

**METRO
NASHVILLE**

**PUBLIC ART
COMMUNITY
INVESTMENT
PLAN**

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

The *Public Art Community Investment Plan* signals an important new direction for public art in Nashville, advancing the vision that **every Nashvillian experiences a creative city**. This plan is Nashville's plan, driven by Nashville's vision for its future.

With a clear focus on **cultural participation and community vitality**, the plan offers an ambitious agenda for carrying forward the goals of the *NashvilleNext* comprehensive plan and of *Crafting a Creative City*, the Metro Arts strategic plan.

With its emphasis on **promoting equity**, the plan aligns Metro Public Art with the newest thinking about public art funding and program design. It is the first local government public art plan anywhere with this focus.

And with an aspiration to **strengthen the public art ecosystem**—the networks of artists, organizations and communities that create public art—the plan looks to catalyze a robust, sustainable system for public art for many years to come.

The *Public Art Community Investment Plan* demonstrates how Metro Public Art must **look beyond** its current project models, operations and funding structure in order to achieve this new vision.



Percent for Art. Christian Moeller's *Stix* is a gateway to downtown Nashville and landmark at the Korean Veterans Boulevard and 8th Avenue roundabout.

Key plan components

- Casemaking for new directions in public art, expanding beyond traditional site-based works.
- An inventory of new tools for working with artists and developing projects.
- New programs that build the capacity of artists, communities and organizations to sustain this approach to public art.
- Recommendations for the funding, staffing and governance necessary to realize this new direction.
- Outlines of new approaches to collaborating with key departments in Metro Nashville government.

VALUES

Metro Public Art is driven by three core values. Together, they are a foundation for everything the program does.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO EQUITY

Metro Public Art embraces the Metro Arts cultural equity statement, acknowledging that everyone has a right to cultural expression and that the program must take proactive steps to ensure that as many people as possible have meaningful engagements with public art.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO ARTISTS

Metro Public Art recognizes public art practice as a unique cultural and economic endeavor that artists consciously choose. The program will address barriers to access and agency that currently exist for artists and focus resources on supporting artists who wish to engage in this practice.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE PUBLIC REALM

Metro Public Art focuses its efforts on shared spaces that are open to everyone and that are dedicated to the community's vision, identity and purposes.



Partnerships and Issue-Specific Projects. Mural Arts Philadelphia's longstanding relationship with Graterford State Prison has provided opportunities for artists to develop projects related to the criminal justice system.



Public Art Residency. Artist Lonnie Holley led a youth workshop in the process of developing new sculptures for Edmonson Park.

VISION

This Plan explores what it would mean for Metro Public Art to address the overarching vision that all Nashvillians can participate in a creative life and that the arts should drive a more vibrant and equitable community.

Recognizing the unique position of public art within the broader arts and culture field, the plan reinforces that:

Every Nashvillian experiences a creative city

This vision reflects the idea that public art should be something that people experience every day in the city, as they go about their routines and as they participate in community activity and civic conversations.



Temporary Art Exhibitions. Jim Campbell's *Scattered Light* was exhibited in St. Paul, Minnesota at the Northern Spark overnight art festival in 2011.

GOALS

Metro Public Art believes that four goals will help achieve this vision.



Artist-led Civic Engagement. The Rebar Group artist collaborative led a Washington, D.C., neighborhood in creating a temporary art space from an underused traffic lane.



Co-creation with Community. *Our Town*, by artist Bryce McCloud, invited people to make self-portraits at more than 40 events around Nashville and created an exhibition in the Main Library downtown.

STRONGER PUBLIC ART ECOSYSTEM

Means that there should be a robust network of individuals, businesses and organizations who have the skill sets to be involved with creating and producing public art. This includes artists, arts administrators, curators, fabricators, designers, developers, educators and critics—as well as the institutions they work for, such as businesses, arts organizations, public agencies and other organizations that collaborate on art projects.

DEEPER CIVIC AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

Means that the public spaces and public life of the city become opportunities for fostering cultural participation, and through that participation, people can develop a broader civic awareness and participate more fully in civic conversations.

VIBRANT, CREATIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

Means that neighborhoods should have an expressive identity that reflects their culture, history and spirit; embraces and empowers the creativity of people in the neighborhood; and fosters stronger civic connection and social capital.

VITAL PUBLIC REALM

Means that the public features of the city—whether ordinary spaces like streets, community spaces like libraries or civic spaces like courthouses—transcend the services they provide. A vital public realm is valued for being a place that feels accessible to everyone and shared by all, for its aesthetics and its function in equal measure, and for the meaning it expresses about a community's identity and purpose.

NEW APPROACHES

This Plan outlines dynamic new tools that will expand Metro Public Art's work beyond the traditional paradigm of site-based artworks commissioned in conjunction with Metro's capital projects.



Public Art in Private Development. Deirdre Saunder's fountain mosaic in the center of Silver Plaza in Silver Spring, Maryland, was created through a collaboration between a developer and the Montgomery County Public Arts Trust.



Community-Based Studios. The Neighborhood Time Exchange artist residency in West Philadelphia provided artists with free studio space in return for donated skills and services.

COLLABORATIONS THAT OFFER DEEPER WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS

Metro Public Art will work with Metro agencies and non-governmental organizations—civic, professional, educational and community-based—to:

- **Lead** by launching and managing projects and initiatives on its own.
- **Partner** through collaborations with other organizations.
- **Seed** by catalyzing initiatives that others lead or providing support for projects undertaken by others.

TOOLS THAT OFFER NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Metro Public Art will utilize an expanded suite of tools, which have more fluid outcomes, timeframes and deeper engagement processes than traditional site-specific artworks:

- Public Art Residencies
- Community-Based Studios
- Artist Involvement in Planning Teams
- Curated Temporary Art Exhibitions

PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT THE PUBLIC ART ECOSYSTEM

Metro Public Art will build a broader awareness of Nashville's public art and provide resources to community organizations and developers to successfully plan for and implement public art projects. Some recommended initiatives include:

- Portable Collection
- Artist Training
- Mentorship Programs
- Mural Assistance Center
- Private Developer Resources
- Conservation Training

NEW PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

The *Public Art Community Investment Plan* includes guidelines for identifying projects that can realize Metro Public Art's new vision, values and goals. These guidelines will result in projects being **distributed more equitably** throughout Nashville, **engaging more people** with artists, and leaving behind a physical or social infrastructure that will **strengthen a community's creative capacity**.

Metro Public Art's priority will always be to develop projects in partnership with other Metro agencies—though the projects might turn out to be different from the sculptural works that the program has focused on until now. This Plan focuses on opportunities for collaborating with agencies whose facilities or services **affect the quality of life and reach the broadest cross-section of people in Nashville**. These include Parks and Recreation, Public Health, the Nashville Public Library, Transportation and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Through programs like THRIVE and Learning Lab, Metro Arts and Metro Public Art are beginning to support artist collaborations with a broader range of groups, such as independent arts organizations and neighborhood-based non-profits. These groups can become a vital part of Nashville's public art ecosystem, helping artists **connect with communities** in a direct way, allowing for new project ideas to emerge from the relationships that are established, and potentially generating additional resources to support artists.



Artist Training. Metro Public Art's Learning Lab program is an opportunity for artists to develop public art skills and access funding for community-based projects. Courtney Adair Johnson's *Mapping McGruder* was supported through THRIVE and Learning Lab.

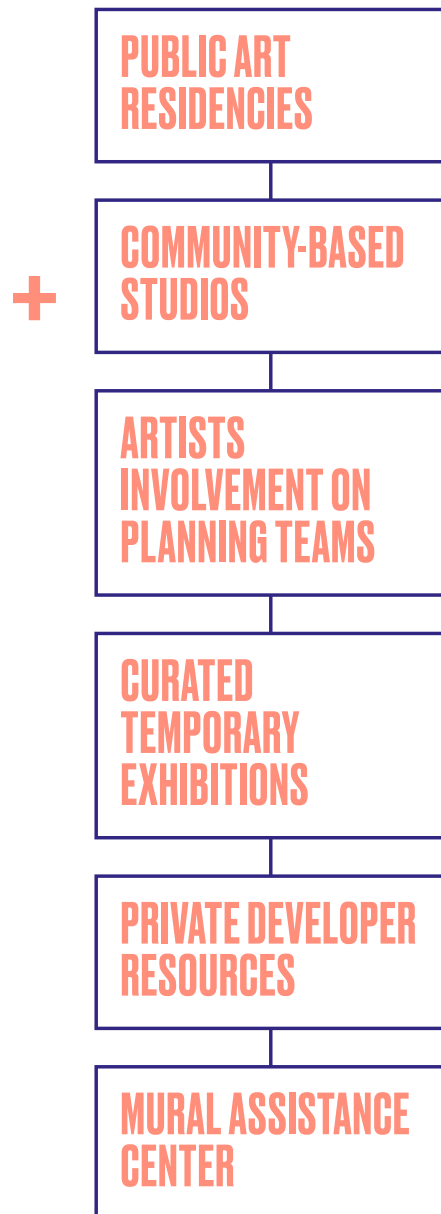


Transportation Toolkit. Marcus Young, St. Paul City Artist in Residence, created the *Everyday Poems for City Sidewalks* project, an approach to stamping newly-poured sidewalks with original poetry.

Existing approaches



New approaches



FUNDING: A KEY RESOURCE

New, flexible funding sources will be paramount.

Current one-percent funding will remain a key resource for creating public art in conjunction with Metro capital investments. However, to achieve this vision for Nashville, Metro Public Art will also require funding that allows for deeply engaged community-based projects and for programs that build the capacity of artists, communities and organizations to bring Nashville's creative voice to life.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- Continued **one-percent funds** to support the commissioning of permanent works of art that support Metro Public Art's vision, values and goals.
- **Flexible project funds** to support new project models, such as artist residencies, community-based studios, artist collaboration on planning projects and temporary artworks.
- **Ongoing program funds** to support the initiatives managed by Metro Arts, such as Learning Lab and THRIVE.
- **Operational funding** to support staffing and consulting required for new programs and projects.
- **Dedicated capital maintenance and conservation funds** for Metro-owned artworks.

AN IMPORTANT MOMENT

This is an opportune moment for Metro Public Art to chart a course for how it can help achieve the vision and goals that *NashvilleNext* and *Crafting a Creative City* set out. Many of the Metro Nashville departments that have been Metro Public Art's best collaborators are in the midst of comprehensive planning processes themselves. This provides an opportunity for the program to consider how its vision and mission can align with those of collaborating agencies and best serve the people of Nashville. This will require the program to be **creative** about applying its new approaches to public art and to **understand** how various agencies' missions and strategies are changing to meet the needs of a dynamic society.

In the broader field of public art, there is vigorous discussion about how public art can **catalyze** urban place-making, **engage** with the economic and social issues that urban communities are facing, and **address** questions of equity. That means the *Public Art Community Investment Plan* can draw on a breadth of experience that has accumulated in the field over the past few years, as well as the networks that Nashville's arts leaders have already established, to chart a course that will establish Nashville's leadership in the public art field for years to come.

For Further Information

Metro Nashville Arts Commission
Metro Public Art
Crafting a Creative City
NashvilleNext Comprehensive Plan
Public Art Community Investment Plan

Acknowledgements

Mayor Megan Barry
Metro Nashville Council
Metro Arts Commission
Public Art Committee
Equity Advisory Group
Arts Ecosystem Advisory Group
Metro Department Directors and Staff

Resources

Arlington, VA, Public Art
Philadelphia Mural Arts Advocates
Public Art St. Paul
Queens Museum

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consultant
Kia Jarmon, MEPR Agency,
community engagement

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