocation for libraries in 2001. Several county departments, such as Hennepin County Medical Center, maintain art collections, and art is included in buildings such as the Government Center, where a community-access gallery space is located.
- The City of Minneapolis established their Art in Public Places program in 1989, including a Neighborhood Gateways program. In 2001, a full-time program coordinator was hired. The City has over 50 works in their collection.
- The Minneapolis Public Library Board established a policy on Art in Public Libraries in 1991 that specifies a percentage of capital budgets for art.
- The University of Minnesota has an Art on Campus program established in 1988, with a full-time staff person since 1999.

- Metro Transit established its first public art program as part of the Hiawatha Light Rail project, with a full-time program director. The Hiawatha line is expected to be operational in 2004.
- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board established public art policies in 1999. The Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is a collaboration with the Walker Art Center.
- Cities throughout Hennepin County have recently begun commissioning art for public places or inviting artists to participate in public improvement projects. St. Louis Park and Hopkins, among others, have been actively developing initiatives.

Private Sector

- Local corporations have commissioned publicly accessible art as part of their building projects, including the Pillsbury Center, Opus Corporation, American Express, IDS, US Bancorp, Reliastar, and Target Stores.
- Several major corporations have sculpture parks or plazas, or major art collections on public display, including General Mills, Honeywell, US Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, and 3M.

Non-Profits and Foundations

- Several local art museums display works outdoors, where they are freely accessible to the public, including the Walker Art Center, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the Weisman Art Museum.
- Several non-profit sculpture parks can be found in the region, including Caponi Art Park (Eagan), Kirchbak Sculpture Garden (Richfield), Franconia Sculpture Park (Shafer), Western Sculpture Park (St. Paul), and the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.
- The Downtown Council of Minneapolis oversees the Holidazzle parade every winter and recently took over management of the Aquatennial festival, which includes sand sculpture competitions and milk carton boat races.
- Public art courses and summer institutes are hosted by local college and universities, including the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and the University of Minnesota. The University of St. Thomas commissioned several outdoor works for

their St. Paul campus and a monumental ceiling fresco for their Minneapolis headquarters.

- Non-profits, including FORECAST Public Artworks, Intermedia Arts, Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre, Barebones Productions, Hijack, Art Tree, Creative Energy Murals, COMPAS, Public Art Saint Paul, and others provide public art programming, training for artists, or facilitation services to the community.
- Local foundations have provided support for public art activities over the past two decades, including McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Bush Foundation, and others. Each funder has its own priorities in terms of public art, such as planning, support for emerging artists, and community involvement.
- Several non-profit cultural facilities have commissioned artists to create publicly accessible art for their buildings, including Open Book, Playwright's Center, the Science Museum of Minnesota, Minnesota Children's Museum, Intermedia Arts, and Jungle Theater.

Community and Neighborhood Groups

- Several community groups and neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis have become proactive regarding developing their identity as a public art destination.
- Murals proliferate along Lake Street and Franklin Avenue in south Minneapolis.
- The Bloomington Lake Area Business Council is developing a public art plan to improve its visibility as part of proposed streetscape improvements.
- The Uptown Association has sponsored the annual Uptown Art Fair, which attracts 300,000 visitors and over 500 artists.
- Several Minneapolis neighborhoods have utilized Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds to pay for art projects connected with public safety, education or economic development initiatives.
- The Phillips Neighborhood in South Minneapolis commissioned a plan for a Youth Arts Mentorship program to engage young people in public art efforts throughout the neighborhood.

- The Friends of the Arts in St. Louis Park is a group of volunteers helping the city establish arts efforts and review projects planned for the community.
- The Center for Neighborhoods has begun initiating public art policy and framework development and engaging broad community input as a service to policy-makers (for which this document is an outcome).
- Numerous neighborhood festivals take place annually, including Juneteenth, Powderhorn Festival of the Arts, Greenway Festival of Art, Wheels As Art, Lake Street Cultural Festival, Art-a-Whirl, and others.

Individual Artists

- There are an estimated 1,000 artists in the metro area who have participated in public art or community-based projects of one kind or another in the past few years. Many of these artists can be found on data bases or in slide registries at the Minnesota State Arts Board, FORECAST Public Artworks, Women's Art Registry of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.
- A recent trend in public art is the collaboration of artists, including participants from diverse disciplines and backgrounds. From informal art collectives to performing art troupes, artists have found ways to reach audiences directly by utilizing public spaces as venues for temporary events or installations.

Fabricators and Suppliers

- There are several companies in the region serving artists working in public, including fabricators, scene shops, custom woodworking studios, glass-blowing studios, and foundries. Some specialize in public art or custom architectural work.
- Material suppliers are plentiful in the region including scrap metal yards, lumber yards, glass retailers, ceramic supply warehouses, and acrylic retailers.

Consultants and Conservators

- There are a small number of locally based consultants specializing in the public art field, including FORECAST Public Artworks, Public Art Saint Paul, Don McNeil, and others. Each has its own set of skills and special assets. National consultants are available, however the cost for their services are usually higher.
- There are a few individuals and small firms specializing in conservation and repairs for public art, primarily outdoor sculpture, including Museum Services and Kristin Cheronis. National consultants and service providers are available, usually at higher rates.