

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on or about April 9, 2002, the City Council of the City of El Paso approved the Public Art Ordinance, as amended on September 21, 2010, that calls for the promotion and encouragement of "private and public programs to further the development and public awareness of, and interest in, the fine arts and cultural properties, to increase employment opportunities in the arts, to encourage the integration of art into the architecture of municipal structures of the City of El Paso, and to provide the citizens of the City high quality, publicly accessible works of art, which contribute to the urban landscape and symbolizes the City's sense of place"; and

WHEREAS, said Public Art Ordinance also required the City of El Paso to create a Public Art Master Plan to guide the public art program and the expenditures of the public art fund; and

WHEREAS, the City of El Paso retained a consultant to develop the 2026-2036 Public Art Master Plan, as required by the ordinance, which would serve as a living document providing a framework to revive the culture and color of El Paso; proposing ways to include artists in shaping the architecture, infrastructure, icons and images of the City. The consultant has developed such a plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2026-2036 Public Art Master Plan is intended to further the following public policy goals: (a) enhance the quality of life of its residents through the thoughtful infusion of artists at a neighborhood level and in the design of publicly financed infrastructures; (b) promote economic revitalization by adding value to municipal facilities, creating ongoing opportunities for artists and artisans to enhance visitor experience; and (c) define, focus, enhance and improve authentic images of El Paso as a unique place, community and destination; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is of the opinion that the 2026-2036 Public Art Master Plan is of benefit to the citizens of El Paso as a tool to properly bring a unique design and cohesion to the City's public places, create works and environments that celebrate and offer insights about the region's history and culture, as well as bolster the City's distinctive sense of place; and

WHEREAS, City Council herein finds that the 2026-2036 Public Art Master Plan should provide a basis for all future public art programs and guidance of all expenditures from the public art fund.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

1. That the 2026-2036 Public Art Master Plan for the City of El Paso, attached as Exhibit "A" and incorporated for all purposes as if set forth verbatim ("the Plan"), is hereby approved and adopted as the primary guideline to be utilized in all public art programs; and

2. That the Plan and its incorporated 10-year action plan shall be used as the primary guideline utilized in determining and appropriating expenditures from the public art fund; and
3. That adoption of the Plan shall not commit the City of El Paso to specific funding levels or implementation strategies, but shall provide guidance for the City's vision for the public art program.
4. That City Council authorize the City Manager or his designee to negotiate with the appropriate parties to allow the City to fund, implement, and participate in the Public Art Master Plan.

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2026.

THE CITY OF EL PASO

Renard U. Johnson
Mayor

ATTEST:

Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Russell T. Abeln
Senior Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:


Ben Fyffe, Managing Director
Quality of Life

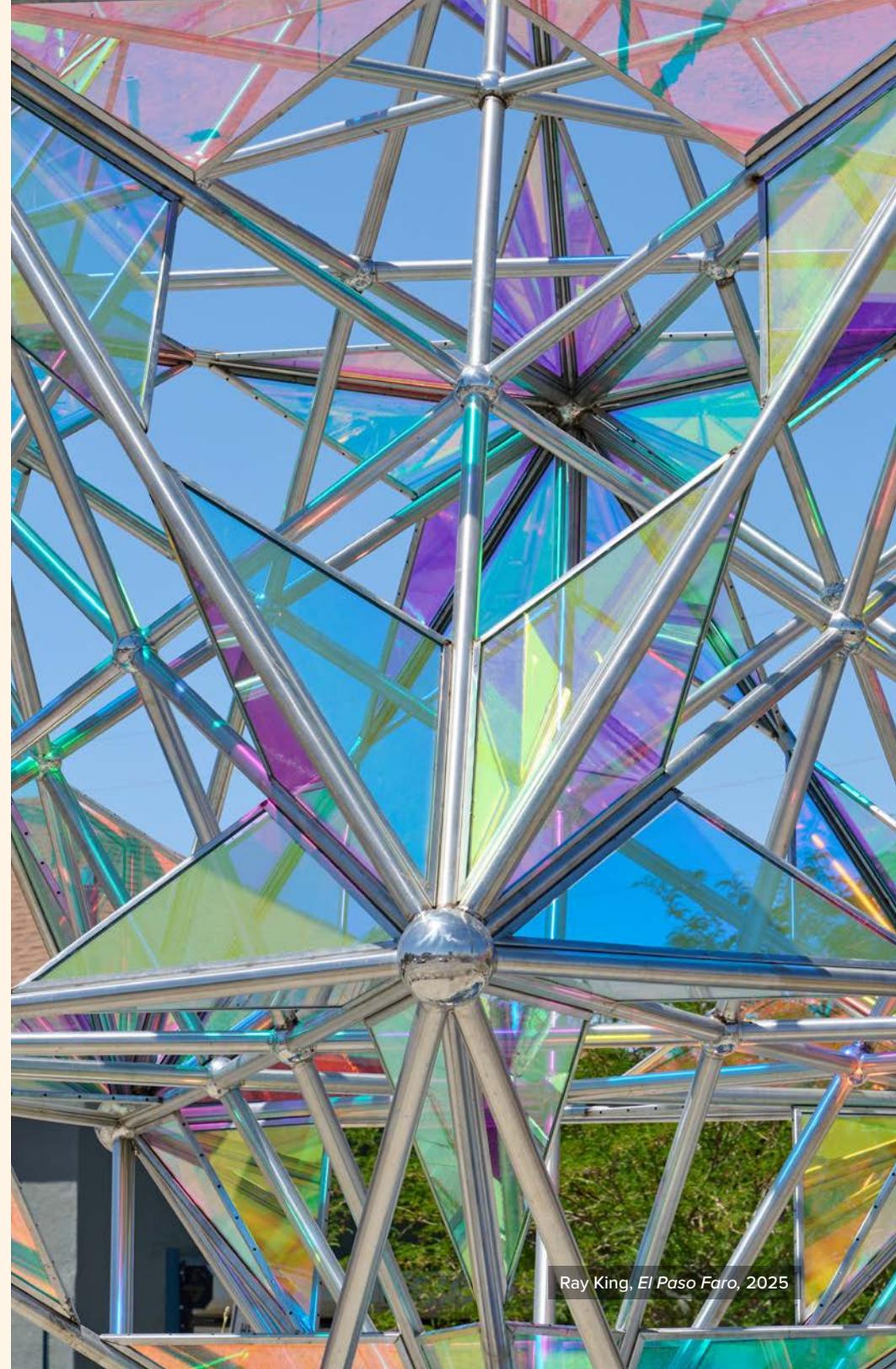
(Exhibit "A" on the following page)

Exhibit "A"

El Paso Public Art Master Plan Update 2026–2036

February 2026

Developed by
Via Partnership, LLP
Todd Bressi
Kerry Doyle



Ray King, *El Paso Faro*, 2025



Ball Nogues Studio, *Not Whole Fence*, 2014

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Executive Summary

A Decade of Growth, A Vision for the Future

The past decade has been one of extraordinary growth for the City of El Paso’s Public Art Program. Since the adoption of the 2014 Public Art Master Plan, the City has added 65 new artworks to its collection, bringing the total to 95 works across all eight Council Districts, with several earning national recognition establishing El Paso as a national leader in the field.

This remarkable expansion was made possible by major bond investments: the 2012 Quality of Life Bond, 2019 Public Safety Bond and 2022 Community Progress Bond. Through the City’s Percent for Art Ordinance, these capital projects generated both funding and opportunities to integrate art into El Paso’s parks, libraries, community centers, transit facilities, public safety buildings and roadways.

Looking to the future, as the pace of bond-funded capital projects moderates, the Public Art Program stands at a pivotal moment. This Public Art Master Plan Update positions the Program for the future, building on its success while expanding access to public art, deepening community engagement and supporting the local arts ecosystem.

Strong Community Support with Clear Directions

The Master Plan Update was developed through extensive community engagement in 2024 and 2025. Input was gathered from local arts and cultural professionals and the broader community through six in-person and virtual roundtable discussions, an online questionnaire and four Open House meetings throughout the city, as well as interviews with Council District Representatives, Public Art Committee members and key City staff who regularly collaborate with the

Public Art Program. Feedback was solicited from previously commissioned artists, Allied Artists, Artist Selection Panelists, design team members and CID Project Managers, as well, and relevant City planning documents, ordinances, policies, guidelines and Program materials were reviewed.

The engagement process revealed strong support for public art and high regard for El Paso’s Collection. Key findings include:

Desire for art that captures the uniqueness of El Paso – its people, history, culture and environment.

Interest in broader engagement with public art – residents want to learn more about the Collection and participate in the public art process.

Support for local artists – appreciation for the Allied Artist Program and interest in expanding professional development opportunities.

Aspiration to broaden the Program’s reach – recognizing that there are parts of the city the Program has not yet reached where there is a strong interest in public art.

Private sector interest – developers and private property owners in El Paso are incorporating art in their developments, finding it creates a uniqueness and sense of place, and others have reached out to MCAD for advice and support in their efforts.

City department interest – some City departments are electing to work with artists to create public art outside of or in addition to the funding provided through the Percent for Art Ordinance, recognizing the value of public art to the publics they serve.

Diversified funding opportunities – as bond-funded projects become fewer, the Public Art Program may need to look to diversify the ways that new public art projects and programs are resourced, including working with developers, partnering with other City departments and partnering with outside organizations.

These findings inform the goals, strategies and recommendations outlined in this Master Plan Update.

Mission, Vision and Goals

Mission

El Paso's Public Art Program commissions, acquires and maintains a diverse collection of public art; supports the inclusion of public art in private development and infrastructure built by others; promotes the community's access to, appreciation and enjoyment of visual art; and supports the public art ecosystem in El Paso.

Vision

El Paso's Public Art Program gives voice to the city's creative spirit.

Goals

The Public Art Program will achieve its vision through public art projects and related programs that support these four goals.

1. **Highlight Local Identity:** Connect with and reflect the distinct ecology, history, landscape and culture of the El Paso region and this binational community.
2. **Increase Arts Access:** Provide opportunities for El Pasoans and visitors to connect with art, artists and the creative process.
3. **Nurture Artistic Development:** Establish pathways for artists to develop new work.
4. **Create Meaningful Places:** Shape locations that anchor community life and provide opportunities for interaction and social engagement.



Implementation Tools

The Master Plan Update provides tools and processes to help prioritize what projects to pursue and how to pursue them in order to make its mission, vision and goals reality.

Annual Public Art Plan Process

Each year, MCAD staff drafts an Annual Public Art Plan identifying which capital projects should include public art based on established criteria, allocating pooled funds according to locational priorities and outlining the budget, location, artist selection approach and timeline for each project. This plan requires approval by the Public Art Committee, Museums and Cultural Affairs Advisory Board and City Council.

Project Identification Principles

Capital projects should include public art when they align with Program goals, meet locational priorities, advance equitable distribution, provide adequate time for site integration, have adequate budgets and allow sufficient implementation time. Otherwise, funds should be pooled for higher-impact opportunities.

Retrofit Projects

The Program should explore “retrofit” projects adding art to existing facilities. The upcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which is expected to focus on improving existing facilities, offers an important opportunity to do so. The Program can also collaborate with MCAD to allow artists to develop public art for existing facilities through MCAD’s Cultural Funding Program grants and explore other projects the Public Art Program can initiate itself, such as murals.

Public Art Focus Plans

For some Opportunity Areas, such as large-scale facilities like El Paso International Airport or the Convention Center or for systems of places like parks and park facilities, the Master Plan Update recommends developing Public Art Focus Plans to identify site integration strategies and priority locations for public art, outline implementation strategies and inform the use of public art resources.

Opportunity Areas for Public Art

The Master Plan Update outlines ten Opportunity Areas for public art. These are types of facilities and infrastructure that can be found throughout the city and are places where the City should focus its investment in public art. For each Opportunity Area, the Master Plan Update provides goals for public art, criteria for prioritizing project opportunities, suggested resources and special considerations.

Parks, Trailheads, Skate Parks, and Community Facilities

The Program should work with the Parks and Recreation Department to create an implementation-oriented Public Art Focus Plan that provides a strategy for public art in parks, park facilities and community facilities and identifies priority locations, site integration strategies, project types and funding mechanisms.

Libraries

Libraries should continue to be a priority location for public art commissions in conjunction with capital improvement projects, as well as retrofit projects. The Program can partner with libraries as locations for community engagement and artist outreach activities and to provide the public with information about works in the Collection.

Road Infrastructure and Transportation Corridors

The Program should seek locations for public art that are important nodes in the citywide road and transportation networks, have a high volume of use and would require minimal site preparation investment, while prioritizing areas that do not already have public art.

Public Safety Facilities

Public art should continue to be commissioned at public safety facilities that have significant public use and should be sited to maximize visibility by the public as well as public safety staff.

Downtown

The Program should continue to grow the collection of public art Downtown, recognizing its high level of visibility to residents and visitors, while balancing the need to bring art to other parts of the city. Public art should be included in the planning for the proposed Convention Center expansion and the redevelopment of the Union Plaza area.

El Paso International Airport

The Program should consider partnering with the airport to develop an airport Public Art Focus Plan that would offer a roadmap for matching airport art resources to opportunities, not only for permanent commissions, but also for temporary installations and exhibitions managed by EPIA.

Co-Location

Various types of Opportunity Areas, such as parks, libraries, community facilities, skate parks and public safety facilities are often co-located or clustered on small campuses. Where this co-location of types of Opportunity Areas occurs, the Public Art Program should consider consolidating public art resources from two or more facilities towards a more significant project that serves the whole cluster, commissioning multiple pieces that create a connected and cohesive experience or shifting funds into the pooled funds to avoid a concentration of public art in one place.

Strengthening the Art Purchase Program

The Art Purchase Program, launched in 2013, acquires portable two- and three-dimensional works from artists living within 100 miles of El Paso. With over 200 artworks displayed in City offices and public buildings, this Collection provides rotating exhibitions while supporting local artists financially and professionally. The Master Plan Update recommends enhancing the Program by using guest curators or juries, introducing thematic calls to artists, increasing acquisition frequency, creating public exhibitions of new works and developing an online gallery to increase visibility.

Deepening Community Connections

As the collection grows, so does the opportunity to engage diverse audiences. The Master Plan Update provides many recommendations, ideas and tools for how the Program can build audiences and connect with the community.

Core Tools

Enhanced artwork labels, high-quality photography and video documentation, print materials distributed at libraries and community centers, improved digital presence including the Public Art Dashboard, strategic social media campaigns and periodic collection tours.

Educational Programming

Collaboration with educators to develop curriculum kits and training materials that use the Public Art Collection as a teaching tool.

Mural Registry

A citywide registry documenting murals created both by the Public Art Program and independently would celebrate El Paso's rich muralism tradition, particularly grassroots works in neighborhoods like Segundo Barrio and Lincoln Park that reflect authentic community expression.

Cultivating Local Artists and the Arts Ecosystem

El Paso’s Public Art Program does not exist in isolation. It is part of a larger arts ecosystem including MCAD’s museums, local nonprofits, universities, galleries and independent artists. The Master Plan Update outlines strategies to strengthen this ecosystem:

Allied Artist Program

This successful program pairs less-experienced local artists with lead artists on major commissions. Recommended improvements include assigning Allied Artists earlier in projects, creating annual cohorts rather than rolling applications, providing orientation sessions and offering workshops on public art practice.

Professional Development

The Program should partner to deliver workshops on public art fundamentals, covering topics like fabrication, budgeting, community engagement and professional practices. Partnerships with universities, MCAD colleagues and national organizations can provide resources and expertise.

MCAD Cultural Funding Grants

The Master Plan Update recommends establishing a small-scale grant program specifically for artist-initiated public art projects, potentially through existing Artist Incubator or Arts Activate programs, with a list of City facilities interested in hosting grant-funded projects.

Public Art Resource Directory

An online directory would provide artists, property owners and organizations with resources for implementing public art projects outside the City’s program.

Working With Private Developers

Private developers are incorporating art into their properties, recognizing the positive impacts art can have on their developments. In the future, they may play a larger role in El Paso’s art ecosystem as the Program looks to diversify the ways new public art projects are resourced.

The Master Plan Update recommends the City of El Paso adopt a policy for public art in private development affirming the value of public art to the community and its role in implementing the City’s Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan and stating that the City will encourage public art in private development to the extent possible. Specific strategies are provided, including focusing on areas where the City is encouraging economic development, exploring a public art fee/requirement, updating the Land Use Development Ordinance to encourage and incentivize public art, encouraging developers to voluntarily include public art and developing a process for public oversight of public art in private development.

Resources and Sustainability

The Master Plan Update offers guidance on funding and staffing for the Program’s future.

Funding

The Percent for Art Ordinance will remain the primary funding source, dedicating two percent of net proceeds from revenue bonds and certificates of obligation to public art.

As new bond issuances moderate, the Program should diversify funding through:

- Strategic pooling of funds from less-visible capital projects to support higher-impact locations
- Partnerships with City departments (as successfully demonstrated with Sun Metro, Fly ELP and Environmental Services)
- Working with private developers to commission public art

Staffing

The Program’s current staffing level should be maintained. To handle workload variations and specialized needs, the Program should hire consultants, contractors or temporary employees for tasks like curation, collection management, audience outreach and artist professional development. Enhanced collaboration with other MCAD staff and external partners can expand capacity for engagement and education.

Updated Guidelines

The Master Plan Update includes revised Public Art Guidelines (Appendix A) with key changes:

- Clarified Artist Selection Panel composition consistent with City ordinance.
- Expanded definitions including Art Purchase Program Collection and Public Art Focus Plans.
- Revised deaccession policy allowing staff to re-site non-site-specific works without PAC or MCAAB approval while maintaining PAC and MCAAB oversight for site-specific works.
- Streamlined artist selection and acquisition processes with visual flowcharts.

Conclusion

The many artworks that can be found integrated into public spaces throughout El Paso are a testament to the remarkable success the Program has had since its inception. This Public Art Master Plan Update positions the Program to build on that success at a pivotal moment. It lays out a roadmap to guide the Program into its next chapter, where the Program can continue to provide value to the community by broadening access to public art, deepening the community’s engagement with public art, and playing a key role in supporting the local arts ecosystem.



Zoe Spiliotis, *When Breath Becomes Air*, 2019



THE BEAST URBAN PARK

Mark Grieve & Ilana Spector, *Hueco Tanks Archway*, 2020

Introduction

El Paso is a city of great artistic and cultural vitality. The City of El Paso’s Public Art Program gives voice to the city’s creative spirit. By bringing world-class art into the everyday spaces where people live, work and gather, public art enhances quality of life, celebrates local culture and transforms public spaces into places where residents and visitors encounter creativity that reflects the community’s rich history, diverse cultures and bold aspirations for the future. The past decade has seen extraordinary growth of the City’s Public Art Collection — and this Master Plan Update positions the Program to build on that success while expanding access, deepening community engagement and supporting the local arts ecosystem.

Under the leadership of the Museums and Cultural Affairs Department (MCAD) and the guidance of the City’s Public Art Committee (PAC) and Museums and Cultural Affairs Advisory Board (MCAAB), El Paso’s Public Art Program has added 65 new artworks since the adoption of the 2014 Public Art Master Plan. This collection now includes 95 works across all 8 Council Districts. The Collection represents a variety of styles,

media and approaches, as well as a range of sites including libraries, community centers, parks, transit facilities and roadways, the El Paso International Airport and Downtown. In addition to being locally celebrated, several artworks have received national recognition, including *Marquise* by theverymany, **Sun Pavilion** by RDG Studio, *Chroma Booster* by Matthew Geller, *Not Whole Fence* by Ball Nogues Studio, *Radiance* by Re:Site Studio, *Los Lagartos* by Luis Jimenez and *The Cloud* by Donald Lipski.

This expansive growth in the Collection is in part due to the major investments the City has made, and is still making, in its community, transportation and public safety infrastructure. The 2012 Quality of Life Bond, the 2019 Public Safety Bond and the 2022 Community Progress Bond generated both the funding, through the City’s Percent for Art Ordinance, and the opportunity to integrate art into these investments. Because most public art projects accompanied capital projects, public art was concentrated in areas receiving other capital improvements.

Background and Context

The 2014 Master Plan was adopted by City Council at the beginning of this period of growth. It set out a vision, goals and directions for the Program; proposed approaches to commissioning art with a focus on upcoming capital projects; and updated the public art guidelines to clarify roles and responsibilities and introduce tools for planning for upcoming projects.

This Public Art Master Plan Update anticipates a transition for the Public Art Program from a period of expansive growth in new work commissioned as part of capital projects to a

period of more moderate growth that includes focusing on areas of the City that have not had significant investments in public art. It maps out other resources to support the commissioning of new work, including private development and City departments electing to include public art in projects. In addition, the Master Plan Update acknowledges that the Public Art Program's role and functions extend beyond just commissioning artworks. As the Collection grows, the Program's responsibilities significantly increase. And as more interest is generated for public art, the Program can develop new partnerships and strategies to support the local arts ecosystem and to engage the public with the Collection.



Planning Process

In 2024, MCAD began the Public Art Master Plan update process in collaboration with a team of experienced public art consultants, who had also worked with the Department on the 2014 Public Art Master Plan. The Master Plan Update was developed through consultation with local arts and cultural professionals and the broader community. Public input was gathered through multiple avenues. In November and December 2024, the consulting team hosted a series of six in-person and three virtual roundtable discussions about the Public Art Master Plan Update, attended by thirty local art, design and civic community stakeholders. An online questionnaire, open from December 2024 through February 2025, was designed to gain feedback on the Program’s vision, goals and directions; to solicit information regarding people’s awareness and preferences of existing public art in El Paso; and to allow the public to respond to a broad set of possible directions for public art in the future. The consulting team facilitated four Open Houses around the city on April 7 — 10, 2025. Participants at Open Houses were invited to share thoughts on the vision, goals and directions for public art in El Paso and potential locations for public art.

The consultants facilitated interviews with Council District Representatives, Public Art Committee members and key City staff who regularly collaborate with the Public Art Program. The consultants also conducted interviews seeking process feedback from previously commissioned artists, Allied Artists, Artist Selection Panelists, design team members and CID Project Managers.

The consultants reviewed relevant City planning documents focused on the physical planning and infrastructure of the city. The purpose of the review was to understand the context for public art in regard to El Paso’s growth, the development of public and community spaces and future plans for public infrastructure. The consultants also reviewed ordinances, policies, guidelines and planning documents, Annual Work Plans and Calls for Artists specific to the Public Art Program, as well as the 2014 Public Art Master Plan.

Community Feedback

The engagement process revealed **strong support for public art** in general and high regard for El Paso’s Public Art Collection. There was **considerable interest in works that capture the uniqueness of El Paso** – its people, history, culture, and environment.

With that strong support comes **interest from community members in being more aware and engaged with public art**. People are finding useful information on the website to learn about works in the Collection but want more. Educators throughout the community are coming up with ways to use artworks from the Collection as tools in the classroom and see opportunities to build on that work and share it more broadly. And people want to know how they can get more involved.

There is an interest in **broadening opportunities for local artists**. There is great appreciation for the Allied Artist Program and the efforts made by MCAD staff to support local artists

who are newer to public art. This can be built upon to provide additional professional development support and to reach even more artists.

The recent growth in the Public Art Collection has been made possible by the City’s investments in its parks, community facilities, transportation infrastructure, cultural facilities, and public safety facilities. However, **there are parts of the city that the Public Art Program has not yet reached where there is a strong interest in public art.**

The interest and appreciation of the benefits of public art also extend into the private development community. Several **developers and private property owners in El Paso are incorporating art in their developments**, finding it creates a uniqueness and sense of place and others have reached out to MCAD for advice and support in their efforts.

Likewise, some **City departments are electing to work with artists to create public art outside of or in addition to the funding provided through the Percent for Art Ordinance.** These departments, too, recognize the value of art to the public they serve and have worked with MCAD to support their efforts.

The pace of new public art commissions funded through Percent for Art is tied to the pace of bond-funded capital project investment. As these bond-funded projects become fewer, the Public Art Program may need to look to **diversify**

the ways that new public art projects and programs are resourced, including working with developers, partnering with other City departments and partnering with outside organizations.

These findings inform the goals, strategies and recommendations outlined in this Master Plan Update. The Plan establishes priorities for the next phase of the Public Art Program: caring for the Collection, expanding access across all neighborhoods, deepening community engagement, supporting local artists and building partnerships that diversify resources for public art. Together, these strategies will ensure that public art continues to give voice to El Paso’s creative spirit, enrich the lives of all who call this city home and enhance the experiences of all who visit.

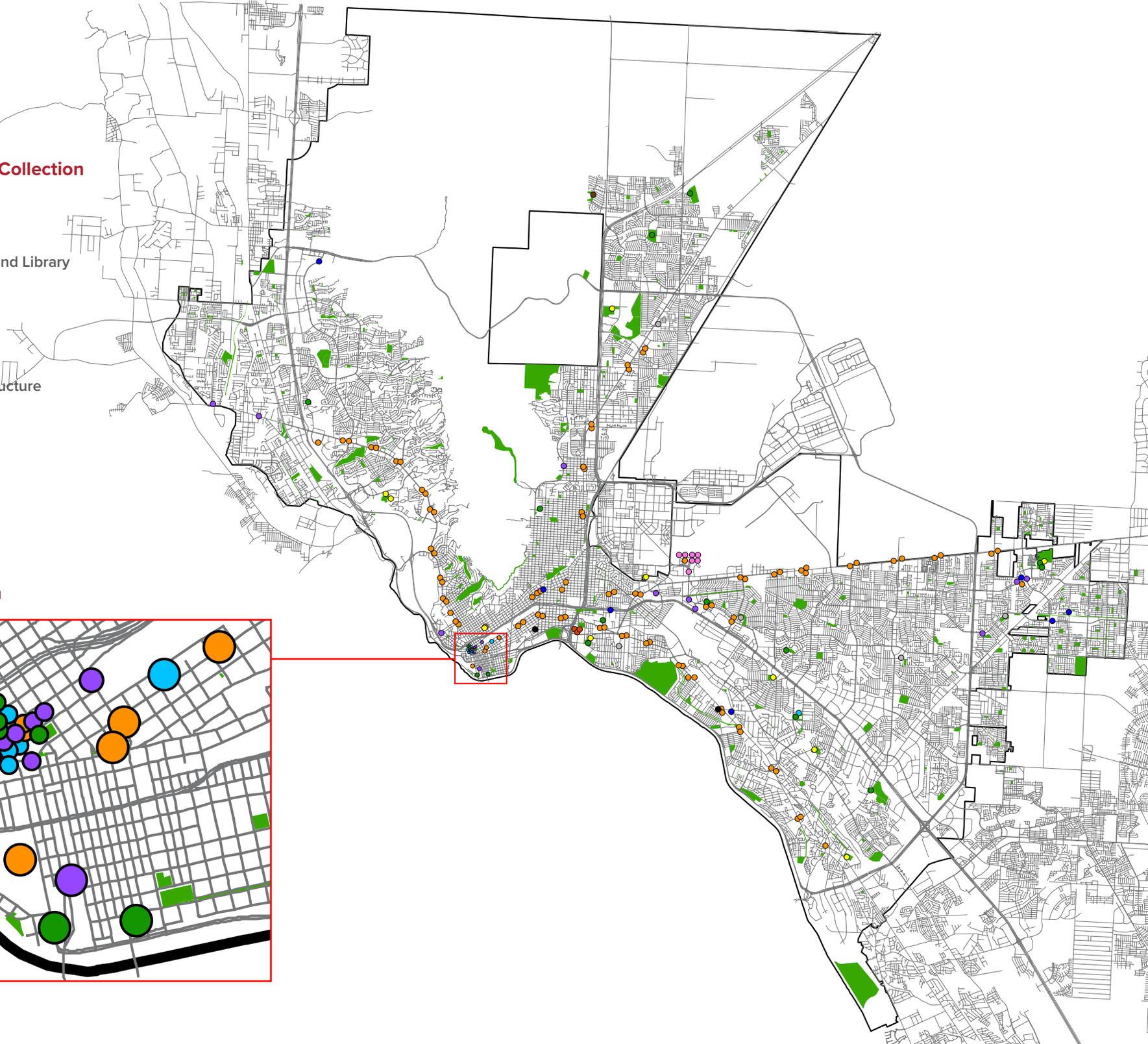
Public Art Master Plan Update Open House, Westside Regional Command Center



El Paso's Public Art Collection

- Airport
- Community
- Community and Library
- Libraries
- Parks
- Public Safety
- Road Infrastructure
- Sun Metro
- Trailhead
- Zoo
- Other

Downtown





Marc Fornes, THEVERYMANY, Marquise, 2018

The El Paso Public Art Program

Mission, Vision, Goals and Strategies

The mission, vision, goals and strategies of the Public Art Program are designed to provide thoughtful focus to the program. All work undertaken by the Program should resonate with its mission and vision and employ its goals and strategies, ensuring the program is relevant and responsive to the community's needs.

Mission

What the Public Art Program does.

El Paso's Public Art Program:

Commissions, acquires and maintains a diverse collection of public art;

Supports the inclusion of public art in private development and infrastructure built by others;

Promotes the community's access to, appreciation of and enjoyment of visual art; and

Supports the public art ecosystem in El Paso.

Vision

The impact of the Public Art Program's work.

El Paso's Public Art Program gives voice to the city's creative spirit.

Goals

The Public Art Program will achieve its vision through public art projects and related programs that support these four goals.

Highlight Local Identity

Connect with and reflect the distinct ecology, history, landscape and culture of the El Paso region and this binational community.

Increase Arts Access

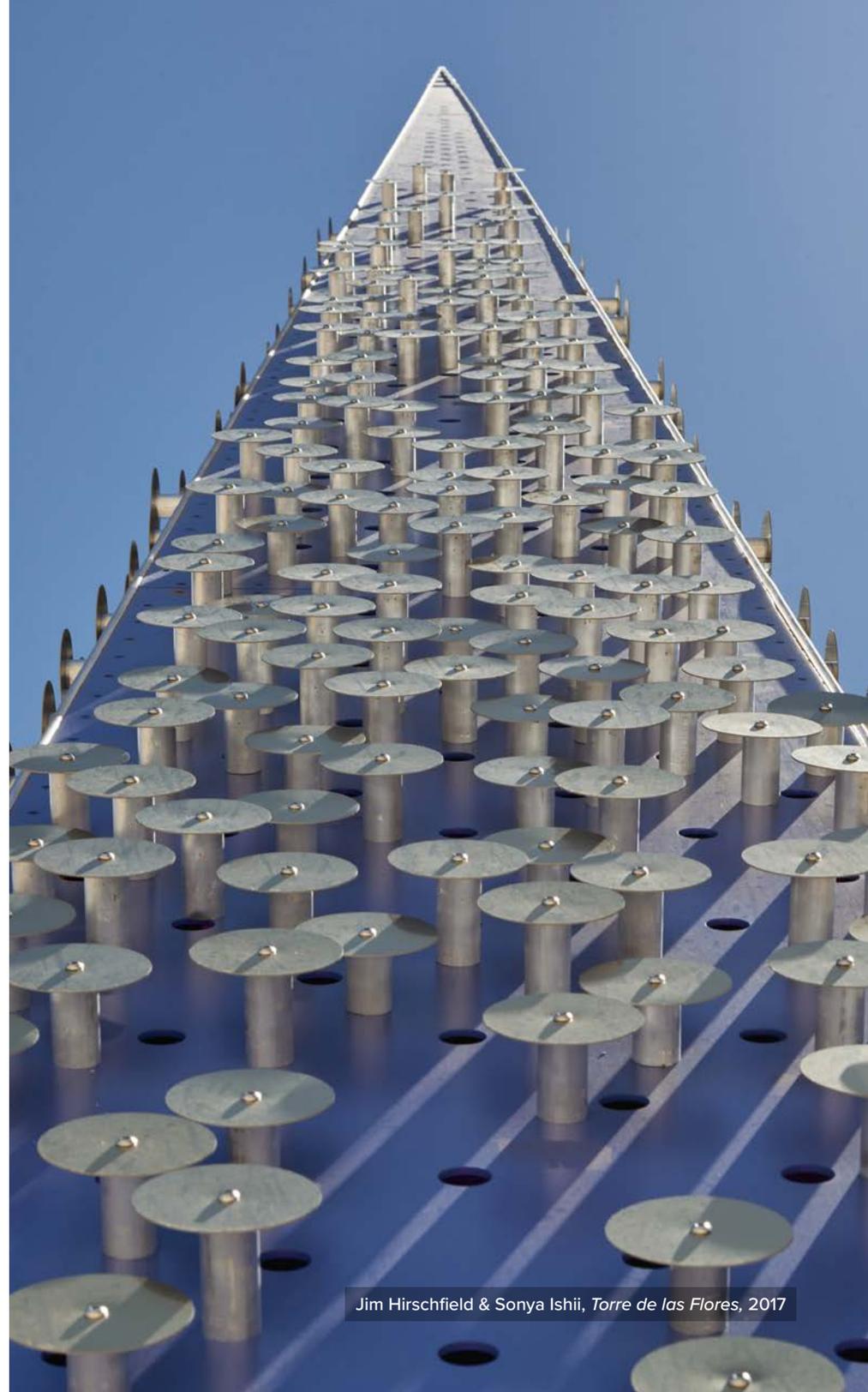
Provide opportunities for El Pasoans and visitors to connect with art, artists and the creative process.

Nurture Artistic Development

Establish pathways for artists to develop new work.

Create Meaningful Places

Shape locations that anchor community life and provide opportunities for interaction and social engagement.

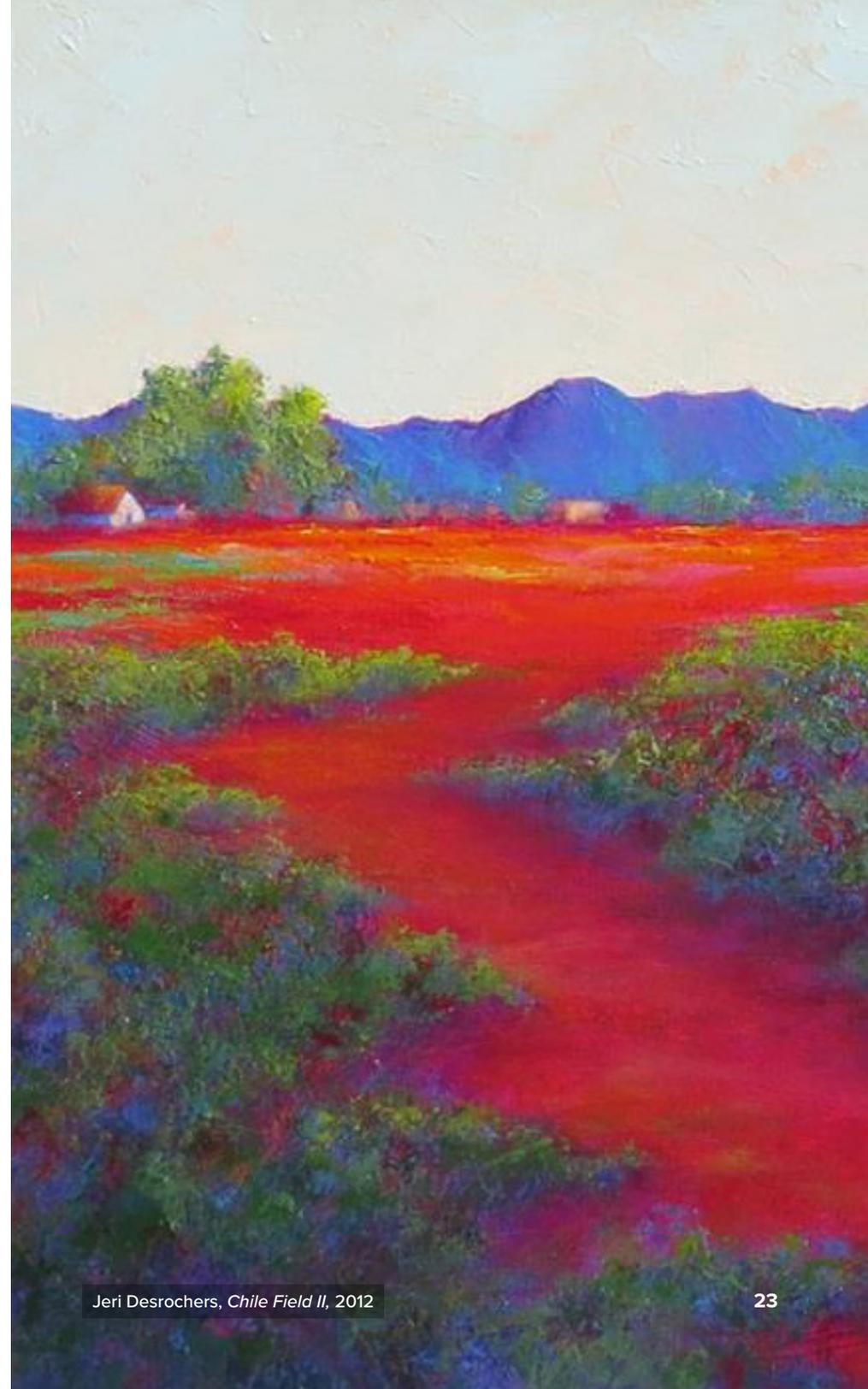


Strategies

The Public Art Program will employ these strategies to achieve its goals.

Highlight Local Identity

- Support public art processes that invite artists to think deeply about El Paso's identity and highlight what makes the region unique.
- Commission site-specific artworks that are inspired by El Paso's history, culture, landscape and identity.
- Involve community members and stakeholders in the public art development process to ensure artworks thoughtfully capture the spirit and identity of El Paso's communities.
- Through the Art Purchase Program, acquire artworks that represent varied elements of El Paso's local culture and create a portrait of the region.



Improve Arts Access

- When possible, commission new public art projects in places that do not already have public art.
- Encourage artists who are developing public art projects in neighborhoods to include a hands-on community engagement component as part of their project.
- Promote and raise awareness of El Paso's Public Art Collection and the Art Purchase Program Collection, as well as murals and public art projects in El Paso that are not part of the City's Collection.
- Work collaboratively with internal and external partners to develop programs and resources centered on the Public Art Collection that engage and educate people of all ages.
- Work with private developers to incorporate public art into public spaces within their own projects.
- Provide guidance and resources for artists, organizations and private property owners to develop and maintain their own public art projects.



Mark Aeling, MGA Studios, *Convocation*, 2024

Nurture Artistic Development

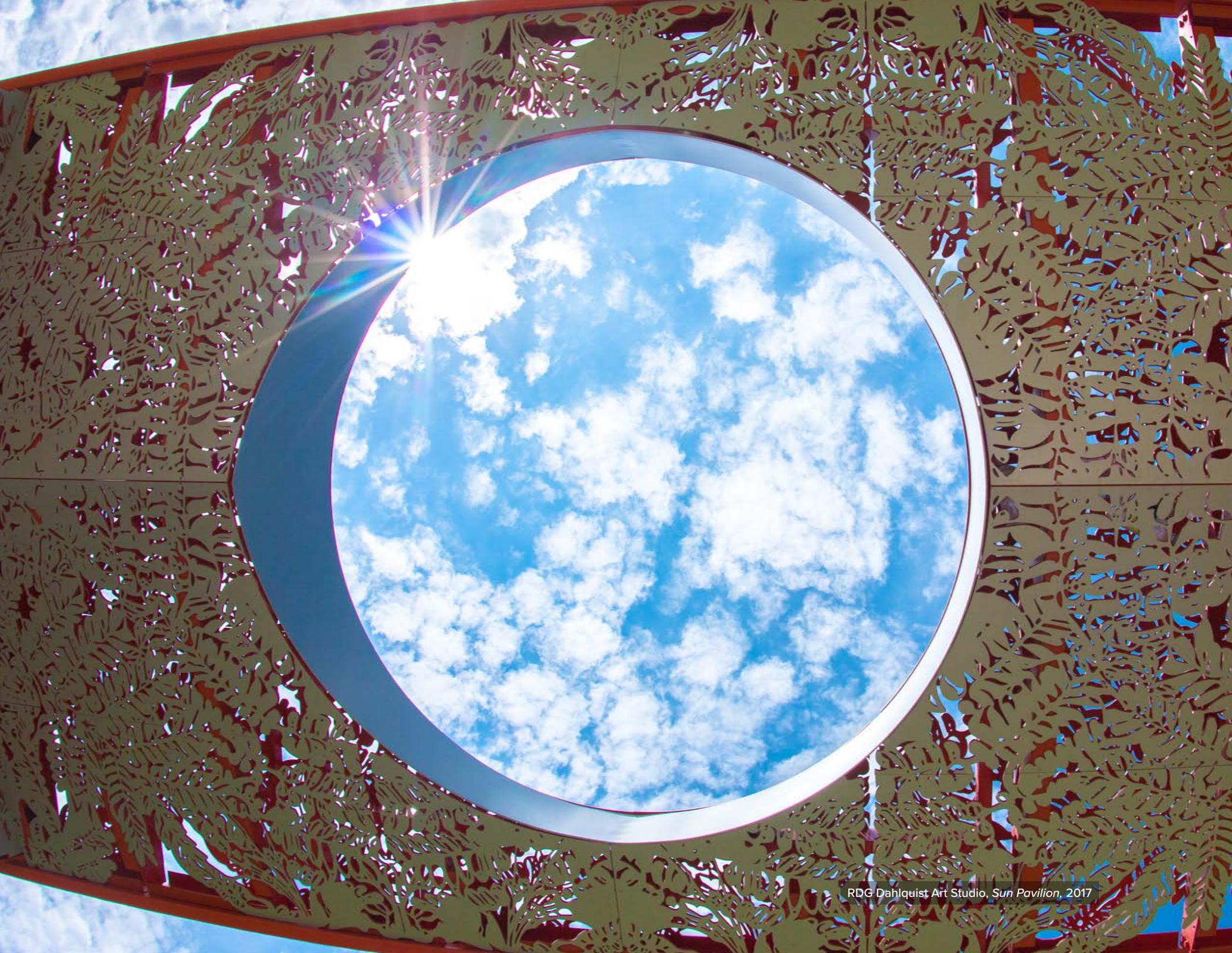
- Build time into the commissioning process for artists to undertake local research, engage meaningfully with community members and create new work informed by these interactions.
- Develop public art projects that draw on the strengths of the local arts community and create opportunities for artists to develop their practice in public art and master a range of skills.
- Enhance the Allied Artist Program to better support El Paso artists who are new to public art.
- Seek partnerships and resources to provide additional opportunities for professional development.
- Promote and provide information to the public about individual artworks and artists in the Public Art Collection and the Art Purchase Program Collection.
- Continue acquiring artwork through the Art Purchase Program to provide opportunities for artists to sell their work and gain exposure.

Create Meaningful Places

- Site public art at locations that are or can become community gathering places.
- Commission public art that invites people to engage and interact with each other in public space.
- Commission public art that helps revitalize and activate places that have experienced disinvestment.
- Commission public art that makes a positive impact on the overall design of public spaces.
- Commission public art that brings identity to neighborhoods and corridors.

Poetic Kinetics, *Aztec Pavilion*, 2012





RDG Dahlquist Art Studio, *Sun Pavilion*, 2017

Opportunities for Public Art

El Paso’s Public Art Program focuses on commissioning artworks that are incorporated into the City’s public facilities and public spaces. Because its funding largely comes through a percent for art ordinance, the program has emphasized locating art in conjunction with City capital projects. This chapter outlines the most likely opportunities for locating new artworks and considerations for how they can be best integrated into those locations.

Opportunity Areas

The opportunities for public art described in this chapter are organized into Opportunity Areas. These include both types of facilities and infrastructure that can be found across the city — such as parks, trailheads, skate parks, libraries, community facilities, public safety facilities and roadway infrastructure — as well as specific areas, such as the El Paso International Airport and Downtown.

These Opportunity Areas are places where the City should focus its public art investment. They relate to various aspects of the city’s public realm and reflect different categories of places people experience in their daily lives in the city.

For each Opportunity Area, the plan provides a description of the area or type of area, goals for public art, criteria for prioritizing opportunities, suggested resources and any special considerations.

Co-Location of Opportunity Areas

Throughout El Paso, various types of Opportunity Areas, such as parks, libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, skate parks and public safety facilities are often co-located or clustered on small campuses. These clusters tend to serve more people and more diverse groups of users than stand-alone facilities do.

In some cases, the clusters have evolved incrementally or organically and do not seem to have a strong center of gravity or civic focus that holds the spaces together. One example is Pavo Real, where several City facilities are clustered — a library, a recreation center, a senior center, a spray park and a facility for the Department of Public Health. In other cases, such as The Beast Urban Park in El Paso’s Upper East Side, these campuses have been consciously and cohesively planned, even though they may be built in several phases over many years.

Where this co-location of types of Opportunity Areas occurs, the Public Art Program should consider a variety of potential strategies for public art:

Consolidating public art resources from two or more facilities towards a more significant project that serves the whole cluster.

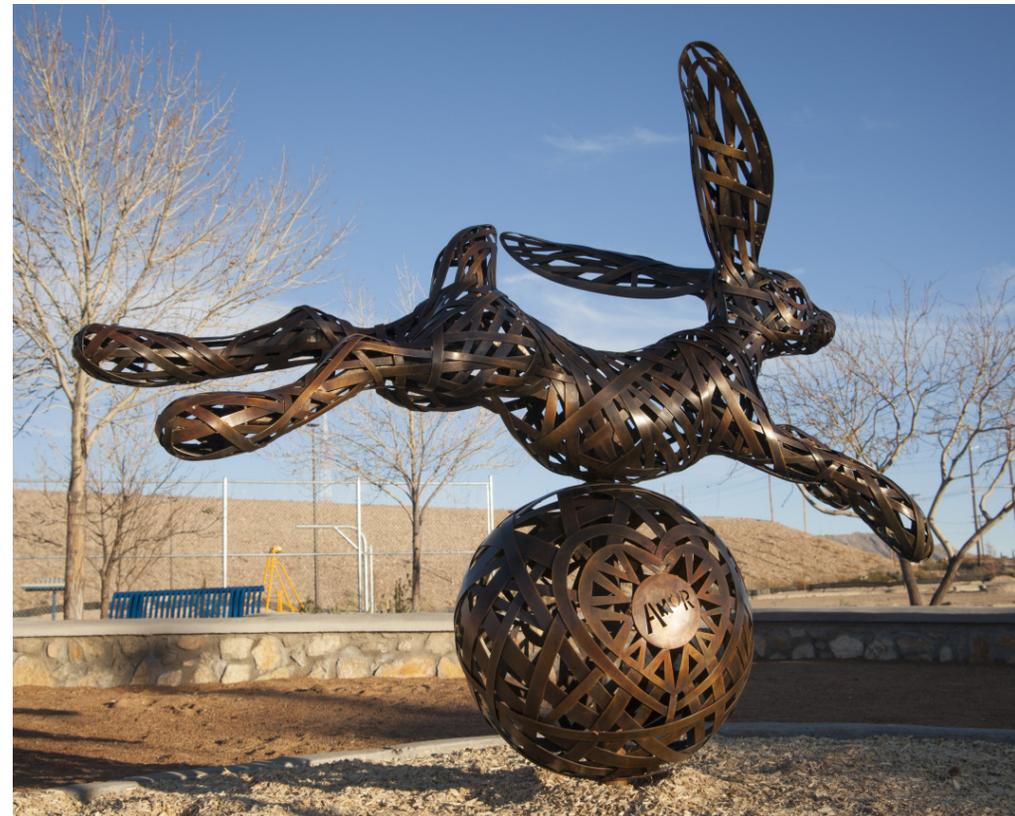
- Consider functional artworks that expand the use of the area (such as shade or gathering) or artworks that act as a focal point in areas that serve users of all the facilities

Commissioning multiple pieces that create a connected and cohesive experience.

- Consider connective features, such as landscape elements
- Consider features that help people understand the layout of the area, such as pieces that focus on entry points to the overall facility as well as entry points to each featured element

Shifting funds into the pooled funds to avoid a concentration of public art in one place.

Michael Stutz, *Jackrabbit Jumps the Love Ball*, 2019



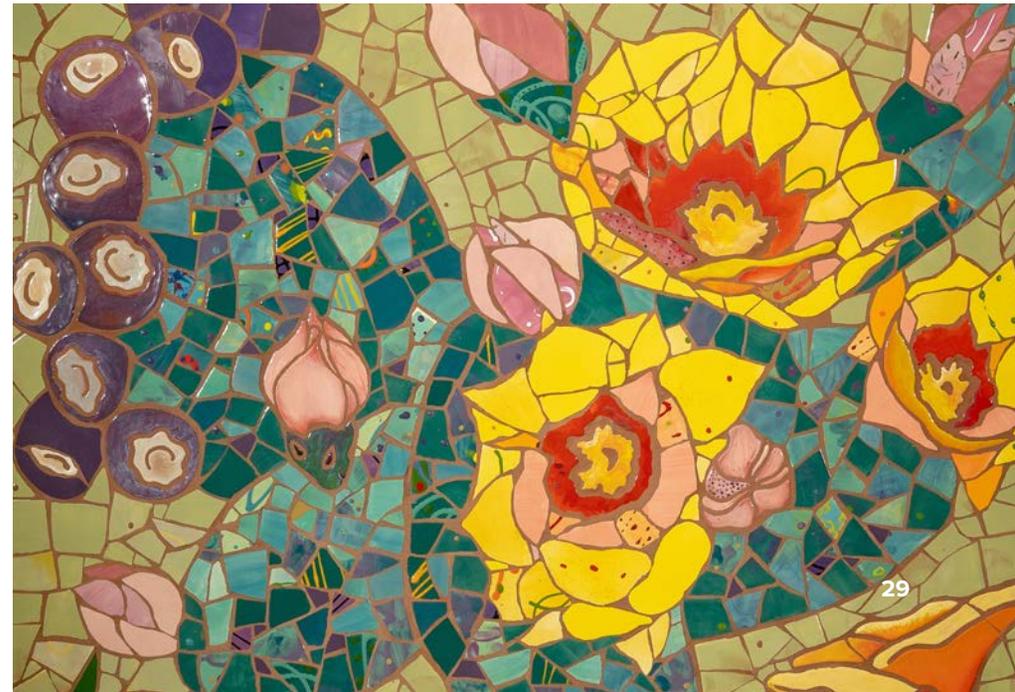
Retrofit Projects

El Paso’s Public Art Program has excelled at commissioning site-specific artworks integrated into a variety of public facilities in a variety of ways. These artworks are generally commissioned at the time that a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project is occurring. While this approach should remain a priority for the Program, looking forward, the Program should also explore approaches to commissioning artworks at locations where capital improvements are not occurring. This will help the Program better achieve its goal of distributing public art more fully throughout the city.

These projects, which could be considered “retrofit” projects, come with additional complexity as the Program will be responsible for more aspects of the planning and coordination of the projects than is typical for public art commissioned as part of a capital improvement project. Additional considerations will include overseeing physical site integration issues, such as foundations and lighting.

The Master Plan Update provides strategies for advancing retrofit projects, where appropriate, including: planning for retrofit projects in conjunction with the upcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which is expected to focus on improving existing facilities; collaborating with MCAD to allow artists to develop public art for existing facilities through MCAD’s Cultural Funding Program grants (see the Cultivating Local Artists section of this plan); and exploring other projects the Public Art Program can initiate itself, such as murals. Murals are a particularly good fit for retrofit projects because they generally require less infrastructure work than other types of projects and can be added in many types of places and facilities, both indoors and out. The Program should consider commissioning one mural a year, as a way to distribute art throughout the city, while also supporting El Paso’s rich tradition of muralism.

Terry Wright & Kathryn Gelinias, *Living Desert*, 2020



Opportunity Area: Parks

The City of El Paso maintains a broad network of parks. They include regional, community, neighborhood and linear parks, as well as sports centers, and special-use parks, such as the El Paso Municipal Rose Garden and Eastwood (Album) Park, to serve a broader constituency than the immediate area. Aside from roadways, parks are the most common type of public space in the city. They provide an opportunity to locate public art in places that are easily accessible to many people.

Though most of the parks constructed by the City over the past decade have included public art, many parks predate the Public Art Ordinance and don't yet have public art. In addition, most of the park spaces dedicated by developers over the past decade have not included public art.

Notably, at the time of this writing, the City is launching a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the focus is expected to be on improving existing facilities. This planning process offers an important opportunity to align public art investment in parks with the community's broader goal of locating art in communities that have been bypassed so far. When that plan is complete, the Program should work with the Parks and Recreation Department to create an implementation-oriented Public Art Focus Plan that provides a strategy for public art in parks and park facilities, particularly for retrofit projects. This strategy can identify site integration strategies and priority locations for public art and can inform the way that public art is funded through future capital programs. The following considerations are especially important:

- The Public Art Focus Plan for Parks and Recreation should identify locational priorities and mechanisms for planning, funding and commissioning public art into parks and park facilities in areas of the city with less access to public art.
- The Public Art Focus Plan for Parks and Recreation should consider whether there are functional park features, such as shade structures and entry markers, that can be customized through artistic enhancements.
- Park lands dedicated by developers, generally in newer areas of the city, often have fewer amenities than City-developed parks and no public art. The Public Art Focus Plan for Parks and Recreation should consider which of these spaces

would be priorities for public art, taking into consideration functional features and amenities that are required for developer-created park spaces, as well as processes for funding and commissioning these projects.



Goals for Public Art in Parks

Public art in parks should:

- Elevate the appearance and experience of parks
- Create engaging spaces within parks that bring people together
- Help create a unique identity for each park that is reflective of its context
- Enhance the functional features of parks
- Strengthen synergies between parks and co-located facilities, functionally or visually

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should prioritize:

- Capital improvement project locations that meet the Project Identification Principles for budget, timing and site integration outlined in the “Creating the Annual Public Art Plan” section of this plan
- Parks in areas/neighborhoods that are underserved with public art, as indicated by the metrics outlined in the Creating the Annual Public Art Plan section of this plan.
- Parks where the community has identified public art as a priority through a park or community planning process, including the forthcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Resources for Public Art in Parks

The Program should consider the following sources of funds for public art in parks:

- CIP funds for new park construction
- Pooled CIP funds
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for parks improvements

Parks with Public Art

Bartlett Park

Jackrabbit Jumps the Love Ball,
Michael Stutz

Blackie Chesher Park

Sun Pavilion, David Dalhquist

Cavalry Man Triangle

Aztec Pavilion, Poetic Kinetics

Cavalry Man, Jose Ruiz de Rivera

Cleveland Square Park

Sombras y Luz,
Bill and Mary Buchen

Treacherous Crossing,

Julio Sanchez de Alba

Crime Victims Memorial Park

*Remembrance — Crime Victims
Memorial Reading Garden,*
Ken Bernstein

Delta Park

Men of Company E Memorial,
Julio Sanchez de Alba

Eastside Regional Park

Hueco Tanks Archway,
Mark Grieve and Ilana Spector

Oasis Sombrio, Brad Goldberg

Lions Plazita

Aguacero, Sebastian

Lt. Col. Robert “Bob” Chisolm Park

Sky Boulder, Willie Ray Parish

Northeast Regional Park

Rivals, Lars Stanley

Jim Crouch Park

August 3rd Memorial,
Albert “Tino” Ortega

San Jacinto Plaza

Los Lagartos, Luis Jimenez

Stanton Bridge Park

El Paso Port-all, Jari WERC Alvarez

Travis White Park

Wagon Sprouts, Christopher Fennell

Veterans Memorial Park

Day of Valor, Jimmie Bemont



Albert “Tino” Ortega, *August 3rd Memorial*, 2024

Opportunity Area: Trailheads

El Paso’s trail network generally consists of two types of trails — hiking trails in the Franklin Mountains and urban trails that connect neighborhoods, mostly through linear parks or dedications along major arterials in newly developed areas of the city. The City also hosts the southern segment of the Rio Grande River Park trail, a paved multi-use trail that runs from Sunland Park through the Upper Valley and will ultimately extend far northward into New Mexico.

Overall, the City is building a network of 10 trailheads to provide access to its mountain trails and the River Park trail, in addition to creating access points where these trails connect to City parks. Of these trailheads, four are in planning or advanced planning stages and six are completed or under construction at the time of the writing of this plan.

Public art at trailheads can help identify where trailheads intersect with roadways, trail parking, or destinations; give each trailhead a distinctive identity; and help anchor gathering places. The Program should evaluate existing and new trailheads for mountain trails and the river trail to identify potential locations for public art, using the criteria below.

The proposed Parks and Recreation Public Art Focus Plan, discussed in the Parks Opportunity Area above, should consider public art at trailheads, including locational considerations, site integration strategies, project types and funding mechanisms.

Goals for Public Art at Trailheads

Public art at trailheads should:

- Create a unique identity for individual trailheads that is reflective of each trail’s context
- Strengthen functional features of trailheads
- Foster awareness of ecological systems
- Improve the legibility of the overall trail system

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should prioritize:

- Trailheads that have the highest use
- Trailheads that are in areas of the city underserved with public art

Trailhead with Public Art

Chuck Heinrich Memorial Park
Desert Blossom, May + Watkins Design

- Trailheads that are co-located with other facilities, such as parks
- Locations where public art can support the experience of nature and natural systems

The Program should avoid:

- Locations where public art would disrupt natural systems and/or the experience of nature

Resources for Public Art at Trailheads

The Program should consider the following sources of funds for public art at trailheads:

- CIP funds for urban trailhead construction
- Pooled CIP funds



Opportunity Area: Skate Parks

The City operates 11 skate parks, most but not all of which are in existing parks. Four have custom concrete builds and seven have modular ramp layouts.

Public art, in the form of murals, could be retrofit onto non-skateable surfaces in existing skate parks or onto walls that are adjacent to skate parks. If new skate park facilities are constructed, public art can be incorporated into the design of the facility. Skating culture has its own visual culture, which could be explored through public art.

The proposed Parks and Recreation Public Art Focus Plan, discussed in the Parks Opportunity Area above, should consider public art in existing and new skate parks, including site integration strategies, project types and funding mechanisms.

Goals for Public Art in Skate Parks

Public art in skate parks should:

- Remediate and discourage illegal graffiti
- Reflect local skate culture
- Engage youth and skate park users in the public art process to foster a sense of ownership of the public art

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should prioritize:

- Skate parks that are being newly constructed
- Skate parks in areas/neighborhoods that don't already have public art
- Skate parks in areas with highest incidences of graffiti

Additional Considerations:

- Even if a skate park is co-located with other community facilities, the artwork pursued for a skate park should be independent and specifically reflective of skate culture and skaters.
- Specific skate parks with appropriate surfaces and walls could be included on a list of locations interested in working with artists who receive MCAD Cultural Funding Program grants for public art projects.

**Resources for
Public Art in Skate Parks**

The Program should consider the following sources of funds for public art in skate parks:

- CIP funds for new skate park construction
- Pooled CIP funds
- CDBG funds for parks improvements
- Graffiti abatement funds



Opportunity Area: Community Facilities

Community facilities include El Paso’s networks of recreation centers, senior centers and aquatic centers, all of which are managed by the Parks and Recreation Department.

The City manages 20 Recreation Centers (some are called Community Centers), which feature a variety of programming suitable for all ages and abilities, as well as amenities such as fitness equipment, gyms, classrooms, dance studios and both indoor and outdoor courts for pickleball and tennis. The City also manages 11 Senior Centers, with programming specific to older community members. Some community facilities are co-located with libraries, as well.

The proposed Parks and Recreation Public Art Focus Plan discussed more thoroughly in the Parks Opportunity Area section above, should consider public art in community facilities, including locational considerations, site integration strategies, project types and funding mechanisms.

Goals for Public Art in Community Facilities

Public art in community facilities should:

- Reflect the neighborhood/community where the artwork is sited and the activities taking place within the facility
- Complement and enhance the visual appearance and design of the facility
- Strengthen and beautify gathering places

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should prioritize:

- Facilities in communities that don’t already have public art
- Facilities that don’t have public art
- Locations that strongly meet the Project Identification Principles for budget, timing and site integration outlined in the “Creating the Annual Public Art Plan” section of this plan

CIP funds for projects at facilities that don’t meet these criteria should be allocated to projects that better meet these criteria.

Additional Considerations

- The strategies for co-location discussed earlier should be considered when applicable.
- The Program should consider community participation in the process of commissioning and/or creating artworks, in order to maintain connections with the communities these facilities serve.
- Specific community facilities could be included on a list of locations interested in working with artists who receive MCAD Cultural Funding grants for public art projects.

Resources for Public Art in Community Facilities

- CIP funds for new community facility construction
- Pooled CIP funds

Community Facilities with Public Art

Camp Cohen Water Park

Crescendo, John Davis

Chalio Acosta Sports Center

PITZ/TLACHKO, Gabriel Gaytan

Chamizal Community Center

Blurred Boundaries, Jesus “Cimi” Alvarado

Chapoteo Water Park

Folklorico, Simon Donovan and Ben Olmstead

Lost Kingdom Water Park

Mythical Mayans, Madeline Weiner

Oasis Water Park

Desert in Bloom, Olalekan Jeyifous

Pat O'Rourke Recreation Center

Blooming Trees and Color Schemes, Cesar Ivan

Pavo Real Recreation Center

Camino Real en Pavo Real, Rene Nevarez

Polly Harris Senior Center

Living Desert, Terry Wright and Kathryn Gelinias

Sylvia A. Carreon Community Center

Narrativa, Blessing Hancock

Valle Bajo Community Center

VOIDS, Osman Akan

Westside Natatorium

Marquise, Marc Fornes (Theverymany)



Rene Nevarez, *Camino Real en Pavo Real*, 2022

Opportunity Area: Libraries

The El Paso Public Library system consists of 15 facilities, some of which are co-located with community centers. Seven of them include public art, most created through the Public Art Program. Two libraries, Richard Burges and Clardy Fox, have artworks that were funded through MCAD Cultural Funding Program grants.

Library leadership values public art because it can connect people in the community to the library and its resources and thereby encourage life-long learning and connection to a larger world as well.

Because libraries are dispersed throughout El Paso and are a central part of community life, they should continue to be a priority location for public art commissions in conjunction with capital improvement projects, as well as retrofit projects.

Libraries are also excellent spaces for the Public Art Program to utilize for community engagement activities and artist outreach and to provide the public with information about works in the Collection. Individual libraries may also be interested in partnering on programs to expand audience engagement with specific works at or near library facilities.

Goals for Public Art in Libraries

Public art in libraries should:

- Connect the community to library facilities through art
- Inspire discovery, creativity and life-long learning
- Foster connection to and appreciation of the broader world
- Enhance the experience of being in the physical space of the library
- Encourage community participation and engagement

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should prioritize:

- Libraries in communities that don't already have public art
 - Libraries that don't already have public art
 - Locations that strongly meet the Project Identification Principles for budget, timing and site integration outlined in the "Creating the Annual Public Art Plan" section of this plan
- CIP funds for library projects that don't meet these criteria should be allocated to projects that better meet these criteria.

Additional Considerations

- The strategies for co-location discussed earlier should be considered when applicable.
- The Program should consider community participation in the process of commissioning and/or creating artworks, as part of the libraries' ongoing efforts to maintain connections with the communities they serve.
- Specific libraries could be included on a list of locations interested in working with artists who receive MCAD Cultural Funding Program grants for public art projects.

Resources for Public Art in Libraries

- CIP funds for new library construction
- Pooled CIP funds

Libraries with Public Art

Chamizal Library
Blurred Boundaries,
Jesus "Cimi" Alvarado

Clardy Fox Library
Desert Agave, Adrian Lopez

El Paso Main Library
A Novel Romance, Ho Baron

Esperanza Acosta Moreno Library
Seats of Hope, Samantha N. Silva

Irving Schwartz Library
Nebula, Michele Gutlove

Jose Cisneros Cielo Vista Library
Continuum, Patricia "Sabina" Munoz

Richard Burges Library
Kidz Zone, Hal Marcus

Valle Bajo Library
Voids, Osman Akan



Opportunity Area: Public Safety Facilities

The City of El Paso is expanding and upgrading its public safety facilities through numerous CIP projects funded by the Public Safety Bond approved by voters in 2019. Overall, the projects seek to add new public safety facilities in growing areas of the city, provide for major maintenance and renovation of aging facilities and provide academy and logistics facilities to accommodate for future growth. Artworks have been completed for the Upper East Side Regional Command and Fire Station 36.

Public art should continue to be commissioned at public safety facilities that have significant public use and/or visibility and should be sited to maximize visibility by the public as well as public safety staff.

Goals for Art in Public Safety Facilities

Public Art in public safety facilities should:

- Help the public understand the nature of public safety work
- Explore themes related to fire, police and other public safety work
- Improve the experience of staff and members of the public using these facilities

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should:

- Prioritize projects at new public safety facilities where there is significant public visitation and/or visibility (such as spaces that the public can access and locations visible from major roads). Pool public art funds for projects that do not meet this criterion.
- Prioritize locations at new public safety facilities that strongly meet the “project identification principles” for budget, timing and site integration outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Pool public art funds for projects that do not meet this criterion.
- Direct pooled funds to public safety facilities in communities that are underserved by public art.

- Direct pooled funds to public safety facilities that don't have public art.
- Strongly consider pooling public art funds for regional command center renovations and fire station renovations.
- For larger budget CIP projects, strongly consider commissioning only one artwork and pooling remaining funds for projects identified according to the criteria above.

Resources for Public Art in Public Safety Facilities

- CIP funds for public safety facilities

Public Safety Facilities with Public Art

Fire Station #5
Firebird, Greg Reiche

Fire Station #18
Rising Stronger, Julio Sanchez de Alba

Fire Station #36
Pillars of the Community, Ken McCall

Fire Station #37
Water, Ilan Averbuch

Police Headquarters
History of Five Points,
Jesus "Cimi" Alvarado

Police Department Eastside Regional Command Center
Sun Eagle, Natalie Blake Studios
Convocation, MGA Sculpture



Ilan Averbuch, *Water*, 2013

Opportunity Area: Road Infrastructure

The 2022 Community Progress Bond is providing almost \$250 million to expand and upgrade basic roadway elements throughout the city, including bridges, roundabouts, paving, medians, sidewalks, bike lanes and signals. While much of this funding is for upgrading the current road network, including the 50 busiest corridors, funding is also planned for expansions in the Upper Valley, Northeast and the East Side. Some of the funds will also be spent on neighborhood traffic calming and on pedestrian improvements in transit corridors.

The Public Art Program has commissioned numerous road and bridge projects, both before and after the 2014 Public Art Master Plan was adopted. They include roundabout sculptures, artworks in median strips, two murals on retaining walls, lighting on

an underpass and integrated concrete work in retaining walls along two segments of the Transmountain Highway in collaboration with the Texas Department of Transportation. The Program is currently planning a project to commission public art as recommended by the Public Art Streetscape Aesthetics Plan.

A key lesson from artworks commissioned through previous transportation bond projects was that a number of them, primarily in medians and roundabouts, have had a high level of repair issues due to the number of vehicle collisions. Accordingly, the most reasonable public art approach will be to couple caution when selecting sites, particularly in regard to roundabouts and median artwork, with consideration of strategies for minimizing the potential risk to artworks.

Goals for Public Art in Road Infrastructure

Public Art in road infrastructure should:

- Enhance the appearance of road infrastructure for residents and visitors to the city
- Enhance the sense of connectivity in the city by strengthening the overall identity of the different areas of the city that are connected by road infrastructure
- Contribute to increased safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should:

- Seek locations that represent important nodes in the citywide transportation network
 - > Especially consider nodes that will be experienced by residents and visitors alike
- Seek locations on roadways with higher volumes of traffic
- Seek locations that have high pedestrian use
- Seek locations that have been recommended for public art in other adopted City plans
- Seek locations where the City already controls adjacent right of way suitable for the installation of public art
- Seek locations where there is adjacent infrastructure, such as retaining walls, that would allow for the installation of public art without extensive site preparation.
- Avoid locations where maintenance and repair are likely to be an issue, especially as a result of collisions with the artwork

Mitsu Overstreet, *Juntos*, 2022



Guidelines for Locating Public Art in Roundabouts and Medians

These guidelines can be used to evaluate the advisability of commissioning public art in roundabouts or medians:

- Focus on projects where the design reduces the chance for collisions:
 - > For roundabouts, consider the overall geometrics of the roundabout and approach roads, roadway design speeds, edge treatments and grading of the roundabout and the presence of traffic calming measures on the approach roads.
 - > For medians, consider the width of the median, landscaping in and grading of the median, roadway design speeds and the presence of traffic calming infrastructure.

- Wait for several years after a roundabout has been installed and analyze collision and speeding data, to determine the overall safety of the roundabout in ordinary conditions, before planning for public art in that location.
- Consider implementing traffic calming measures such as speed humps in the vicinity of art installation.

Resources for Public Art in Road Infrastructure

- CIP funds

Road Infrastructure with Public Art

Alabama Street

Window to the Franklins,
Jesus “Cimi” Alvarado

Bataan Railway Fence

Ferrocarrilero, Art Garcia

La Plaza de Los Lagartos,

Leticia Huerta

Luminous Landscape,

Tom Orr and Frances Bagley

Reclaimed Crossing, Bruce Taylor

Rio Grande 1, Lars Stanley

Carolina Bridge

Woven Culture, Creative Kids, Inc.

Country Club Road Roundabout

Unity, Laura Turon

El Paso and San Antonio Street Roundabout

Bienvenido, Christopher Weed

Geronimo Drive

Juntos, Mitsu Overstreet

I-10 Airway Interchange

Airway Aesthetics, Vicki Scuri

Paso Del Norte Roundabout

El Paso Faro, Ray King Studio

Pebble Hills Traffic Circle

Ocotillo, Howard Kalish

RC Poe Roundabout

Whirlwind, Art Garcia

Rich Beem Roundabout

Conexion, Jose Octavio Cano

Spur 1966

The Cloud, Donald Lipski

Upper Valley Traffic Circle

Upper Valley Wind Sails,

Doug Taylor

Jesus “Cimi” Alvarado, *Window to the Franklins*, 2022



Opportunity Area: Transportation Corridors

The City of El Paso has developed four transit corridors that provide bus rapid transit service (Brio) into the far reaches of the city, as well as a looped streetcar route that provides regular service connecting downtown, the UTEP campus and the neighborhoods in between. No plans currently exist for extensions to any of these networks. The four Brio corridors include public art at all stations, through an ambitious collaboration between MCAD and Sun Metro.

El Paso is now encouraging infill development, particularly residential development, along these and other major transportation corridors. While the primary goal for infill development is to promote more housing options and housing affordability, the City also envisions related improvements to support development and population

growth along those corridors. These areas will be an important opportunity for new public art projects, though the mechanisms for incorporating public art into public and private improvements would need to be determined.

Over the years, the City's ideas for infill development have been encapsulated in several planning documents and policies. *Envision El Paso*, the City's proposed comprehensive plan update, will emphasize infill development, particularly residential and related infrastructure improvements. Similar recommendations can be found in several plans and policies adopted in recent years, such as the *Onward Alameda* master plan, *Downtown and Uptown Master Plan* and the *City of El Paso Infill and Redevelopment Policy*.

The City's Infill and Redevelopment policy¹ outlines several key goals:

- Increase the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of older, underutilized buildings.
- Increase density and housing options within existing communities where appropriate transit options exist.
- Increase the development of middle housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, quadraplexes, or attached single family homes and mid-rise multifamily housing in targeted areas.

These plans and policies generally envision infill housing development occurring incrementally through private investment. They do not propose new public funding for infill housing, though some of the corridors pass through Tax Increment Reinvestment

¹ City of El Paso Infill and Redevelopment Policy, 2022

Zone (TIRZ) areas where funding might support development and infrastructure. Other policy proposals have included relaxing zoning and parking standards as development incentives. One possibility might be to designate demonstration areas throughout the city where different approaches could be explored.

The City's plans and policies also associate other improvements to areas where infill would be focused. The "place types" outlined in Envision El Paso offer holistic views of how development, public realm and public services can be linked in different types of urban communities. Before Envision El Paso, the Alameda and Downtown/Uptown plans have several key similarities; both prioritize walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods around transit stations and incorporate

affordable housing and green infrastructure initiatives.

Because at the moment infill development is envisioned to occur through market forces, the Public Art Program should focus on creating mechanisms to incorporate public art in associated quality of life public realm improvements, especially in Envision El Paso place types that are most appropriate for infill redevelopment. Public art improvements might include small-scale features such as corner treatments, low-rise planters, bicycle racks, tree grates, neighborhood markers, wall treatments and entries. This kit of parts could be incorporated inexpensively into street improvement projects and also offered to private developers. It is possible that this kit of parts could be developed through experimentation with ideas in the Public Art Streetscape Aesthetics Plan.

Because of the scale and nature of the development that is envisioned, it is not likely that any but the largest infill developments could include public art. In those cases, the City might consider a public art requirement that is tied to any incentives that are offered for infill housing. This could result in small developer projects or contributions to pooled funds, which should be used in the vicinity of the project being developed.

Goals for Art in Transit Corridors

- Enhance the appearance of street infrastructure and other City mobility infrastructure
- Reinforce multimodal strategies; emphasize areas where people make connections or shift between modes (including pedestrian modes)
- Strengthen public spaces and community identity through public realm improvements

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should prioritize:

- Publicly-owned sites
- Sites that offer the potential to coordinate with public construction projects
- Sites that will require minimal site preparation investment
- Sites in communities that don't already have public art

Resources for Public Art in Transit Corridors

- CIP funds for transportation improvements along and near key corridors

Sun Metro Facilities with Public Art

Al Jefferson Westside Transfer Center
Time in Transit, Gary Price

Alameda RTS
Alameda Brio, 13 local artists

Airway Boulevard Median
Flores del Desierto, Christopher Weed

Bert Williams Downtown Santa Fe Transfer Center
Confluencia, Hank Saxe and Cynthia Patterson

Dyer RTS
Desert Camouflage, Haddad-Drugan

Glory Road Transfer Center
Glory Road, Mike Mandel

Montana RTS
Acies, George Bates

Mesa RTS
Leaves of Wind, Catherine Widgery

Metro 31 Transit Center
Radiata, Ed Carpenter

Nestor A. Valencia Mission Valley Transfer Center
Natural Passage, Gary Price

Northgate Transfer Center
Torre de las Flores, Jim Hirschfield and Sonya Ishii

Sun Metro Bicentennial Council Transit Operations Center
Pasajeros (Passengers), Simon Donovan and Ben Olmstead

Upper Eastside Transfer Center
Luminous Bound, Aaron Stephan

Katherine Widgery, *Leaves of Wind*, 2014



Opportunity Area: El Paso International Airport

The El Paso International Airport (EPIA) is a gateway for visitors from around the world to west Texas, southern New Mexico and adjacent areas in Mexico.

The Public Art Program has had a vibrant and growing partnership with EPIA commissioning new artworks. Six projects have been completed prior to this writing, and five additional projects are planned. (An additional artwork that is part of the Montana Street BRIO corridor is also located at the airport.) Other artwork at the airport, such as temporary exhibitions and installations, are managed by EPIA staff.

The airport is in the midst of a five-year Capital Improvement Plan that includes \$276 million in terminal, airfield and non-aviation projects. While these

projects' primary alignment with the City's strategic plan is to help achieve the goal "Cultivate an Environment Conducive to Strong, Economic Development" by expanding airport capacity, airport leadership also notes the airport plays a role in achieving the goal "Promote the Visual Image of the City" by improving the visual impression of El Paso for travelers. The five-year plan includes rehabilitation, renovation and remodeling of several areas in the terminal that might be candidates for future public art collaborations.²

With the expansion of public art at EPIA, the Public Art Program should consider partnering with the airport to develop an airport Public Art Focus Plan. This plan could offer a roadmap for matching airport art resources to opportunities, not only for permanent

commissions, but also for temporary installations and exhibitions managed by EPIA.

Goals for Public Art in the Airport

Public Art in the airport should:

- Welcome visitors from around the world to El Paso and the Borderlands Region, and create a sense of pride and homecoming for regional residents returning home
- Enhance user experience by contributing to the overall design and ambiance of the airport
- Enhance visual impressions of El Paso for travelers, creating a sense that you know you are in El Paso

²Undated presentation, "Airport 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan"

Criteria for Prioritizing Public Art Opportunities

The Program should prioritize:

- Sites that are in a variety of locations, both pre- and post-security, to reach travelers as well as meeter-greeters and the non-traveling public
- Accessible areas where there is an opportunity for a strong, immediate visual impact.

Resources for Public Art in the Airport

- CIP funds for EIPA

Public Art at El Paso International Airport

Concourse B Variation, Rae Mahaffey

El Paso Passage, Bill Fitzgibbons

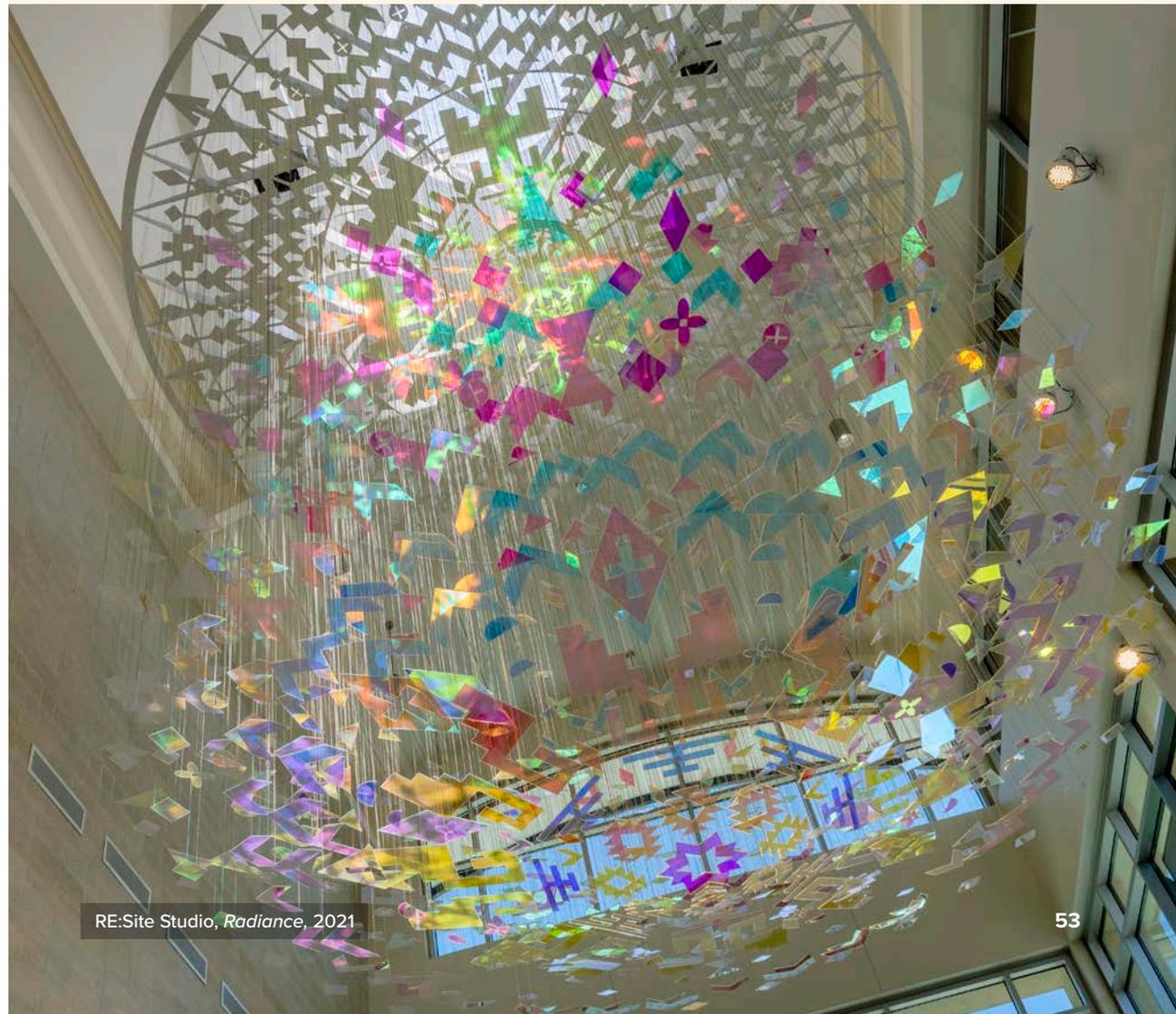
NOPALI, Chris Winterstein

Portal 1, Ricardo Chavarria

Radiance, RE:Site

River Spirit, Mitsu Overstreet

The River/El Rio: Both Sides, No Sides, Mitsu Overstreet



Opportunity Area: Downtown

Downtown El Paso is the city’s cultural, entertainment and governmental hub, as well as a busy retail destination. It is an international gateway, with two of the city’s four border crossings that link to downtown Ciudad Juarez. El Paso’s Downtown Arts District was officially designated as a cultural district by the Texas Commission on the Arts in 2011.

Downtown is the location of the highest concentration of public art in the city, including works that are in the City’s Collection and works that have been created through other processes, such as artist-initiated works and works commissioned by other organizations.

Public art marks the border crossings; major facilities such as the convention center, baseball stadium, library, City museums, Mexican American Cultural Center and La Nube; and artworks

along the Pedestrian Pathway at two roundabouts and along various Brio lines. One of El Paso’s most iconic and best-loved artworks, *Los Lagartos*, is in San Jacinto Plaza.

The Program should continue to grow the collection of public art Downtown, recognizing its high level of visibility to residents and visitors, while balancing the need to bring art to other parts of the city.

One opportunity is the proposed expansion of the Convention Center south across San Antonio Avenue. Plans for this project are still taking shape, and provision should be made for public art to be included in this important public-facing facility, even if it is not funded through bonds subject to the City’s percent for art ordinance. The Program should develop a Public Art Focus Plan for the Convention Center that could identify

site integration strategies and priority locations for public art, outline implementation strategies and inform the use of public art resources at the Convention Center. In addition, the expansion provides an opportunity to display works from the Art Purchase Program and/or to acquire artworks through the Art Purchase Program specifically for the Convention Center.

Another significant opportunity is the Union Plaza area, one of downtown El Paso’s oldest districts, historically shaped by rail activity, warehouses, and cross-border commerce that supported the city’s growth as a regional transportation hub. Today, Union Plaza includes a mix of adaptive-reuse buildings, small-scale cultural and entertainment uses, along with the Union Plaza Park. The neighborhood is located directly adjacent to Southwest University Park, which

draws consistent audiences for regular El Paso Chihuahuas baseball games and El Paso Locomotive FC soccer matches, along with special events. In March 2025, the City began soliciting proposals for the redevelopment of City-owned properties south of Overland Street, immediately south of the proposed Convention Center expansion site.³ This redevelopment represents an important opportunity to re-activate an underutilized area and strengthen connections between the Convention Center, the ballpark, and surrounding downtown districts. The City should consider public art as an integral component of redevelopment efforts in this area, using site-responsive works that reflect the district’s history and support a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented downtown experience.

Goals for Public Art in Downtown

Public art in Downtown should:

- Mark key cultural, entertainment and governmental facilities
- Create inviting and inclusive public spaces
- Welcome people entering Downtown from other areas
- Reflect the history and cultural traditions of the communities living in and around Downtown
- Connect people to El Paso’s cultural and civic narratives

Criteria for Prioritization

The Program should prioritize:

- Projects that reinforce the nature of Downtown districts, facilities and pedestrian connections

Resources for Public Art in Downtown

- CIP funds for the construction of new facilities, such as the proposed Convention Center expansion
- Private developers, especially related to City property sold for redevelopment in the Union Plaza area

³ “The City of El Paso is offering 17 City-owned properties in the historic Union Plaza area of downtown for redevelopment through adaptive reuse — repurposing existing structures while preserving their architectural character. Located between Santa Fe, Chihuahua, Paisano, and Overland Streets, these properties are available individually or as part of a Master Plan Development.” <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/union-plaza-redevelopment/>, accessed July 2025.

Public Art Downtown

A Novel Romance, Ho Baron

Aguacero, Sebastian

Alameda Brio, 13 local artists

Aztec Pavilion, Poetic Kinetics

Bienvenido, Christopher Weed

Cavalry Man, Jose Ruiz de Rivera

Chroma Booster, Matthew Geller

Confluencia, Hank Saxe Cynthia Patterson

Dyer Brio — Desert Camouflage,
Haddad-Drugan

El Paso Faro, Ray King Studio

El Paso History of Baseball,
Gaspar Enriquez

El Paso Port-All, Jari WERC Alvarez

Ferrocarrilero, Art Garcia

La Plaza de Los Lagartos, Leticia Huerta

Los Lagartos, Luis Jimenez

Luminous Landscape, Tom Orr and
Frances Bagley

MaStairPlan, Jari WERC Alvarez

Mesa Brio — Leaves of Wind,
Catherine Widgery

Not Whole Fence, Ball-Nogues

Points of Lights, Creative Kids, Inc.

Reclaimed Crossing, Bruce Taylor

Reflections of the Desert,
Creative Kids, Inc.

Rio Grande 1, Lars Stanley

*The River Chronicle a History of
El Paso del Norte*, Robert Davidoff

Silver Lining, Barbara Grygutis

Sombras y Luz, Bill & Mary Buchen

Time Expanding, Charlotte Paul

Treacherous Crossing, Julio Sanchez

Weatherscape, FutureForms



Ray King, *El Paso Faro*, 2025



Osman Akan, *Voids*, 2020

Creating the Annual Public Art Plan

The vision, mission and goals outlined in this Master Plan Update express broadly shared ideas about why the City of El Paso supports public art and the impact that people in El Paso expect public art to have on their city. Following the guidance of this Master Plan Update and the City's Public Art Ordinance, El Paso's Public Art Program will use the process and criteria outlined below to prioritize and pursue projects that reflect these shared ideas.

Each year, the Program develops an Annual Public Art Plan that guides its work. The plan includes the budget, location, artist selection approach and general timeline for each public art project that will be worked on that year. The Annual Public Art Plan is approved by the Public Art Committee and MCAAB and forwarded to City Council for approval. Once the Annual Public Art Plan is approved, MCAD staff may proceed with the commissioning or acquisition of artwork for the projects in the plan.

MCAD staff will draft the Annual Public Art Plan through the following steps:

- Confer with the City's Capital Improvements Department (CID) to assess the schedule of CIP projects and determine which are at a point in their planning at which they could be considered as an opportunity for public art. These meetings between MCAD and CID staff should occur at least quarterly, as CIP project schedules and details can change throughout the course of a year.
- Evaluate each CIP opportunity with CID and the relevant City department to determine if El Paso's public art goals are best served by commissioning public art at that site, using the Project Identification Principles below, or by pooling the public art funds and transferring them to another site.
- For CIP projects that will include public art, confer with CID and the relevant City department to identify location(s) for artwork within the project, project timeline and public art budget.

- For CIP projects that will not include public art, or whose public art budgets would be greater than the amount needed to commission an artwork at that site, pool the funds for use elsewhere.
- Allocate pooled public art funds to projects according to the Priorities for Pooled Funding below and the Criteria for Prioritization provided for each Opportunity Area in this plan.

Project Identification Principles

The Program should use the following principles to identify public art projects that should be part of the Annual Public Art Plan.

Capital Improvement Projects

If a CIP project meets all the following criteria, public art should be commissioned in coordination with the design and construction of that project. If all the criteria are not met, strong consideration should be given to pooling the public art funds for use elsewhere.

- Incorporating public art into this CIP project would align with **the Program’s mission, vision and goals.**
- Public art incorporated into this CIP project site would meet the **locational priorities** described below.

- Incorporating public art into this CIP project would advance the **equitable distribution of public art** throughout the city, as described below in this section This includes not only newly expanded areas of the city, but also areas of the city that lack public art.
- The project provides the artist with an **adequate opportunity to consider the relationship between the public art and the site** — the overall cultural context as well as how the artwork can reflect and be integrated into the architecture, landscape architecture, infrastructure and other site conditions.
- The public art budget is **adequate** to create an artwork of appropriate scale and significance for the site and would cover all project costs including artist fees, fabrication, installation, community outreach and other project components.
- The schedule for the underlying CIP project allows **adequate time for proper implementation** of the public art process — including defining the public art project, artist selection, community engagement, fabrication and installation.

Priorities for Pooled Funding

If it is determined that public art should not be created on site and that the public art funds related to the CIP project should be pooled, the following principles should be used to prioritize the allocation of pooled funds.

Funding should be re-allocated to:

- Other planned public art projects that have **budgets that are not adequate to cover all project costs** — including artist fees, fabrication, installation, community outreach and other project components.
- **Existing facilities where artworks can be installed without extensive infrastructure preparation.** This might mean interior or exterior two-dimensional artworks (murals, mosaics, reliefs) or three-dimensional artworks (small sculptures) that do not require extensive infrastructure preparation.
- Projects that best meet the **locational priorities** outlined below.
- Projects where **other resources can be leveraged**, particularly funding.

Also, funding should be **balanced** among projects that:

- provide opportunities for artists from the region and those that provide opportunities for artists from elsewhere.
- provide opportunities for artists with a variety of interests and levels of experience in public art practice.

Locational Priorities for CIP and Pooled Funding Projects

The Program should prioritize projects in the following locations:

- Places that advance the **equitable distribution of public art throughout the city**, as described below in this section. Places that are **highly visible and highly used** and where art will make a **positive visual or functional impact** in that space, such as community gathering spaces and business, retail, entertainment and campus areas.
 - > These could include public spaces and facilities (such as parks, libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, transportation centers, trailheads) as well as major economic development areas (such as the Medical Center for the Americas, Cohen Entertainment District and the Union Plaza redevelopment area).
- Places where public art will make a **positive impact on neighborhood identity and character**, both visually and in regard to expressing a neighborhood’s underlying cultural and historic identity.
 - > These could include community gathering places, such as existing clusters of community facilities, and emerging urban areas around transit corridors.
- Places that are focal points for **pedestrian and community activity**, where people can actively engage with the artwork.
 - > This could include the city’s four transit-oriented development corridors.

- Places that have an important **cultural or social context**, such as a connection to the region’s history, heritage and its unique bi-national culture.
- > These could include places with connections to history, culture and the arts, particularly places where it is possible to explore the bi-national culture with Ciudad Juarez.

Equitable Distribution of Public Art

Several of the criteria above call for the equitable distribution of public art. While this can be a difficult concept to define, there are several metrics that the Program can use, including several developed for the Envision El Paso comprehensive plan update:

- One metric is to compare the geographic distribution of public art to the distribution of population in El Paso. Essentially, the Program should ensure that public art is accessible to everyone in the communities where they live. This can be evaluated by overlaying a map of public art locations with a map of population distribution, based on Census data.

- One qualitative metric, developed for *Envision El Paso*, is to consider the populations that are most vulnerable, in terms of income, health, age and immigration status, and ensure that those populations have easy access to public art.
- Another qualitative metric, also developed for *Envision El Paso*, is to consider populations that have access to resources that are associated with strong community networks (parks, community facilities, cultural institutions, religious institutions and service providers) or that are evidence of social cohesion (voter participation). Communities scoring lower on this metric might benefit more from public art.

Technical Considerations for Evaluating Sites

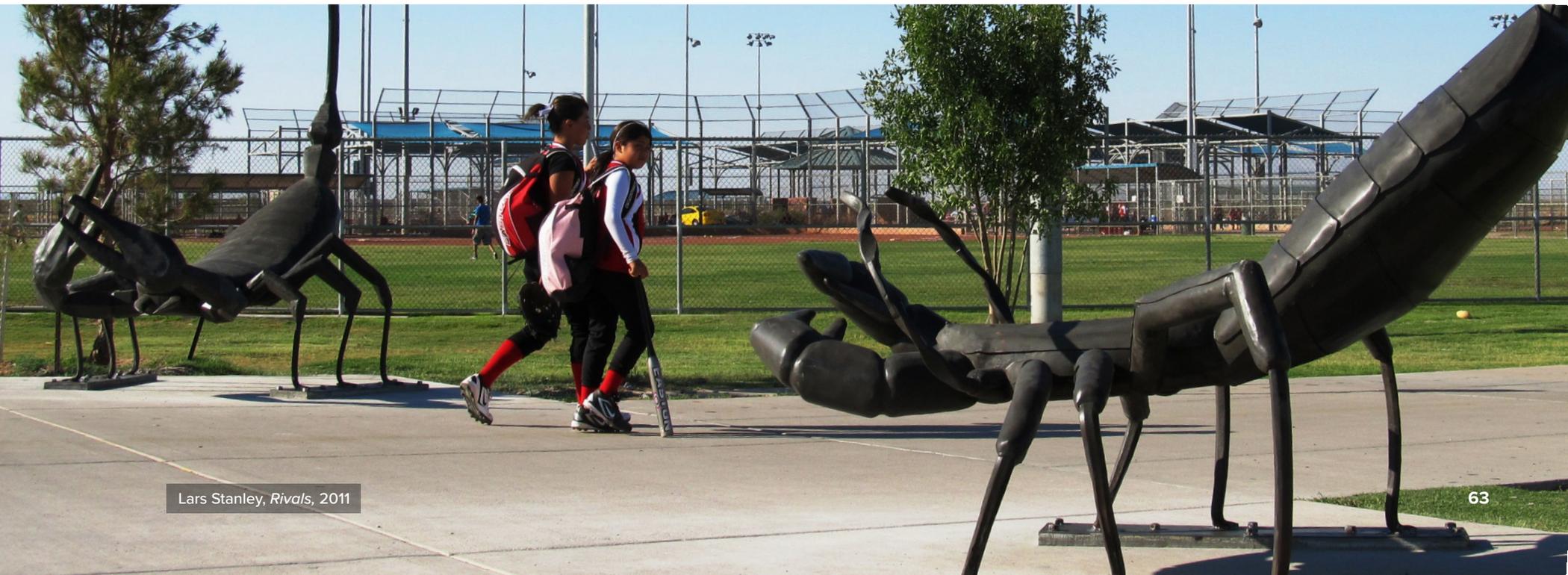
When a location for a new artwork is being considered, the following technical considerations will be used to evaluate how the art can be best integrated into the site.

The siting of the artwork should consider:

- Visibility of and/or public accessibility to the artwork, both for the users of the site and the public at large.
- Visual relationship of a potential new artwork to architectural and natural features, landscape design and any existing artwork near the proposed site.

- Functional uses of the site, including predominant user activities, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, etc.
- The social context of the site, including user patterns and cultural and historical issues.
- Potential environmental impacts and concerns; potential conflicts with future plans for the area.
- Installation and maintenance issues.
- Public safety and liability issues.

For sites not tied to a CIP project, infrastructure costs and efforts such as construction procurement and management should also be taken into consideration.



Lars Stanley, *Rivals*, 2011



Richard Parra, *Poppies*, 2008

The Art Purchase Program

The Art Purchase Program is part of the City of El Paso's Public Art Program, designed to build a portable collection of artwork by El Paso artists that complements the City's site-specific public art. The collection is displayed in public buildings and City offices, bringing art into the daily experience of residents, employees and visitors, while strengthening the visibility and careers of local artists.

Description

Launched in 2013, the Art Purchase Program acquires two- and three-dimensional works from artists living and working within 100 miles of El Paso. To date, the collection includes more than 200 artworks. It is distinguished by its portability, allowing artworks to rotate among City facilities and provide evolving experiences for the public. Acquisitions are funded through Percent for Art. The program does not have an annual budget. In 2020, the collection was expanded with purchas-

ing guidelines that emphasized supporting artists impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Art Purchase Program should continue to grow. The pace of growth should be determined by the demand for new work in City offices and other appropriate facilities and to support goals related to building a diverse collection and investing in local artists.

Purpose and Goals

Today, the Art Purchase Program aims to:

- Tell the story of El Paso through art.
- Enhance public buildings for employees and visitors.
- Provide visibility and financial support for El Paso artists, including emerging creators.

- Build a meaningful collection reflecting the culture, history and identity of the region.
- Foster community pride and interdepartmental engagement, including opportunities for staff to participate in art placement.
- Connect the Public Art Program with artists who have not yet established a public art practice but could be candidates for future commissions and future Allied Artist cohorts.

Curatorial and Selection Processes

In the past, the Art Purchase Program has used different strategies for selecting and purchasing artwork. Moving forward, the Art Purchase Program should:

- Use guest curators, consultants, or juries to ensure high-quality acquisitions based on thoughtful consideration of the Collection’s purpose and goals.
- Introduce thematic or topic-specific calls to artists — such as nature, community storytelling, or regional history — in addition to general calls to local artists.
- Increase the frequency of acquisition rounds to sustain engagement and public interest and keep the Collection dynamic.

- Further raise awareness and celebrate local artists through public-facing initiatives such as temporary exhibitions of new acquisitions or a “People’s Choice” award for the public’s favorite pieces in the Collection.
- Purchase all artwork at the time of selection, rather than waiting until a piece is requested by an office, to ensure all artworks selected are secured for the Collection.

Museum and Other External Loans

The Public Art Program can extend the reach of the Art Purchase Program Collection by loaning works to MCAD museums or other museums and cultural institutions for temporary exhibition. The works would remain in the Art Purchase Program Collection, but could be temporarily displayed at these locations, as part of other exhibitions or as a special exhibition. The loan should be documented as part of the work’s record and a loan agreement should be executed.

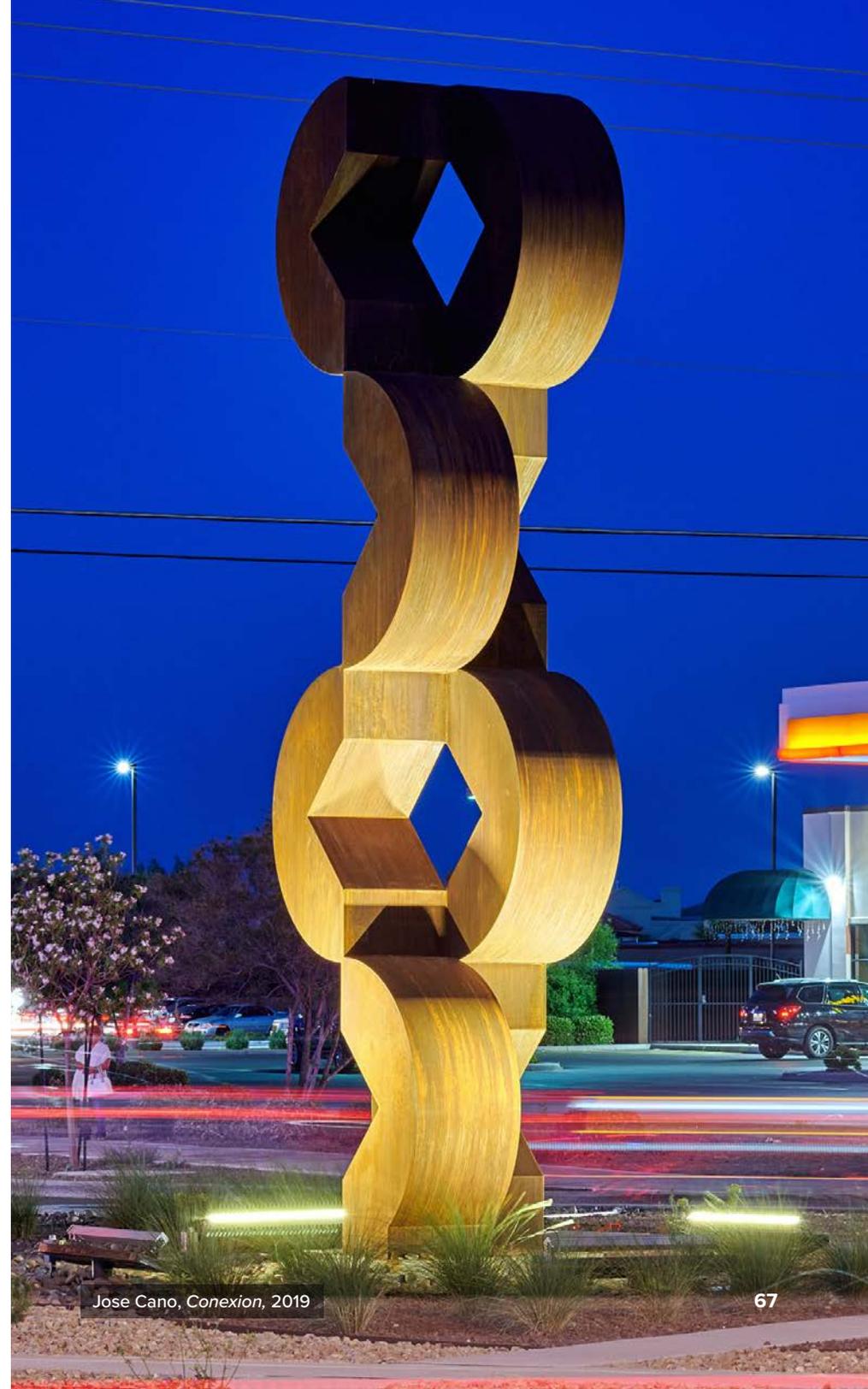
Collection Management and Deaccession

Managing the growing Collection will require dedicated storage to ensure proper long-term care of the artworks. The Program should store artworks that are not on display in a climate-controlled storage facility, which could be shared with other MCAD divisions.

Deaccessioning of artworks in the Art Purchase Program Collection should follow the procedures, criteria and methods of disposition outlined in the Re-siting and Deaccessioning section of Appendix A: Public Art Program Guidelines included in this plan.

Expanding Visibility

To strengthen the impact of the Art Purchase Program, artworks should be photographed and presented in an engaging format that is accessible online. This online gallery would help increase the public's access to the Collection and would directly support the Public Art Program's mission of promoting the community's access to and enjoyment of visual art. An online gallery would also amplify the Art Purchase Program's ability to promote awareness of the local artists in the Collection, reinforcing strategies found elsewhere in this plan.



Jose Cano, *Conexion*, 2019



Sam Reveles, *Dark Star*, 2012

Cultivating Local Artists and the Arts Ecosystem

The Public Art Program is committed to elevating and sustaining local artists by prioritizing their inclusion in commissions, supporting professional development and creating pathways for long-term careers in the field.

El Paso's Public Art Program does not exist in isolation. It is an integral part of a larger arts ecosystem that includes other MCAD Museums and cultural institutions such as the El Paso Museum of Art, the El Paso Museum of History, the El Paso Museum of Archaeology and the Mexican American Cultural Center, as well as local nonprofits, institutions of higher education, other local museums and galleries, fabricators, installers and other private partners. Together, these entities hold complementary resources and initiatives that can expand opportunities for artists, providing skills development, mentorship and networks necessary for deeper and more meaningful participation in the public art process. By fostering collaborations across this ecosystem, the Public Art Program can broaden its reach, strengthen community engagement and enhance the capacity of local artists to thrive in public art at every stage of their careers.

Allied Artist Program

The Allied Artist Program is a cornerstone of the Public Art Program. For new public art commissions with a budget of \$125,000 or more, the Program pairs the lead artist with a less experienced local artist, supported by an additional \$10,000 stipend. To date, the program has successfully introduced numerous local artists to the public art process, with several going on to receive lead artist commissions themselves. Participants have described the experience as a vital source of inspiration, professional integration and skill-building.

Building on the successes of the Allied Artist Program, the Public Art Program should implement minor changes to the program to ensure that it is a rewarding and skill-building experience that benefits the artists, the project they are engaged with and the Program as a whole.

- Assign Allied Artists to public art projects as early as possible so they can be involved in concept development, research,

community engagement, design and fabrication from the outset of the project.

- Include the Allied Artist component of the project in the initial Call for Artists and request that lead artists outline their mentorship approach as part of their application.
- Replace the current rolling application deadline with an annual or biannual deadline from which a cohort of Allied Artists would be selected. This allows for targeted outreach for the Allied Artist application and a single review and acceptance cycle. It also provides the selected artists with a cohort of peers to connect with as part of their experience as an Allied Artist.
- Provide each cohort of Allied Artists with an onboarding/ information session that outlines their role and clarifies expectations.
- Invite Allied Artists to shadow or participate on Art Selection Panels to gain a deeper understanding of the artist selection process.
- When available, provide access to workshops on the fundamentals of public art practice.

Public Art Practice Workshops

When possible, the Public Art Program should lead or partner to deliver workshops on the fundamentals of public art practice. These workshops could be targeted for Allied Artists, or could be open to the broader community of artists who wish to gain entry into public art. Topics could include:

- Introduction to the City's Public Art Collection.
- Practical considerations such as fabrication, budgeting and community engagement.
- Guidance on specific topics, such as murals, copyright, insurance and professional practices.

These workshops could be developed and delivered through collaborations with other MCAD divisions, faculty at The University of Texas at El Paso, independent contractors, or former Allied Artists. Partnerships with national nonprofits or consulting firms specializing in public art could provide additional expertise.

Facilitate Fabrication and Installation

The Public Art Program has successfully provided opportunities for local artists to grow in their practice by supporting the fabrication and installation of projects for artists who don't have experience in a particular media, or in doing public work in general, such as with the Alameda BRIO line and the Pavo Real Recreation Center. This approach has allowed artists to build skills and have their work become part of the Public Art Collection without the full burden of fabricating and installing the artwork. This level of support requires an additional commitment of time for the Program's staff, and therefore it should be considered only in limited circumstances, or supported by temporary consultants.

Smaller-Scale, Shorter Timeline Projects

From time to time the Public Art Program should develop public art opportunities that are smaller in scale and that have a shorter timeline which may be more accessible to artists with less experience in public art.

MCAD Cultural Funding Grants

MCAD's Cultural Funding Program currently supports local artists through the Artist Incubator Program (AIP), which provides grants for the creation of new work in all disciplines, and the Arts Activate Program (AAP), which provides project-based support for arts and cultural activities that reflect the region. Eligible projects must be completed and presented publicly within the yearlong funding cycle, encouraging artists to both create and share their work with the community.

MCAD grants have already been used to fund two small artworks at libraries. These projects not only provided a means for including art in libraries outside the CIP process, but also provided manageable stepping stones for artists who wanted to develop their skills in public art.

The Public Art Program should work with MCAD to establish a small-scale grant program specifically focused on public art, or to designate a portion of AIP or AAP funds as reserved for artist-initiated public art projects. The application process and review process could be tailored to include questions and requirements specific to public art.

In addition, MCAD staff could work with other City departments to develop a list of locations such as specific libraries, senior centers and community centers interested in working with an artist who receives this funding. By creating this list, MCAD could ensure that art projects would be located in facilities

where they would be welcomed, and artists would have a head start on identifying locations for their proposals. This list could be refreshed every year when the Cultural Funding Program guidelines are issued.

Public Art Resource Directory

The Public Art Program often fields questions from artists, property owners, developers, community organizations and even peer City departments about various aspects of implementing public art projects initiated outside of the City’s Public Art Program.

In collaboration with the City’s Department of Information Technology Services, the Program should develop an online directory of resources. This directory could include links to national resources as well as resources developed by MCAD to directly address needs identified by artists and the community.

MCAD Partnerships

The Public Art Program should explore opportunities to collaborate with MCAD colleagues to provide complementary programming and outreach, as well as on grants to fund these efforts. Co-sponsored public programs with MCAD partners can highlight the role of public art in El Paso’s cultural history. Local conferences and initiatives — such as EPMA’s 2025 mural symposium pairing El Paso artists with peers from Los Angeles — offer models for collaboration.

University Partnerships

In addition to potential collaborations to deliver workshops, partnerships with UTEP, Texas Tech’s School of Architecture and El Paso Community College can ensure that public art content is embedded in relevant curricula and that students are aware of the City’s Public Art Program.

Additionally, MCAD could consider implementing Student Internships with the Public Art Program, which could be modeled on similar existing internships in the City’s museums in areas such as education, administration and collections documentation.

Through these strategies, the Public Art Program can expand its role from commissioning individual works to strengthening the entire creative ecosystem — developing artists, fostering partnerships and nurturing a vibrant and inclusive public art culture for the City of El Paso.



Laura Turon, *Unity*, 2022



Community meeting from EPIA landscape improvements project

Building and Connecting with Audiences

The City of El Paso Public Art Program and its Public Art Collection should be a well-known asset that fosters community pride and engages audiences local to El Paso, as well as visitors to the community. MCAD staff, working with internal and external partners, can help sustain and build awareness and interest in public art through effective marketing and communications, as well as programming and engagement activities. Overall, these efforts should:

- Raise the public profile of the Public Art Program, its ongoing projects and programs and the Public Art Collection.
- Elevate the profile of El Paso as an arts destination.
- Encourage people to visit and experience public art projects.
- Highlight the ideas behind the artwork, especially as it relates to the history, people, culture and ecology of El Paso.
- Celebrate and raise the profile of the artists who develop public art projects for the Public Art Program.

- Emphasize local artists who participate in the Public Art Program and local businesses and community partners that have been involved in helping to realize projects or programs.
- Inform people about the process used to select artists and how artists develop their projects.
- Encourage people to get involved with the Public Art Program and provide information on how to get involved.

Planning Ahead

Each year, alongside the Annual Public Art Plan, MCAD staff should outline specific goals and objectives for marketing, communications and audience development for the coming year; what efforts to undertake; and the resources and partnerships necessary to make those efforts successful.

Additionally, at the beginning of each new public art project, MCAD staff should assess, as part of the Individual Project Plan (see Appendix A. Section V. Guidelines for Planning for Public Art), who the stakeholders are for an individual project and what the unique communications and engagement opportunities are for the project. Tools for engagement are found in the following section.

Audiences for Public Art

When planning for marketing, communications and audience development, it is important to consider who the audience is and the specific outcomes desired for the engagement. Key audiences include:

Public At-Large

The Public Art Program should seek to ensure that all El Pasoans have access to public art resources.

City Leadership

In coordination with the City Strategic Communications Office, the Public Art Program should provide timely information about the accomplishments of the program and how they are performing relative to the vision, goals and strategies in the Public Art Master Plan and subsequent Annual Public Art Plans.

Individual Project Stakeholders

When beginning a new public art project, the Individual Project Plan should outline the stakeholders specific to that project. Depending on the project, that might include nearby residents, neighborhood groups or HOAs, facility user groups and employees, local businesses and business organizations, neighboring schools and community- or arts-based organizations. The Individual Project Plan should then lay out ways to ensure that these stakeholders are informed about the project and can engage with the project at key milestones.

Visitors and Tourists

The Public Art Program should support the development of materials that encourage visitors and tourists to learn about the public art resources of the city while they are in El Paso.

Students and Life-long Learners

The Public Art Program should support the development of educational and curricular materials that make the City's Public Art Collection a resource for students and learners of all ages.

Artists

The Public Art Program's success relies on being able to attract talented artists, both locally and nationally, to apply for projects, and El Paso has steadily become a desirable place for artists to create new work. The Public Art Program should continue to communicate directly with artists, especially local artists, to generate interest in working with the Program.

Tools for Connecting with Audiences

The following are some of the key strategies that MCAD staff can use to connect with the Program’s audiences and promote public art.

Labels

An artwork label or plaque is one of the primary ways that people learn about an artwork that they encounter in public space. The label should include the artist’s name, title and year completed, at a minimum and should indicate that the work is part of the City of El Paso’s Public Art Collection.

The label also provides an opportunity for people to learn more about the ideas behind the artwork. By expanding the label to include a brief description of the artwork, audiences can gain a better appreciation of the artwork. Labels can also provide opportunities for further learning by including weblinks or QR codes that share additional information about the artwork and artist.

Photography

High quality photographs of completed public art projects are an important tool for promoting El Paso’s Public Art Program. MCAD staff has worked successfully with artists and local photographers to ensure that there is an excellent inventory of photographs of works in the Collection and should continue to make that a priority.

Video

Some specific projects might benefit from videos about the process or the completed work. This should be determined in advance of launching the project, if possible, and involve the artist. Videos should be produced in coordination with, or approved by, the City’s Strategic Communications Office. Videos should be accessible from the overall website or project websites and can be promoted on social media.

Print Materials

Print materials include postcards, brochures, posters, bookmarks and other physical materials that can be shared about individual works in the Collection. Physical materials can also provide information about works located within a specific geographic area such as a neighborhood or corridor. These materials can be used to educate about a specific piece or to encourage tourism and exploration of an area.

Distribution of print materials can take place at public-facing City facilities such as libraries, community centers, senior centers and museums. They could also be used at unveiling ceremonies and shared for distribution with local businesses, hotels, civic organizations and other community partners.

Digital

The Public Art Program webpage on MCAD’s website, and especially the Public Art Dashboard, provide important resources about the Program and individual works in the Collection. The webpage can be utilized to provide additional information about how to participate in the Public Art Program,

such as information on joining Artist Selection Panels, any future FAQs or informational materials about the Public Art Program, how to get involved with public art in El Paso and events related to the Program such as community meetings and unveiling ceremonies.

In coordination with the City’s IT department, MCAD staff should also consider adding a feedback mechanism, such as a short form or questionnaire, where people can share their thoughts or questions about public art.

Social Media

Social media is an important way to communicate with audiences. MCAD should utilize its social media channels to highlight individual public art projects in the Collection, events related to the commissioning process for individual projects and other public art events. This messaging can effectively be boosted by the City’s social media channels as well as those of end user departments.

Tours

MCAD, working with partners such as Destination El Paso and/or other community or civic organizations, could lead periodic tours of the Public Art Collection.

Council District Meetings and Communications

The Council District Representatives hold regular meetings within their council districts and have regular newsletters to inform constituents about important matters in their districts. MCAD staff should provide an annual update at Council District meetings and/or through the newsletter to provide information on public art projects in the district, opportunities for artists and in-progress projects.

Press / Media

Through the City’s Strategic Communications Office, MCAD should send out media releases to announce its annual plan and a “year in review”, highlighting all of the projects completed from the previous calendar year. Releases can also be sent for community engagement events and project dedications, as deemed appropriate. Communications staff can also cultivate feature stories that focus on “story behind the story” storylines, across regional media.

Media releases and story cultivation can also focus on local, regional and national arts and cultural tourism industry publications. Stories in these publications can help secure national recognition for the Public Art Program and the artists they work with, especially local artists, and elevate El Paso as a cultural destination. MCAD staff should work with staff from the City’s Strategic Communications Office to cultivate earned media.

Mural Registry

A citywide mural registry, including murals commissioned by the Public Art Program and murals developed by others, could celebrate and document existing works, ensure their preservation when properties change ownership and promote muralism as a key component of El Paso's identity.

El Paso has a long and celebrated history of murals, with a particularly rich concentration Downtown, but also spread throughout neighborhoods across the city. The murals in neighborhoods such as Segundo Barrio or Lincoln Park reflect an independent, grassroots tradition of cultural expression in El Paso. Created outside of City-sponsored programs, these works draw on community resources, collective drive and artistic innovation to bring forward stories that are deeply tied to the lived experiences of residents. They are rooted in the culture of the borderlands — expressing histories of migration, labor, activism and everyday life that give El Paso its distinctive identity.

These murals stand as authentic testaments to the resilience and creativity of local communities. Their independent nature is central to their meaning, and any effort to document or preserve them must recognize that they were not the product of capital projects or institutional initiatives, but rather of neighborhood energy, vision and cultural pride. Although many of these works were not created through the Public Art Program, incorporating them into a formal registry would

demonstrate support for muralism in El Paso, strengthen artistic practices and more fully tell the story of the El Paso community and the borderland region.

To develop the mural registry, a process and criteria for submitting murals for inclusion will need to be developed and decisions will need to be made about issues such as where the registry will be housed, who will manage it and what information will need to be included about each mural. Stakeholders, including muralists and property owners, should be consulted in the development of the registry to determine how the registry can best serve their needs and how it can be designed so that they can easily contribute to it.

Working with Educators

The community engagement process that was conducted in developing this plan identified that educators in El Paso are using works in the Public Art Collection as teaching tools. With local Independent School Districts experiencing ongoing budget challenges, resulting in reductions in arts programming and field trips, it is increasingly important to provide tools for educators that can help them do more with waning resources, including using the art that students can encounter in their own neighborhoods.

El Paso's museums and cultural facilities are already working with educators to extend the reach of these institutions. The

Public Art Program should join the conversation with these museums and cultural facilities and reach out to educators specifically to find out what they need. Tools such as curriculum kits, teacher tours and training and other resources should be considered. These tools could be developed under the leadership of educational professionals, through partnerships with community organizations and/or educator training programs at local universities.

The Public Art Program should also consider partnering with the El Paso Public Library System to develop and/or distribute materials for educators, students and others interested in learning more about the works in the Collection, the artists represented and the ideas behind the work.

Resources

The MCAD Public Affairs Coordinator should take the lead on developing the planning and strategies for marketing, communications and audience development and can implement some of these strategies. This position has multiple responsibilities within MCAD, however, and would only be available to work on Public Art Program efforts part-time.

To supplement this, MCAD should consider working with a consultant to help implement specific strategies. There are also opportunities to leverage external partners who have access to specific audiences for mutual benefit related to communications and audience building.

The City's Strategic Communications Office and Department of Information Technology Services can also be excellent resources and can help MCAD boost the reach of their communications.



Tom Darrah, *Onion Pickers*, 2010

Darrah



Working with Developers

Cities throughout the country, including many cities in Texas, have developed strategies for working with developers to include public art in their projects. El Paso has several opportunities for pursuing policies that are appropriate to its unique circumstances.

Public Art in Private Development Policy

As a foundational step, El Paso should adopt a policy for public art in private development. This will provide the foundation for a variety of specific actions to encourage, incentivize or require public art in certain private development projects.

The policy should affirm the value of public art to the well-being of the community and how the provision of public art in private development carries forward specific guidance of the

City's Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan and builds on the City's percent for art investments. The policy should state that to the extent possible, the City will encourage public art in private development.

Using *Envision El Paso's* taxonomy of place types as a reference, the policy should outline the areas of the city in which public art in private development should be prioritized, such as Neighborhood Centers, Regional Corridors, Urban Centers, Downtown and Civic and Institutional Centers. In addition, public art should be prioritized in special economic development areas and in parks built as part of residential subdivisions.

The policy should broadly state what public oversight should be required for public art projects in private development, particularly those created to fulfill a requirement or in exchange for a public benefit.

This policy could be adopted independently by Council or incorporated into the ongoing Envision El Paso comprehensive plan update process. The policy would serve as a foundation for subsequent specific implementation actions by MCAD, the Planning Division and other City entities through future plans, economic development agreements, RFPs for sale of public land and similar processes.

Public Art in Economic Development Areas

El Paso should develop approaches to including public art in areas where the City is encouraging economic development. Examples include the Medical Center of the Americas, the Cohen Entertainment District, the Union Plaza area and the retail complex proposed for east of the airport.

In these and similar areas, the City should consider implementing one or more of the following methods to require or incentivize public art:

- Update relevant plans to indicate that public art is a policy objective in these areas. This would include both area plans and project plans for Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) and Public Investment District (PID) areas.
- When the City is selling property through an RFP process, the City should require bidders to include a public art component in their proposals.

- When the City is using PID or TIRZ funding to support the development of public infrastructure, a percentage of those funds should be dedicated to public art for public infrastructure and/or public spaces in those areas. Another approach would be to identify specific public art investments in PID or TIRZ funding plans.
- When the City is negotiating economic development incentives through a 380 Agreement, consider the use of those agreements to incentivize public art.

Public Art Requirement / Fee

El Paso requires developers of new residential subdivisions to dedicate land for new parks and/or pay a park dedication fee. El Paso should explore a public art fee/requirement modeled after the park dedication requirement for developers. There are several considerations:

- Park dedication requirements are enabled under state law; such a requirement would likely need enabling legislation at the state level (there are no other cities in Texas that have a requirement specifically for public art).
- A public art requirement would need to be applied to specific development types where public art makes the most sense, in terms of both the urban character of the project and the scale of the project (which impacts the economic capacity of the project to absorb the cost of a public art requirement).

For example, a requirement could be applied to large infill mixed-use or residential projects, campus-style developments, or retail complexes. The application of this requirement would be driven by the overall policy mentioned above.

- A public art requirement could include options for providing artwork on site, or provide a fee in lieu of art (as the park dedication fee does now).
- A public art requirement would require an oversight process, described below.

Land Development Ordinance Amendments

The City of El Paso should update its Land Development Ordinance to encourage and incentivize public art. MCAD should work with the Planning Division and other relevant partners to consider the following updates:

- **Bonus Provisions:** Consider offering a density bonus or other types of zoning incentives for certain types of development projects (large-scale commercial, mixed-use) if public art is included in the project.
- **Alternative Equivalent Requirements:** Consider whether there are urban design requirements — such as the screening of parking garages, the creation of active street fronts or the creation of architectural focal points — that can be fulfilled through the provision of public art.

- **Public Art Options:** Consider whether areas of the code that call for amenities to be provided could include public art as a recommended option. This is typically linked to requirements for the provision of amenities in open spaces, plazas or streetscapes, or requirements that a planned unit development application must meet.

Developer Support

The City can create a climate in which developers are encouraged to voluntarily include public art because it supports their development. To accomplish this, MCAD should collaborate with the Planning Division to:

- Provide tools to support developers who wish to commission public art on their own, such as artist and consultant registries, process guides and sample contracts.
- Provide casemaking that public art can have economic benefits for developers' projects, compared to projects that do not include public art (higher rents or sales prices, faster sales or rent ups, better marketing).
- Provide casemaking that public art will result in developments being seen more favorably by the public and the City.

Managing Public Art in Private Development

When public art is provided in a private development project to fulfill a public requirement or in exchange for a public benefit, there should be a process of public oversight. This should include:

- Staff review of artist selections, concepts and the final project once it is installed
- Public Art Committee review of artist concepts
- Provision of documentation (for maintenance and conservation purposes) and inclusion in an inventory
- Agreement to basic maintenance protocols for the lifespan of the project

In addition, the project should be required to meet a variety of general and site-specific requirements that would be outlined in guidelines the City should develop after adoption of a public art in private development policy.



Leticia Huerta, *La Plaza de Los Lagartos*, 2013



Luis Jimenez, *Los Lagartos*, 1995

Community Engagement in the Commissioning Process

One of the primary goals of the Public Art Program is for public art to *connect with and reflect the distinct ecology, history, landscape and culture of the El Paso region and this binational community.*

Community engagement serves as a critical tool for informing MCAD staff and the project artist about the community, the community's goals for art and the site's overall context. Information learned through thoughtfully conducted engagement provides inspiration for artists and helps build an understanding of how art fits into specific places and communities, as well as the broader El Paso community.

Identifying Stakeholders

Developing a community engagement strategy is a component of the Individual Project Plan for all new public art commissions. This strategy begins with identifying internal and external stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders might include:

- The Council District Representative
- Staff of the facility where the artwork will be installed
- The CID Project Manager
- The City's design and construction team for the underlying capital project

These stakeholders can provide context about the overall capital project, including design concepts and inspiration. They can share information about site or facility users,

programs and future plans. They may also have access to previous community engagement conducted as part of a capital project or planning process.

Community stakeholders might include:

- Users of the site or facility
- Area residents
- Neighboring businesses
- Neighborhood associations
- Community leaders

Stakeholders can share information about the community's history, what people cherish or celebrate about their community, challenges they face and their aspirations. They can share stories about important people, places and events that make their community unique.

Some of these stakeholders might be represented by civic or community organizations such as homeowners associations or business associations. These types of organizations have established community networks and track records of working in individual neighborhoods and can help the Public Art Program reach and engage with broader audiences.

Tools for Engagement

MCAD staff and selected artists can use a variety of tools to engage with stakeholders:

Communications

Engagement work often focuses on ensuring that stakeholders are informed about the public art project at different stages of the development process. This can generally be accomplished through effective communication strategies, which are discussed in greater depth in the Tools for Connecting with Audiences section of this plan.

Interviews

Conversations with individual stakeholders can help provide context for the public art project and inform project goals. Interviews can be conducted by MCAD staff or, during the design development process, by the selected artist.

Group Discussions

Like interviews, group discussions with small groups of stakeholders can help provide context for the public art project and inform project goals. These can be conducted by MCAD staff or, during the design development process, by the selected artist.

Surveys

Surveys or questionnaires are effective ways to gather input from a broad range of people. These can be used to collect stories, gather input on project goals at the onset of a project, or obtain feedback on concept proposals.

Pop-up Engagements

Bringing a “pop-up” — such as a table with information, presentation boards, or activities — to community spaces such as community centers, senior centers, libraries and schools is an effective tool for engaging people where they are already gathering. Pop-ups can be a good alternative to surveys for collecting stories, gathering input on goals, or obtaining feedback on concept proposals.

Meet the Artist

Artist talks, meet-and-greets and other types of direct engagement with an artist provide opportunities to inform stakeholders about the artist’s practice, their approach to creating public art and the ideas behind the work they are creating in El Paso. When conducted before the artist has developed a design, these events can also serve as valuable listening opportunities for the artist to learn about the community.

Engagement Opportunities

The information learned through community engagement feeds into the project development process at key milestones: the Individual Project Plan, Artist Selection and Concept Approval. The artist selection process is discussed in greater depth in Appendix A.

Individual Project Plan

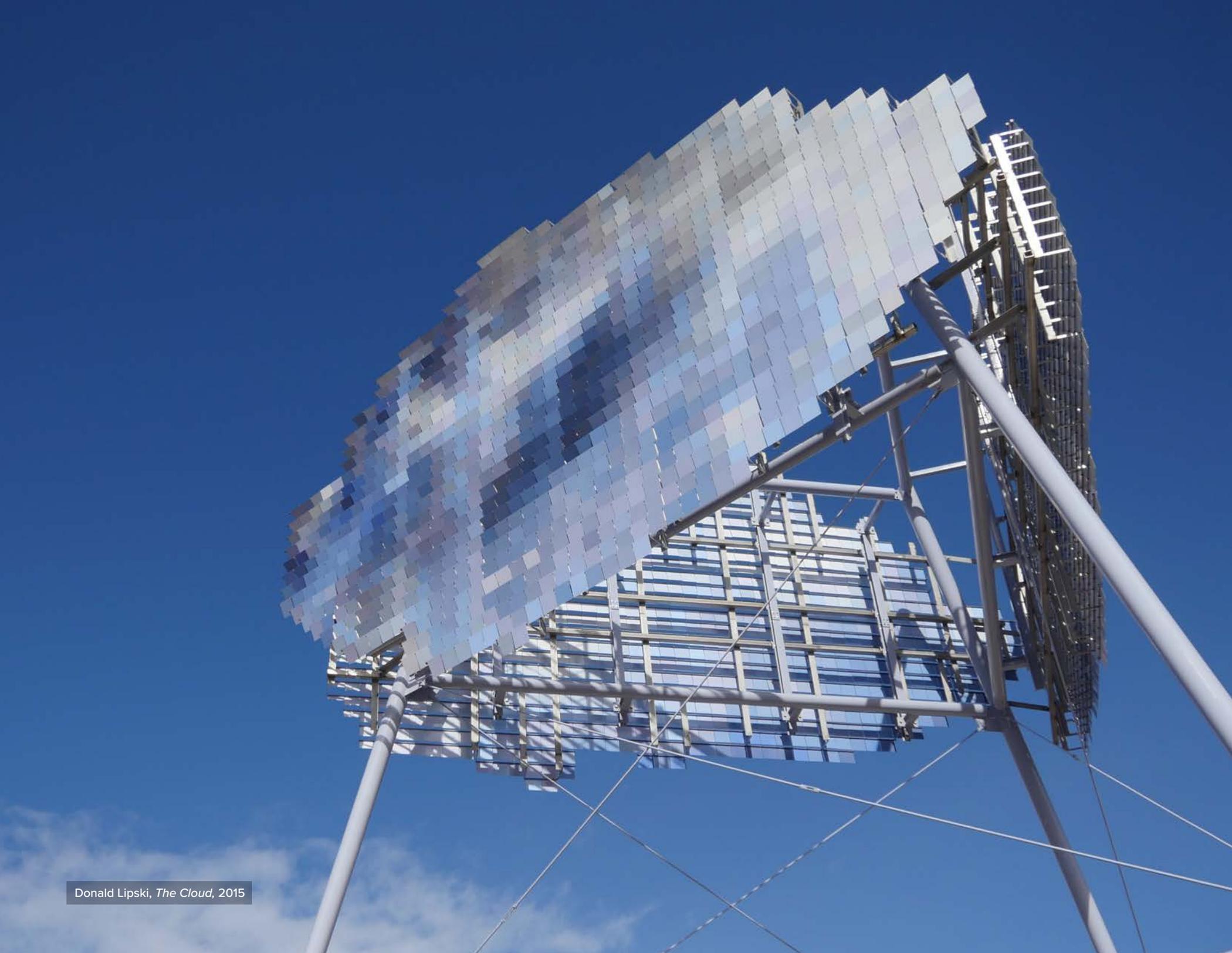
Community engagement informs the goals and context for public art outlined in the Individual Project Plan.

Artist Selection

Artist Selection Panels include both internal and community stakeholders who bring different perspectives that inform the selection process. The Public Art Committee provides another level of community member review, keeping in mind project goals and the overarching vision for the Public Art Program.

Concept Proposal

Concept proposals are proposed designs for the public art project developed by the selected artist or, at times, multiple finalists. For the City of El Paso, the Artist Selection Panels review concept proposals and recommend a selection to the Public Art Committee. Prior to Selection Panel review, input can be gathered from other stakeholders, including a technical review by capital project stakeholders and general input from the community. This input helps inform the recommendation by the Selection Panel and PAC approval.



Donald Lipski, *The Cloud*, 2015

Implementation Resources

A majority of the funding for the Public Art Program, including staff support, comes through the City’s Percent for Art Ordinance. Percent for Art will continue to be the primary mechanism for resourcing public art in El Paso; however, as the number of new capital projects that generate funds fluctuates, the City should look at ways to diversify its funding sources and ensure there are sufficient resources for other program needs, including care of the collection, outreach and engagement.

Funding

Percent for Art

The El Paso Public Art Program is funded through the City’s Percent for Art Ordinance (Ord. No. 2.40.070) which dedicates two percent (2%) of the net proceeds of any revenue bond or certificates of obligation issued for construction projects to fund the Public Art Program. These funds are calculated as part of every revenue bond or certificate of obligation issue.

Public art funds generated through the Percent for Art Ordinance support all costs for the commissioning of public art and the acquisition of art for the Art Purchase Program. Funds can also be used for other important program needs including architectural and engineering design services, maintenance and restoration of artwork and storage and disposal costs for re-sited or deaccessioned artwork. Per the ordinance, up to fifteen percent (15%) Percent for Art funds can be spent on the Program’s administrative costs.

The ordinance and guidelines provide the Program with flexibility in allocating these funds to public art projects. This is an important tool for the Public Art Program, enabling public art projects to be sited in locations where they will make the greatest impact and fulfill the vision and goals for the Public Art Program. The Public Art Program should use the criteria elsewhere in this plan to identify projects that have the widest possible public benefit.

The Public Art Program is actively working on projects related to several current bond programs, including the 2012 Quality of Life Bond, the 2019 Public Safety Bond and the 2022 Community Progress Bond. At this time there are not any future bond issuances in the pipeline.

Partnerships with City Departments

The Public Art Program has been a sought-out partner for El Paso City departments that are interested in commissioning art utilizing their own departmental funding, including projects with Sun Metro, Fly ELP and the Environmental Services Department.

The Public Art Program should continue to seek these types of partnerships and communicate a clear process for the role of each partner in the project. Where possible, MCAD should request that the partnering City department cover costs related to artist selection and project management.

Public Art in Private Development

There has already been a strong interest from the private development community in supporting public art. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is an opportunity to incentivize, encourage and support developers in both commissioning and funding new public art projects. The City should pursue these options to expand the types of places where people can go to enjoy public artworks.

Staffing

The Public Art Program is currently staffed by a Program Manager, a Project Associate and an Administrative Support Associate. They are supported by other MCAD staff, especially the Director and Assistant Director of MCAD in planning and budgeting and the MCAD Public Affairs Coordinator in audience development.

Public Art Program Staffing Responsibilities

The administration of the Public Art Program entails a range of skill sets, requiring staff to move fluidly between different specialties and tasks.

Planning and Budgeting

MCAD staff engage in planning activities related to public art, including developing the Annual Plan, coordinating with the planning efforts of other City departments and developing Individual Project Plans. Throughout these tasks MCAD staff is looking at the big picture, considering the long-term goals of the Public Art Program, its community impact and the needs of individual projects.

Curation

A key aspect of developing public art projects is helping to facilitate the selection of artists and artwork that will best meet the goals for the project and are of a high artistic quality. Researching artists, communicating their practice and process to Selection Panels and working closely with the artists during the design process requires familiarity with a wide range of artists, types of artistic practice and working methods.

Project Management

Realizing public art projects requires excellent project management, which includes tasks such as developing and carrying out Individual Project Plans, facilitating Artist Selection Panels, managing and tracking artist contracts and payments, monitoring fabrication and coordinating installation. MCAD staff must coordinate these tasks closely with artists, outside vendors and other City departments in order for projects to go smoothly.

Collection Management

As the Collection grows, time and resources spent on collection management increase, including documentation and overseeing the maintenance and conservation of the Collection.

Art Purchase Program Management

The Art Purchase Program Collection has its own collection management needs, including managing the de-installation and re-installation of works, as well as their safe storage and care. MCAD staff also manage new acquisitions to the Collection.

Audience Development

This encompasses the wide range of activities that MCAD staff does to build awareness of and interest in the Public Art Program and its Collection through marketing and communications, as well as programming and engagement activities.

Community Engagement

Engagement is a critical tool for informing MCAD staff and the artist selected for a public art commission about the community, the community's goals for art and the site's overall context. It also helps build community support for individual projects and the Public Art Program as a whole. These activities include utilizing a range of tools to elicit input from both internal and external stakeholders.

Local Artist Outreach

Artist outreach includes the work that MCAD staff does to connect local artists with the Public Art Program, including learning about local artists, promoting opportunities, managing the Allied Artist Program and developing partnerships to organize professional development opportunities specific to public art.

Staffing the Public Art Committee

This includes preparing and posting agendas, facilitating meetings, meeting follow-up and managing appointments and onboarding of new members to the committee.

Future Staffing Needs

The MCAD staff stewarding the Public Art Program includes skilled project managers who are adept at working with artists, architects, engineers and CID project managers to realize projects. In the future the needs of the program may shift to include additional artist outreach and professional development, community outreach, audience engagement and

collection management. These tasks will take additional time and may require skills and expertise not currently on the Public Art Program team. Collaborating within MCAD to fill these needs may be a possibility, as may be hiring consultants and contractors with specific expertise.

Staffing Level

The Program should maintain its current staffing level. To handle project and administrative workload, curation of new acquisitions as part of the Art Purchase Program, as well as aspects of caring for the Collection, the Program should hire consultants, contractors, or temporary employees. This will enable the Program to manage variations in project volume and bring in special expertise when needed.

Collaborate with Other MCAD Initiatives

The Public Art Program staff should continue to work with the MCAD Public Affairs Coordinator to support audience outreach. Partnerships with other MCAD staff can be explored to expand artist outreach, including artist professional development and development of the mural registry.

Collaboration with External Partners

MCAD, through its Cultural Programs and Museums, has a wide network of partnerships throughout the El Paso community, working with universities, nonprofits, Independent Schools Districts and other organizations. The Public Art Program can build upon these relationships and traditions of collaboration to work with partners who can lead or support efforts related to audience engagement and artist outreach.



Natalie Baca, *Prickly Pear*, 2013



Isadora Stowe, *Gifted Pathways*, 2017

Updates to the Public Art Guidelines

El Paso's Public Art Program is governed by Ordinance No. 2.40.070 and guidelines updated in the 2014 Public Art Master Plan. The Appendix to this Public Art Master Plan Update includes a proposed revision to the Public Art Guidelines. Following is a summary of the major revisions to the Guidelines.

Added

- Definitions for the Art Purchase Program Collection, Capital Improvement Department, Project and Public Art Focus Plan.
- Language from Section 2.40.070 of the City of El Paso Code of Ordinances describing the ability to pool public art funds.
- The description and responsibilities of Capital Improvement Department (CID) Staff.

Revised

- Updated Vision, Mission and Goals.
- Updated composition of Artist Selection Panels to make consistent with Ordinance 2.40.070 and make eligible capital project stakeholders.
- Eligible administrative costs for percent for art funds.
- Updates to the step-by-step description of the artist selection process and art acquisition process, making this process easier to explain to program and project stakeholders, with the addition of charts to visualize the process.
- Clarified the deaccession policy such that works that are not site-specific or site-integrated, including in the Purchase Program Collection can be re-sited by staff as needed without the approval of the PAC or MCAAB.
- Provided additional criteria for re-siting site specific works or deaccessioning works in the deaccession policy.

- Updates to the deaccession policy so that MCAAB approves deaccessioning.
- Removed the option in the deaccession policy of offering works for public sale and elaborated on methods of disposition, including additional options.

Expanded

- The responsibility of the PAC to annually nominate and approve a Chair and Co-chair of the Committee.



Patrick Gabaldon, *Prickly Pear 4*, 2020



Olalekan Jeyifous, *Desert in Bloom*, 2021

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I. Mission, Vision and Goals

Mission

El Paso's Public Art Program:

- Commissions, acquires and maintains a diverse collection of public art;
- Supports the inclusion of public art in private development and infrastructure built by others;
- Promotes the community's access to, appreciation of and enjoyment of visual art; and
- Supports the public art ecosystem in El Paso.

Vision

El Paso's Public Art Program gives voice to the city's creative spirit.

Goals

Highlight Local Identity

Connect with and reflect the distinct ecology, history, landscape and culture of the El Paso region and this binational community.

Increase Arts Access

Provide opportunities for El Pasoans and visitors to connect with art, artists and the creative process.

Nurture Artistic Development

Establish pathways for artists to develop new work.

Create Meaningful Places

Shape locations that anchor community life and provide opportunities for interaction and social engagement.

II. Definitions

Acquisition

The acquiring of works of art by purchase, exchange, or gift.⁴

Annual Public Art Plan

An annual prioritized list, to be recommended by the MCAAB and approved by the City Council, of public art projects, including budgets, location, artist selection process and recommended design approaches, developed by the PAC in consultation with City departments anticipating capital improvement projects.⁵

Art Purchase Program

An element of the Public Art Program that acquires two- and three-dimensional artworks through direct purchases for the purpose of being displayed throughout City Hall and other City office buildings and facilities. Works of art are acquired using the Public Art Fund and are part of the Art Purchase Program Collection.

Art Purchase Program Collection

The collection of smaller scale, non-site-specific artwork acquired through the Art Purchase Program by the Public Art Program for display in City facilities. This collection is part of the El Paso Public Art Collection.

Artist

An individual or collective generally recognized by critics and peers as a professional practitioner of the visual, performing or language arts, based on a body of work, educational background, experience, exhibition history, publication and/or creation of artwork. For commissioning purposes, an artist cannot be:

- A member of the prime consulting firm, or of any sub-consulting firm, for the relevant capital project's team.
- Undergraduate or graduate students doing the project as a class requirement.
- City employees or their immediate family members.
- A member of the Museums and Cultural Affairs Advisory Board, Public Art Committee or the relevant Artist Selection Panel.

Artist Selection Panel

A committee appointed for the purpose of reviewing artist qualifications and proposals and reviewing proposals for gifts or loans of art for public places.

⁴ Section 2.40.070 of the City of El Paso Code of Ordinances

⁵ Section 2.40.070 of the City of El Paso Code of Ordinances (as Public art plan)

Capital Improvements Program

All projects financed by general obligation bonds and revenue bonds and certificates of obligation, except for capital acquisitions and the Plaza Theatre Project.⁶

Capital Improvement Department

El Paso’s Capital Improvement Department (CID) manages capital projects in the Capital Improvement Program.

Commission

The selection and contracting of an artist or artist team to the task of creating a work of art for a fee.⁷

Conservation

The regularly scheduled examination, documentation, treatment and preventative care of an artwork conducted by a professional art conservator.

Deaccession

The permanent removal of a work from the City’s Public Art Collection by selling, donating or destroying it.

El Paso Public Art Collection

All works of public art approved by the MCABB and on the accession records/inventory of the City.

Gift of Art

A work of art donated free and clear to the City for inclusion in the El Paso Public Art Collection.

Individual Project Plan

A document, developed by MCAD staff in collaboration with relevant City departments and the input of stakeholders, that outlines the work that must be done to undertake a specific public art commission or acquisition and establishes the goals against which the project will be reviewed.

Loaned Art

A work of art given for exhibition over a period of time, to be returned to the owner at the end of the exhibition period.

Maintenance

The routine care and repair of works of public art that does not require specialized expertise (i.e.: dusting, washing, changing light bulbs, lubrication of moving parts, etc.).

Museums and Cultural Affairs Advisory Board (MCAAB)

The board established to advise City Council and the Museums and Cultural Affairs Department on matters related to the cultural funding program, public art programming and other departmental matters under provisions of Chapter 2.40 of the City of El Paso Municipal Code.⁸

Project

Any construction activity undertaken pursuant to the capital improvements program.⁹

⁶ Section 2.40.070 of the City of El Paso Code of Ordinances

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Ord. No. 2.40.070

Public Art Committee (PAC)

A subcommittee of the MCAAB appointed to oversee quality control of the Public Art Program and projects and to recommend the scope of projects, artworks and artists for the Public Art Program.¹⁰

Public Art Focus Plan

A strategy document that can help guide future public art projects and related programming for a specific large-scale facility such as the Convention Center or El Paso International Airport, or for a system of places such as parks and parks facilities. A Focus Plan can identify site integration strategies and priority locations for public art, outline implementation strategies and inform the use of public art resources.

Public Art Master Plan

A planning document developed by MCAD and approved by City Council that outlines a vision for public art in El Paso and strategies for achieving that vision over an approximate ten-year timeframe.

Public Art Program

The process for administration, selection, approval, funding, acquisition or commissioning of public works of art under section 2.40.70 “Art in Municipal Places” of the City of El Paso Municipal Code.¹¹

Temporary Public Art

Works of art commissioned by or on loan to the City of El Paso for a public place for a limited period of time, generally less than five years.

Work of Art

Any public art project that is a work of visual art, including but not limited to, a drawing, painting, mural, fresco, sculpture, mosaic, photograph, work of calligraphy, work of graphic art (including etching), works in clay, textile, fiber, wood, metal, plastic, glass, stone, concrete and like materials, or mixed media (including a collage assemblage, or any combination of the foregoing art media).

For projects that involve no structure, a work of art may include a combination of landscaping and landscape design (including some natural and manufactured materials such as rocks, fountains, reflecting pools, sculpture, screen, benches and other types of streetscapes).

A work of art may include an artist participating in master planning, conceptual development, design development, construction drawings, or construction oversight for any municipal project.

Except as provided herein, the term “work of art” excludes the performing arts of dance, music, theatre, or the literary arts, unless expressed in or combined with a work of visual art or design.¹²

⁹ Section 2.40.070 of the City of El Paso Code of Ordinances

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² *ibid*

III. Funding for the Public Art Program

Sources of Funds

El Paso’s public art ordinance dedicates two percent (2%) of the net proceeds of any revenue bond or certificates of obligation issued for construction projects to fund the Public Art Program. These funds are calculated as part of every revenue bond or certificate of obligation issue, according to Financial Services Department Policies and Procedures.

Donations from the private sector or grants from the private or public sector shall be encouraged as a means to broaden the existing program potential. These funds shall be maintained in a separate fund for the Public Art Program.

Funding Process

Funds will be dispersed in accordance with the Financial Services Department policies and procedures.

Uses of Funds

In order to ensure that works of art have sufficient public visibility and impact, funds generated from the various capital improvements program projects, if allowed by law, may be pooled or aggregated together and utilized for one or more large works of art as recommended by the MCAAB and PAC and upon approval by City Council.¹³

Bond proceeds generated for public art projects may be spent for the commissioning or acquisition of artwork, including:

1. Artist’s design fee
2. Operating and overhead costs
3. Labor and materials
4. Proposals, drawings or maquettes
5. City-required permits related to construction or erection of artwork
6. Project-related travel
7. Transportation of artwork to the site
8. Installation

¹³ Section 2.40.070 of the City of El Paso Code of Ordinances

9. Site preparation or modification when not included in base construction costs
10. Frames, mats, mounting, anchorage, pedestals, cases or other material necessary for the installation, display and/or security of the artwork (such as fire retardant or graffiti resistant treatment)
11. A portion of the budget for the artwork may be set aside for contingency at the beginning of a project and returned to the Public Art Fund if unused.
12. Administrative costs, at fifteen percent (15%) of project funds, to include:
 - a. Public Art staff salaries and benefits
 - b. Temporary staffing support
 - c. Professional development
 - d. Office overhead
 - e. Expenses for competitions
 - f. Community engagement
 - g. Expenses of conducting a search for work of art
 - h. Employing consultants for planning and research and project management
 - i. Education and marketing

13. Architectural and engineering design services when not included in base construction costs.
14. Insurance costs.
15. Capital maintenance and restoration of artwork acquired through the Public Art Program.
16. Storage and disposal costs for re-sited or deaccessioned artwork acquired through the Public Art Program.
17. Special projects and other purposes directly related to a specific Two Percent for Public Art project and recommended by the PAC for MCAAB approval.

Exclusions

No public art funds may be spent on:

1. “Art objects” that are mass produced or of standard manufacture, such as playground equipment, fountains, or statuary elements, unless incorporated into an artwork by a project artist.
2. Decorative or functional elements that are designed by the project design professionals such as architects, landscape architects, engineers or their consultants.
3. Directional elements such as signs, maps or color coding, unless designed or executed by an artist and integral to a specific public art project.

4. Any design features or functional elements of a project that have been eliminated from that project for cost-saving reasons. If public art is integrated into a design feature or functional element, then public art funds can be spent only on the portion of the cost of providing an artist-designed feature or element that is greater than the base cost of providing that feature or element had public art not been incorporated.
5. Utility costs.
6. Any design elements that have not been created by an artist, as defined in this policy, and which have not been commissioned and approved through the process outlined in Section 6 of this policy.



Andrew Dufford / Chevo Studios, *Persistencia*, 2019

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

Public Art Committee

Description

The PAC is a standing committee of the MCAAB that advises on the implementation of the Public Art Program. The PAC approves the selection, placement and relocation of artwork acquired through the Public Art Program and recommends deaccession of artworks in the Collection and revisions to the Public Art Guidelines to MCAAB.

Appointment

The PAC shall consist of nine (9) members appointed as follows: the chair of the MCAAB shall appoint one (1) member to the PAC from the MCAAB. The additional eight (8) members will be appointed by the Chair of the MCAAB from a list of qualified citizen candidates provided by the Museums and Cultural Affairs Department staff and approved by the MCAAB. Members are appointed to a two-year term and can be reappointed for one consecutive two-year term with each member serving no more than six years in total. Terms for the MCAAB members serving on the PAC will correspond to their MCAAB terms.

The PAC will annually nominate and approve a Chair and Co-chair of the Committee.

Composition

All PAC members must be qualified/credentialed professionals and represent the following: Four (4) members of the PAC shall be representatives of the visual arts, such as visual artists (by means of a currently demonstrable record of exhibitions, works sold/collected and/or commissioned), curators, art historians or critics, arts advocates/collectors or arts administrators and the other four (4) members of the PAC shall be representatives of the architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning or engineering, construction or development industries. The categories of membership listed above are not exclusive and more than one category may be represented by one member.

Responsibilities

- Annually appoint a Chair and Co-chair of the PAC at the February meeting.
- Recommend revisions to public art policies and procedures.
- Review and recommend Public Art Master Plan to MCAAB.
- Review and recommend Annual Public Art Plan to MCAAB.
- Review Individual Project Plans for implementation by MCAD staff.

- Make recommendations to MCAD staff for the appointment of Artist Selection Panels who will recommend artists and artworks.
- Serve on and chair Artist Selection Panels when appointed and make reports back to the PAC.
- Review and endorse recommendations of Artist Selection Panels for implementation by the MCAD staff.
- Review proposals received by the City for gifts or loans of Works of Art for public places, recommending to the City for acceptance or rejection of the artwork gifts or loans, except works of art acquired for the permanent collections of or exhibitions within the El Paso Public Library, the El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso Museum of Archaeology, the El Paso Museum of History and the Mexican American Cultural Center.
- Make recommendations to MCAD staff for programs to educate the community on the Public Art Program and recommendation to the City of programs and activities to further the development and public awareness of art in public places.
- Review and make recommendations to MCAAB regarding the deaccession or relocation of artwork from the El Paso Public Art Collection.
- Serve as public art ambassadors in the community.

Museums and Cultural Affairs Department (MCAD) Staff

Description

The Director of the Museums and Cultural Affairs Department allocates Department resources to ensure appropriate staffing and administrative support of the program, including the appointment of a Public Art Manager that oversees all activities related to the program.

Responsibilities

- Manage the Public Art Program and facilitate communication among the Museums and the MCAAB, PAC, Artist Selection Panels (ASP), other City departments, artists and other stakeholders as related to the development and implementation of public art projects.
- Develop the Annual Public Art Plan in consultation with City departments for review by the PAC and MCAAB and approval by Council.
- Identify public art project opportunities and develop Individual Project Plans for review and approval by the PAC.
- Initiate and coordinate each artist selection process so that its process is compatible with any related project timelines, including but not limited to: administering the artist recruitment and selection process, selecting Artist Selection Panel members for each project, facilitating Artist Selection Panel meetings, facilitating community engagement, presenting selections to the PAC for approval and providing report supporting finalist selection for PAC to present to MCAAB.

- Manage the implementation of public art projects, including but not limited to: preparing contracts, facilitating technical review, inspecting artwork prior to installation and coordinating installation.
- Provide recommendations for potential PAC members to MCAAB chair.
- Oversee the El Paso Public Art Collection, including ensuring work is properly maintained, overseeing periodic conservation assessments and maintaining an inventory of the Collection.
- Facilitate review of gifts and loans of artwork.
- Oversee the documentation, registration, care and installation of all gifts or loans of Works of Art accepted by PAC.
- Facilitate review of deaccession and relocation of public artwork and manage deaccession or relocation if approved.
- Direct the public relations and general education of the Public Art Program.
- Develop and oversee programs to develop the capacity of local artists to successfully complete public art projects.

Capital Improvement Department (CID) Staff

Description

The Capital Improvement Department manages capital projects in the Capital Improvements Program. Many public art projects are commissioned in conjunction with capital projects managed by CID staff. For these projects, MCAD staff interfaces with CID staff to ensure the seamless integration of public art into its related capital project.

Responsibilities

- During the development of the Annual Public Art Plan, meet with the Director of MCAD to review opportunities for public art in upcoming capital projects to be incorporated into the plan, including budget and schedule.
- Ensure that CID supervisors are aware of upcoming capital projects that will incorporate public art and that any project consultants managed by CID are appropriately scoped and resourced to coordinate with the Public Art Program.
- At the Individual Project Plan phase for developing a public art project in conjunction with a capital project, provide a CID project manager to meet with MCAD staff to review the capital project, potential public art siting opportunities, related community and design goals, artist scope, budget and schedule.
- For specific public art projects that are part of a CID-managed capital project, designate a CID project manager and, when applicable, a design consultant from the capital project to serve on the Artist Selection Panel.

- Provide background materials on capital project to MCAD staff to share with artist finalists and selected artists and provide technical review of artist concept proposals.
- For public art projects installing in capital projects managed by CID, CID construction managers work with MCAD staff to coordinate site work and installation.

Artist Selection Panels (ASP)

Description

A group of individuals, including artists, art and design professionals and non-artist citizen representatives that is created to select artists who will be commissioned to create a Work of Art or to provide services. The PAC recommends the composition of each ASP and individual members are appointed by MCAD staff.

Composition

In general, the ASP shall be composed of three (3) to seven (7) persons who are professionals in the visual arts and design fields and members of the community and must include one member of the PAC. All Panels will include at least one representative from the community where the artwork(s) will be sited. When applicable, each ASP will also include capital project stakeholders including, but not limited to, the project architect or landscape architect, the project manager and a representative from the department where the public art project is to be sited.

Qualifications and Eligibility

The MCAD staff will establish and maintain a file of potential ASP members containing information on the experience and expertise qualifying individuals to serve as Panel members.

- In general, it is the intent that an ASP be appointed for each artist selection process; however, in situations of extenuating circumstances, such as extreme time limitations, the PAC may serve as the ASP.
- At the discretion of MCAD staff, an ASP may be asked to serve on more than one artist(s) selection process or project.
- The City is committed to participation by artists from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, MCAD staff will ensure that ASPs reflect the ethnic diversity of the population of the City.

Responsibilities

- Review material provided by MCAD staff about the long-term goals and strategies for public art at the facility where the art will be located.
- For commissions, reviews artist qualifications and selects finalists.
- For commissions, reviews concept proposal(s) and/or interviews finalists and recommends final selection to the PAC.
- For acquisitions, reviews candidate artworks and makes a recommendation to the PAC.

- Provide to the PAC a report on the reasons for its selection(s), addressing the stated objectives, parameters and criteria outlined in the Individual Project Plan.
- Serve as public art ambassadors to the community.

City Council

Description

The El Paso City Council consists of eight members, elected for four-year terms. Council members are elected by Council district and may not be elected more than twice or serve for more than 10 years in their respective offices.

Responsibilities

- Approve Annual Public Art Plan and any projects over \$50,000 that are added to the Plan in the course of the year.
- Approve individual artist contracts over \$50,000 if not in the Annual Public Art Plan.
- Approve the Public Art Master Plan.
- Approve policies related to public art.

Museums and Cultural Affairs Advisory Board (MCAAB)

Description

The MCAAB is a nine-member board that advises the Museum and Cultural Affairs Department on matters pertaining to, but not limited to, the cultural funding program, public art programming and other departmental matters as determined by the Director of MCAD. The MCAAB is composed of one member nominated by each district representative and the mayor.

Responsibilities

- The Chair of the MCAAB appoints one member to the PAC from the MCAAB.
- The additional eight members of the PAC will be appointed by the Chair of MCAAB from a list of qualified citizen candidates provided by the MCAD staff and approved by the MCAAB.
- Review and recommend the Annual Public Art Plan to Council.
- Review and provide recommendations for the establishment of policies and guidelines related to the Public Art Program.
- Approve deaccession of Works of Art from the El Paso Public Art Collection.

V. Guidelines for Planning for Public Art

Public Art Master Plan

The MCAD staff will develop a Public Art Master Plan that establishes a long-term vision, mission and goals for the program, identifies key linkages to upcoming capital projects and establishes priorities for selecting future projects. The Public Art Master Plan will be approved by the Public Art Committee and MCAAB and forwarded to City Council for its approval.

Annual Public Art Plan

Each year, the MCAD staff will develop an Annual Public Art Plan that outlines public art activities and the use of the Public Art Fund for the coming year. The Annual Public Art Plan lists new and ongoing public art projects, which should be selected on the basis of the criteria set out in the Public Art Master Plan. The Annual Public Art Plan should outline the location, selection process, requested allocation, artist (if selected), anticipated completion date and a brief project description. The Annual Public Art Plan will be approved by the Public Art Committee and MCAAB and forwarded to City Council for its approval. Once a public art project is in an approved Annual Public Art Plan, MCAD staff may proceed with the commissioning or acquisition of artwork.

Individual Project Plans

MCAD staff will develop an Individual Project Plan that guides each public art project. The Individual Project Plan should outline each aspect of the project, including:

1. A description of the project's location and other information regarding the proposed siting;
2. The project goals as informed by engagement and research and how the project relates to the overall vision for public art in El Paso, to the Public Art Master Plan and the Annual Work Plan;
3. Evaluation criteria against which the artist selection and concept design can be evaluated;
4. The budget and funding sources;
5. The project schedule;
6. Project stakeholders;
7. The artist's scope of work;
8. The artist selection method;
9. Recommended Selection Committee members with alternates and
10. A community outreach strategy.

The Individual Project Plan should be informed by the Public Art Master Plan and other planning documents related to the site.

The Individual Project Plan is developed by the MCAD staff in collaboration with relevant City departments and the input of community stakeholders. The Public Art Committee reviews the Individual Project Plan prior to the commencement of a project.



Aaron Stephan, *Luminous Bound*, 2021

VI. Guidelines for Selecting Artwork and Artists

Commissioning Process

In most cases, the City of El Paso will commission an artist to create a unique, new work of art that is informed by the context of the site. The selected artist is given a project brief that usually includes a site (or ideas around siting), a set of goals, a budget and a timeline. The artist develops a concept design that is responsive to the brief. Once approved, the artist is responsible for the final design of the artwork and in most cases is responsible for the fabrication and installation of the artwork.

Each artist selection process should be uniquely designed to match the conditions of the project. However, the process should follow the basic steps outlined below.

Step 1: Develop the Individual Project Plan and Convene the Artist Selection Panel

The first step for a public art project is to define the general parameters of the project in an Individual Project Plan, as described in the section “Guidelines for Planning for Public Art: Individual Project Plan.” At the same time, or later, an Artist Selection Panel is created.

Step 2: Develop the Artist Pool

El Paso’s Public Art Program can choose from a variety of methods for developing the pool of artists for consideration by the Artist Selection Panel. MCAD staff will identify the method that best meets the needs of the project in the Individual Project Plan.

Open Competition

In an open competition a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is issued for a specific project and artists are asked to submit evidence of their past work. Any artist may submit credentials, subject to any limitations established in the RFQ.

Invitational Competition

In an Invitational Competition, a RFQ is issued to a limited number of artists. Artists are invited, based on their past work and demonstrated ability to successfully respond to the conditions posed by the particular project or based on other non-aesthetic Public Art Program goals. Artists can be identified through MCAD staff research, consulting with the Artist Selection Panel, consulting a pre-qualified artist list, or working with a contracted curator or consultant to identify candidates.

Direct Selection

At times MCAD staff may elect to recommend a direct selection in which it contracts with a specific artist for a particular project without looking at a broader pool of candidates. Such an election may occur for any reason but will generally occur when circumstances surrounding the project make either an Open or Invitational Competition unfeasible (for example: project timeline, community or social considerations, client demand, etc.).

Pre-Qualified Artists List

A pre-qualified artist list can be created as a tool for developing a pool of artists for consideration for multiple public art opportunities. A pre-qualified artist list is developed based on a comprehensive review of qualifications from artists who respond to an open RFQ. A list can be focused on a specific set of opportunities or could be used broadly for a range of commissions. If the list is meant to be used for several years, it should be updated annually or bi-annually.

Pros and Cons of Methods for Developing the Artist Pool

Open Competition

PROS	CONS
Can be broadly accessible and can allow for a broad range of applicants and artistic approaches.	Can consume a large amount of time for MCAD staff and Artist Selection Panel members.
Can provide opportunities for new, otherwise unknown and emerging artists to apply.	May take several months from initiation to artist selection.
	Artists who have strong potential, but fewer portfolio examples, can get overlooked, especially when there are many applicants.
	Artists who have strong practices may not be aware of Open Competitions, or they may not consider themselves eligible.
	Some established artists will not respond to Open Competitions, preferring Invitationals or being directly selected for projects.

Invitational Competition

PROS	CONS
Useful when looking for artists with specific expertise, focus or method in which they work.	Can overlook artists that are interested and good candidates for specific projects.
Can reach artists that would not normally apply for a public art project or are not following public art competition opportunities.	
Can encourage artists to apply because they know they are competing against a smaller pool of artists.	

Direct Selection

PROS

Useful when project requirements are narrow.

Enables recruitment of artists that would not normally apply for a public art project.

Can be accomplished in an accelerated timeframe.

CONS

Does not allow for the comparison of different artistic styles or approaches.

Can overlook good candidates.

Pre-Qualified Artist List

PROS

Allows artist selection to proceed more quickly, which is useful if there is a need to bring an artist on board quickly.

Can save on MCAD staff and Artist Selection Panel time.

Requires applicants apply only one time to be eligible for multiple projects.

CONS

Requires upfront work and ongoing management.

Can become dated quickly, and if not updated regularly, can exclude emerging public artists.

Can be difficult to anticipate what skill sets you will need in the Artist List without knowing the details and goals for every specific project that will be using the List.

Step 3: Select Finalists

The Artist Selection Panel reviews artist qualifications based on criteria outlined in the approved Individual Project Plan and selects finalists (generally 2 – 5).

Step 4: Select the Final Artist and Concept

At the finalist stage, there are two options for selecting the artist. The ASP can ask finalists to each develop a concept proposal and base the selection on qualifications and the proposal. Or the ASP can interview finalists and select an artist based on qualifications and in interview.

Option A: Interview-Based Selection

In an interview-based selection, rather than develop a concept proposal, finalists are invited to interview with the Artist Selection Panel. Questions focus on the artist’s approach to developing a concept and executing the artwork and other skills that are considered desirable for that project, such as conducting research and community engagement or working collaboratively with a design team.

The Artist Selection Panel recommends an artist based on their qualifications and interview to the PAC. Once approved by the PAC, the selected artist is then put under contract to develop a concept proposal.

The selected artist presents their concept proposal to the ASP. The ASP recommends approval of the concept proposal to the PAC.

Option B: Concept Proposal-Based Selection

In a concept proposal-based selection, finalists are paid a stipend to develop a concept proposal. MCAD staff develops a Request for Proposals that outlines proposal requirements, which may include renderings, concept description, description of materials and fabrication, initial budget and timeline.

The finalists present concept proposals to the Artist Selection Panel. The Artist Selection Panel recommends selection of an artist to the Public Art Committee based upon the favored concept proposal.

Technical Review

Prior to the finalists or selected artist presenting their concept proposal to the ASP, their draft proposal(s) should be reviewed by MCAD staff to flag potential technical concerns. The finalists or selected artist should be given time to address any concerns raised in the technical review.

Approval by the Public Art Committee

The PAC will review the recommendation of the ASP according to the review criteria and will accept, accept with conditions, or not accept the recommendation. In case the recommendation is not accepted, the PAC will work with the ASP to resolve issues concerning the recommendation.

Pros and Cons of Concept Proposal vs. Interview Based Selection

Concept Proposal Based Selection

PROS

Allows for the Selection Panel to see different approaches to a project’s site, context and goals.

Can allow the Selection Panel to take a risk on one or more finalists that may not have as much experience or a relevant body of work.

CONS

Some well-established artists will not submit for projects where there is a competitive concept proposal selection process.

Does not provide finalists with the ability to do in-depth engagement and research in the development of their concept proposal.

Does not allow for the finalists to receive guidance and feedback from MCAD staff and the design team during design development.

A portion of the budget goes to proposal fees, which can make an impact if the overall project budget is limited.

Process can be lengthier.

Interview Based Selection

PROS

Provides the Selection Panel with the opportunity to learn about how the artist will approach the project, work with the design team, engage the community and get their inspiration.

Once selected, allows the artist to spend time developing an understanding of the site and community before developing a concept.

Provides an opportunity for the artist to collaborate with the design team to integrate their artwork into the site or develop functional amenities.

Allows MCAD staff to provide guidance and feedback during the design development process.

Can be quicker to get to a final concept.

CONS

Favors artists that have a stronger portfolio of past projects.

Step 5: Artist Contract

Upon the recommendation of an artist by the PAC, the MCAD staff will prepare a contract that includes the scope of work, fee, schedule and relevant terms and conditions. The scope of work will vary depending on the project, but will generally include final design and engineering, fabrication of the artwork and installation of the artwork.

Step 6: Final Design and Engineering

Once the concept design is approved, the artist will develop final design and engineering drawings for review and approval by the City before proceeding with fabrication. MCAD staff will coordinate meetings with the appropriate City departments to provide a technical review of the drawings.

If the artist proposes any significant design changes from the original concept design, the MCAD will secure the approval of the Public Art Committee before approving changes, per the terms and conditions of the artist's contract. If the City requests any modifications due to changes in the project, MCAD staff will review the proposed changes with the artist. In either case, a formal change order should be submitted.

Step 7: Fabrication and Installation of Artwork

Once the final design and engineering drawings have been approved by the City, the artist will proceed with the fabrication of the artwork. The fabrication may be done by the artist, or part or all may be done by subcontractors supervised by the artist. MCAD staff may request a studio visit, photographs or

written updates from the artist. In some cases MCAD may elect to contract directly with a fabricator to fabricate the work, per contract with the artists.

In most cases, the artist will be responsible for the installation of the artwork. The MCAD coordinates installation with the artist and the appropriate City department(s) and their contractors. In some cases MCAD may elect to contract directly with a contractor to install the work, per contract with the artists.

Step 8: Communications, Submittal of Documentation and Closeout

A communications strategy is planned and implemented by MCAD staff and the relevant City department. The artist is required to submit all required paperwork, including all drawings and a maintenance and conservation protocol, prior to project closeout and final payment. MCAD staff enters the work into the collection database.

Competitive Proposal Option

1. Develop the Individual Project Plan and Convene the Artist Selection Panel	2. Develop the Artist Pool	3. Select Finalists	4. Select the Final Artist and Concept	5. Artist Contract	6. Final Design and Engineering	7. Fabrication and Installation of Artwork
MCAD staff develops the Individual Project Plan	MCAD staff develops and distributes the Call for Artists based on the approved Individual Project Plan	Artist Selection Panel reviews artist qualifications and selects finalists	Finalists develop Concept Proposals	MCAD staff develops contract and facilitates review, approval, and issuance of a Purchase Order	Artist develops final design and construction documents	Artist fabricates art
PAC approves Project Plan		MCAD staff notifies finalists and non-finalists	MCAD staff facilitates technical review of Concept Proposals		MCAD staff reviews at benchmarks and manages review by others, as needed	Artist installs art
			Selection Panel reviews Concept Proposals and recommend selection			MCAD staff reviews and approves final installed art
			PAC reviews and recommends selection of artists and Concept Proposal			

Interview Option

1. Develop the Individual Project Plan and Convene the Artist Selection Panel	2. Develop the Artist Pool	3. Select Finalists	4. Select the Final Artist and Concept	5. Artist Contract	6. Final Design and Engineering	7. Fabrication and Installation of Artwork
MCAD staff develops the Individual Project Plan	MCAD staff develops and distributes the Call for Artists based on the approved Individual Project Plan	Artist Selection Panel reviews artist qualifications and selects finalists	Finalists participate in interview	MCAD staff develops contract and facilitates review, approval, and issuance of a Purchase Order	Artist develops final design and construction documents	Artist fabricates art
PAC approves Project Plan		MCAD staff notifies finalists and non-finalists	Artist Selection Panel recommends artist based on interview		MCAD staff reviews at benchmarks and manages review by others, as needed	Artist installs art
			PAC reviews and approves selection			MCAD staff reviews and approves final installed art
			Selected artist develops Concept Proposal			
			MCAD staff facilitates technical review of Concept Proposal			
			Artist Selection Panel reviews and recommends Concept Proposal			
			PAC reviews and recommends Concept Proposal			

Acquisition Process

In certain cases, the City and Public Art Committee may determine that it is in the best interest of the City to acquire an artwork directly from an artist or from a gallery.

Step 1: Individual Project Plan

The first step for any public art project is to define the general parameters of the project in an Individual Project Plan, as described in the section “Planning Processes for Public Art: Individual Project Plan.” The reasons for purchasing a work instead of commissioning are to be outlined in the Plan. It should also include details regarding whether the City or the seller is responsible for details such as site preparation, shipping and installation

Step 2: Artwork Selection

In most cases, an art acquisition will be the result of a competitive process. The City will invite artists and/or galleries to submit images and information about existing available artwork. The information should include the artist’s basic qualifications (résumé or bio, portfolio), an image of the artwork, dimensions, materials, date fabricated, condition, provenance and asking price. The designated Artist Selection Panel will review the submissions of existing work based on the goals and criteria outlined in the Individual Project Plan. MCAD may choose to obtain an independent, qualified appraisal of the fair market value of the selected artwork and a professional art conservator’s report on the condition of the artwork.

Step 3: Agreement of Sale

The City will enter into an agreement of sale with the seller. The transaction will include a transfer of title from the seller to the City and an indemnification regarding past and future claims related to the provenance of the artwork.

Step 4: Installation of Artwork

Depending on the nature of the agreement with the seller, the City or the seller may be required to take full or partial responsibility for site preparation; the design and installation of foundations, landscape, hardscape and lighting; shipping the artwork to its new location and insurance for the transfer; and the installation of the artwork.

Step 5: Communications, Documentation

A communications strategy is developed with MCAD staff and the relevant City department. The work should be photographed on site and all paperwork related to the acquisition should be archived by the City, including the maintenance and conservation protocol. MCAD staff enters the work into the collection database.

General Criteria for Selecting Artists and Artwork

Projects undertaken by artists or acquisitions of artwork, whether by commission, purchase, gift, or other means, should further the purpose and goals of the Public Art Program. The ASP will apply the following baseline criteria when selecting artists, considering acquisitions or siting artwork. Additional project-specific criteria may be developed and should be included in the Individual Project Plan.

General Criteria for the Review of Artist Qualifications

- Meets the definition of Artist, as defined in the Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines.
- Demonstrates artistic excellence, innovation and originality as represented in past work and supporting materials.
- Demonstrates capacity for working in media and with concepts that are appropriate to the project goals and site.
- Demonstrates interest and capability in creating public artworks in collaboration with the City, MCAD, the design team (if applicable) and other project partners.
- Demonstrates interest in and understanding of the project as outlined in the Individual Project Plan.

- Demonstrates interest and capability in engaging community representatives in a project.
- Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively and elicit the ideas of team members; flexibility and problem-solving skills; and ability to work with architectural drawings and construction documents.
- Demonstrates experience in successfully completing works of similar scope, scale, budget and complexity, or articulates how he or she would be able to bring the necessary artistic and technical skills to this project.
- Is available to perform the scope of the work in a timely and professional manner.
- Builds the diversity of the City's Public Art Collection.

Criteria for the Review of Artist Concept Proposals

- Meets the definition of Artwork as defined in the Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines.
- Demonstrates artistic merit, including excellence in aesthetic quality, workmanship, innovation and creativity.
- Demonstrates appropriateness in scale and form and is of materials/media suitable for the site.
- Meets the project's goals as outlined in the Individual Project Plan.

- Demonstrates feasibility of construction and installation.
- Demonstrates feasibility in terms of budget, timeline, safety, security, durability, operation, maintenance, conservation, legal and ethical issues.
- Builds the diversity of the City’s Public Art Collection.

Criteria for Reviewing Acquisition of Existing Artworks

- Clearly responds to the City’s vision for public art.
- Meets the definition of Artwork, as defined in the Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines.
- Meets the project’s goals as outlined in the Individual Project Plan.
- Demonstrates excellence in aesthetic quality, workmanship, innovation and creativity.
- Demonstrates appropriateness in scale and form and is of materials and/or media suitable for the site.
- Demonstrates feasibility in terms of cost, timeline, safety, durability, operation, condition, maintenance, conservation, legal and ethical issues related to possession and use of Artwork, security and/or storage and siting.
- Builds the diversity of the City’s Public Art Collection.

Diversity

Artwork will be sought from artists of diverse ethnic and cultural identities; from local, regional, national and international artists; and from emerging and experienced artists.

The PAC encourages applications from artists working in both established and experimental art forms.

Artists will not be eligible for more than two projects at any given time.

Rejection of Submissions

The PAC and ASP may recommend rejection of all submissions, if none are considered satisfactory, and request that a new pool of artists be established.

VII. Guidelines for Accepting Gifts and Loans of Art

Procedure for Review of Gifts and Loans

Proposals

Proposals for gifts and loans of artworks shall be submitted to the MCAD staff in a written format established for this purpose.

At a minimum the proposals should include:

1. Title of the artwork, its dimensions, medium and date of execution.
2. Digital images of the artwork or other appropriate presentation materials.
3. Proposed site location(s), method of display and required site improvements.
4. Resume or biography of artist.
5. Warranty of originality (i.e., certification that existing work is an original creation or limited edition).
6. Statement of appraised value of art.
7. Maintenance and installation requirements, including a cost estimate for installation.

8. Written explanation of legal issues, including but not limited to, certifying the current legal owner of the artwork(s) and, the existence of any copyrights, patents or other title rights in or to the artwork(s); and an explanation of any conditions or limitations on the donation of the artwork(s), such as any interests to remain with the Artist.
9. Report of artwork's condition and of ongoing maintenance protocols.

Internal Review

Initial review of proposals shall be by MCAD staff, in consultation with other relevant City departments, to ensure that the application is complete and to conduct an initial feasibility review of the proposal.

Aesthetic Review

Once this initial review is complete and MCAD staff determines that the proposal is feasible, an aesthetic review of proposals shall be by the Public Art Committee or by an Artist Selection Panel established by the PAC for that purpose.

1. ASP's evaluation of proposals will be coordinated and staffed by MCAD staff. A representative of the individual or organization making a proposal will be invited to make a brief informational presentation to the members of the Panel.
2. The ASP shall evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:
 - a. Advances the vision and goals for the Public Art Program.
 - b. The artistic merit of the proposed artwork.
 - c. Compatibility with the El Paso Public Art Collection.
 - d. Contributes to the diversity of the Public Art Collection.
 - e. Availability of the site.
 - f. Maintenance and installation requirements and anticipated costs to the City.
 - g. Artwork condition.
 - h. Liability considerations.
 - i. Donor conditions.

Approval of the Gift or Loan

The recommendation of MCAD staff and the ASP will be forwarded to the PAC for review and recommendation to the MCAAB for approval.

Conditions of the Gift or Loan

The City shall accept gifts or loans of art only when accompanied by an appropriate warranty of originality and a legal instrument of conveyance of title, in the case of a gift, or documenting the loan, in the case of a loan, enumerating any conditions of the gift or return to the donor for the gift or loan. MCAD shall keep on file copies of the conveyance of title and the stated insurance value of donated artwork(s) and the artwork(s) will become part of the City's public art collection. The stated value of any loaned artworks shall be provided to the City Risk Management division. The PAC shall not act as an agent for the purpose of selling, exchanging, or promoting the sale of any gifts of art or loaned work.

Installation of the Artwork

Siting

Siting and location development of gifts of art or loaned artwork in public places will be coordinated by MCAD staff. If possible, the artist who created the gifted or loaned artwork should be consulted regarding siting and installation issues.

Coordination

Installation of the artwork will be coordinated between MCAD staff and the appropriate entity having jurisdiction over the site.

Exceptions

These guidelines shall not apply to:

1. Artwork loaned to the City for one year or less.
2. Artwork loaned for inclusion in temporary exhibitions in City facilities and City owned spaces managed by the City.
3. Artwork loaned or donated to City employees or appointed City officials for display in their personal offices.
4. Gifts of State presented to the City by other governmental entities (municipal, state, national, foreign).
5. Artwork loaned or donated to the private collections of non-profit organizations that manage City entities, or included in temporary exhibitions at those facilities.



VIII. Maintenance, Conservation, Ownership and Record-Keeping

Maintenance

Maintenance of public art shall be the responsibility of the City, not the artists, and the City shall commit to keeping the artworks in its Collection in well-maintained condition.

Artists shall be required to submit working drawings of their project and a maintenance and conservation protocol. The City may request as part of the contract process that the artist or artist team include maintenance provisions for a term of one-year that includes repairs.

Conservation

The Public Art Program shall evaluate all works in the Public Art Collection on a regular basis for purposes of assessing conservation needs and develop a multi-year, prioritized plan for conservation of the Collection.

Ownership

The City shall have absolute, unrestricted rights incidental to its full ownership of the final artistic work to alter, change, modify, destroy, remove, move, replace, transport or transfer in whole or in part, the final artistic work when the City deems necessary within its discretion in order to exercise the City's powers and responsibilities in regard to public works and improvements, in furtherance of the City's operations or for any other good cause. The artist may retain copyright and other intellectual property rights in and to the final design and the final artistic work itself.

In the circumstance in which commissioned art is physically part of the building or landscape and is not an independent object or objects that can be safely removed, the City may require the artist to waive all rights that they may have under the Visual Artists Rights Act, 17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq. (1990) ("VARA") to protect the City's interest, in regards only to the destruction of the art piece. Prior to the destruction of the art, the City will attempt to contact the artist and secure advice on the future of the work that may include redesigning the art for the new situation. In the event that the remodeling of the building or landscape destroys part of the art, the City will deaccession the art and, at the request of the artist, remove any attribution to the artist.

The Artist shall grant to the City a perpetual, irrevocable license to graphically depict or display the final artistic work for any non-commercial purpose, unless otherwise specified by contract.

Project Files and Records

MCAD staff shall maintain records on each project, which shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. All materials in proposals submitted and other visual or written materials relating to the artist's design or method of execution as submitted or become available.
2. Conveyance of title enumerating any conditions.
3. Records of the MCAAB, PAC and City actions bearing on the project.
4. Any agreements relating to the project.
5. Correspondence and memoranda relation to the project.
6. Records of all billings made in connection with the project.
7. Maintenance and conservation protocols and records of conservation to the artwork.



Matthew Geller, *Chroma Booster*, 2015

IX. Re-Siting And Deaccessioning

While the intent of the Museum and Cultural Affairs Department (MCAD) is to commission and acquire artwork for long-term public display, circumstances and/or conditions may arise that make it prudent for MCAD, on behalf of the public interest, to remove a work of art from the El Paso Public Art Collection or the Art Purchase Program Collection by trading, selling, donating, or destroying it.

MCAD retains the right to re-site or deaccession any artwork, regardless of the source of funding or method of acquisition. Re-siting or deaccessioning of a work of art will be done in accordance with the terms agreed upon in the artist's contract. MCAD will institute a review process that will ensure that re-siting of site-specific works or deaccessioning will be a carefully considered action that insulates the Collection from fluctuations in taste.

Eligible Artworks

This policy applies to works of art in the El Paso Public Art Collection. For works of art that are not site-specific or site-integrated, including portable works acquired through the Artwork Purchase Program, this policy only applies for deaccessioning. Re-siting of these works may be carried out by staff as needed without the involvement of the PAC or MCAAB.

Procedures

MCAD staff may initiate the process for deaccessioning or re-siting an artwork at any time as needed when one or more of the criteria below exist.

If an artwork is identified for deaccessioning or re-siting the following steps will be taken:

1. MCAD staff will present a report to the Public Art Committee (PAC) for their review and approval. The report will include the following:
 - a. A description of the artwork, current photographs of the artwork, acquisition method, cost, estimated current value and any restrictions that may apply to the artwork based on contract review.

- b. The reasons for the proposed deaccessioning or re-siting, including the specific criteria for re-siting and deaccessioning met by the artwork.
 - c. Staff's recommendation as to whether the work should be re-sited or deaccessioned.
 - i. For site-specific and site-integrated works, if in the opinion of MCAD staff the artwork can be re-sited while maintaining the intent of the artwork, MCAD staff will make a good-faith attempt to discuss re-siting with the artist prior to recommending the work for re-siting. If the artist does not agree to the proposed re-siting; the artist will have the right to prevent the use of their name as the author of the artwork or to buy back or recover the work, if such a provision is addressed in the artist contract. If, in the opinion of MCAD staff, there is not another appropriate site for the artwork, the artwork may be recommended for deaccessioning.
 - d. For works recommended for deaccessioning the report shall include the recommended method of disposition.
2. MCAD staff will submit the report and the recommendations of the PAC to the Museum and Cultural Affairs Advisory Board (MCAAB) for their review and approval.

3. If an artwork is approved by the PAC and MCAAB for deaccessioning, MCAD staff will document the reason for deaccession and the manner of disposition and keep this information on file permanently as part of the Public Art Collection records. If an artwork is approved by the PAC and MCAAB for re-siting, MCAD staff will proceed with re-siting the artwork, as described in the approved report and document the re-siting in the Public Art Collection records.

If the structural integrity or condition of an artwork, in the opinion of the MCAD staff, presents an eminent threat to public safety, the MCAD director may authorize its immediate removal, without PAC and/or MCAAB action or the artist's consent. The director will place the work in temporary storage. The artist and the PAC and MCAAB must be notified of this action within 60 days. Staff will then recommend options for disposition to the PAC and MCAAB for approval. In the event that the artwork cannot be removed without being irreparably damaged or destroyed, and if artist rights are not waived in the contractual agreement, the MCAD staff must make a good faith effort to gain such written permission before proceeding with removal. In the event that this cannot be accomplished before action is required in order to protect the public health and safety, the MCAD director will proceed according to the advice of the City Attorney's Office.

Funds from artworks sold as a result of deaccession will be placed into the Public Art Fund.

Criteria for Re-siting and Deaccessioning

One or more of the following criteria must be met for a site-specific or site-integrated artwork to be considered for re-siting or deaccessioning, or for an artwork that is not site-specific or site-integrated to be considered for deaccessioning. Works that are not site-specific or site-integrated may be re-sited by staff as needed.

1. The site is being eliminated or the site is being altered such that the artwork is no longer compatible with the site.
2. The security of the artwork can no longer be reasonably guaranteed at its current site.
3. The artwork has become a danger to public safety.
4. The artwork's annual maintenance cost is deemed excessive, or the artwork requires extensive conservation or restoration that is cost prohibitive and/or exceeds the value of the artwork.
5. The artwork is not, or is only rarely, on display, or there is a lack of a suitable site to display the artwork.
6. The artwork does not further the vision, mission, or goals of the Public Art Program.

7. The artwork was commissioned or acquired with the provision or understanding that it was to have a limited lifecycle or installation period.
8. The artwork has been damaged or has deteriorated to the point at which it no longer reflects its original intent.
9. Significant adverse reaction to the artwork from the community has continued for an extended period (at least two years).

Methods of Disposition

Staff may recommend to the PAC and MCAAB one or more of the following manners of disposition of the artwork. Staff, the PAC and MCAAB shall not be limited to these courses of action, but may suggest new methods, as may be appropriate, given by a particular set of circumstances.

1. Trade through artist, gallery, museum, or other institutions for one or more other artwork(s) of comparable value by the same artist. The traded artwork must be approved for accession into the City's Public Art Collection following the Public Art Program's policies for accession.
2. Offer the work to the artist with terms to be agreed upon by both parties.
3. Donation to a museum collection, governmental entity, or other organization determined to be appropriate.

4. Sale through auction, art gallery or dealer resale, or direct bidding by individuals, in compliance with City law and policies governing surplus property.
5. Destruction of artwork which has deteriorated or become damaged beyond a reasonable cost to repair or has been deemed to be of no or only negligible value.
6. Destruction of a site-specific or site-integrated artwork that cannot be re-sited while maintaining the intent of the artwork.

The manner chosen for disposition of an artwork shall represent the best interest of the City and be in accordance with City policy for the disposition of property. Priority will be given to returning the artwork to the artist, provided that terms can be negotiated that represent the City's best interest. Artworks will not be deaccessioned directly or indirectly or in any manner that would personally benefit City employees, members of the MCAAB, the PAC, or of the City Council. Ethical considerations prohibit the acquisition of deaccessioned objects by City staff, members of the MCAAB, the PAC, or of the City Council.

X. Conflict of Interest

This section supplements the City's Ethics Ordinance, as codified in Chapter 2.92 of the El Paso Municipal Code.

MCAD Staff

Employees of MCAD are ineligible for public art commissions or projects as long as they are employed by MCAD.

PAC members and PAC Subcommittee

A member of the PAC or of a PAC subcommittee, such as an Artist Selection Panel, having a financial interest in the outcome of any policy, decision or determination before the PAC or PAC subcommittee on which the member serves shall, as soon as possible after such interest becomes apparent, disclose to each of the other members voting on the matter and the nature of the financial interest in the issue, and such member shall be disqualified from participation in any debate or vote.

Other Participants

Members of the project management, project architect, or consulting firms and employees of City of El Paso are ineligible to receive public art funds for design services or public art commissions.

Artists

1. An artist is ineligible to serve on an ASP while under consideration for a public art commission or project. This provision does not preclude artists participating in the Allied Artist program from participating on an ASP.
2. An artist is precluded from having their work considered for a public art commission or project once selected for or while serving on an ASP. This provision does not preclude an artist from being selected as an Allied Artist while serving on an ASP.

XI. Review and Amendment

These guidelines are subject to periodic review and revision by the PAC and subsequent approval by the MCAAB.



Christopher Weed, *Bienvenido*, 2021



Simon Donovan & Ben Olmstead, *Folklorico*, 2020

Appendix B: Summary of Engagement

Input from the community and program stakeholder helped to inform the Public Art Master Plan Update. Engagement activities included a series of roundtable discussions with local artists and members of the art, design and civic community; an online questionnaire; and a series of open houses. Summaries of the findings are below.

Roundtables

In November and December, 2024, the consulting team facilitated six in-person and three virtual roundtable discussions that engaged 30 of El Paso's art, design and civic leaders in a conversation about the Public Art Collection, the vision, goals and directions in the 2014 Public Art Master Plan and opportunities for the future.

Feedback on the Vision, Goals and Directions

- Art should continue to anchor the urban core
- Is exposure per person a goal? Most highly visible/visited locations?
- Where does tradition of muralism, painting fit in?
- Specificity of the border area. What makes ELP unique? Spirit, identity, culture
- Education should be a part of this.
- What are authentic images? Loaded word. Who decides?
 - Asking artists to think deeply about the place
 - Thoughtful, dynamic, meaningful
- What does quality of life mean? Clarify.
- What does economic benefit mean?

- Local public art practice authentic to the city
- Using public art to create an engaging public sphere – create spaces and conversations. Build places for interaction. Shape public spaces and interaction.

Other Key Discussion Points

- A critical mass of artwork in downtown that provides opportunities to see and experience art around every corner.
- Growth of the Collection into El Paso’s neighborhoods — many focusing on community gathering places — libraries, parks, community centers, etc.
- A high regard for the Collection — people are aware of several works and have favorite pieces that they speak about and describe enthusiastically.
- Educators are using the Public Art Collection as a teaching tool in the classroom in both high school and college courses.
- A good mix of local and non-local artists, different project types and approaches, media, etc.
- The inclusion of local artists elicits a sense of pride in the community and its creative sector.
- Positive reviews of the Allied Arts Program and its impact on the career trajectory for artists interested in pursuing public art.

- Incubator grant program through MCAD has been able to fund a small handful of local artists in doing public art projects.
- Precedent of ‘public art bootcamp’ programs, though it has been several years since the last one.
- General appreciation of a focus on work that is site-specific and that captures something special and unique about El Paso.
- Some feel that some works, in an effort to be site-specific, fall into overly simplistic depictions about El Paso/the southwest.
- Artists are looking for other professional development opportunities and entry points into getting commissions with the Public Art Program and expanding their public art practice.
- Major corporations that have operations in El Paso could commission public art and/or contribute philanthropically.

Questionnaire

As part of the outreach process of developing the update to the project consultants conducted an online questionnaire in English and Spanish. The questions were designed to help the consultants and MCAD better understand the public’s awareness of and connection to the Public Art Program and specific works of art; assess the relevance of the current vision, goals and directions; and understand people’s priorities for the program for the next decade.

The questionnaire was launched on December 3, 2024 and was up through February 28, 2025. The questionnaire received 195 responses.

The questionnaire asked questions related to people’s familiarity and relationship to El Paso’s Public Art Program, as well as their preferences for public art:

- Were you aware that the City of El Paso has a public art program?
- What connection, if any, have you had to the City of El Paso Public Art Program?
- Are you familiar with any of these works of art commissioned by the City of El Paso Public Art Program? (Respondents were shown 16 examples of public art in El Paso.)
- Do you have a favorite artwork in El Paso? Which one? What do you like about it?

Respondents were also asked to review the existing vision for public art and indicate how important they feel it is for the coming decade; this question was followed by an open-ended question in which respondents could share what they would add or change to the existing vision.

Similarly, two additional questions asked respondents to review the five main goals and the four key directions for the program and indicate which of these they agreed should still be goals and directions for the program in the coming decade. Again, after each of these questions, open-ended questions

allowed respondents to share any goals and directions they felt should be added.

Respondents were also asked to select the most important types of places for public art. They could indicate up to 6 types of places from a list of 12 (including “other — write in”). Finally, the last question asked respondents to rank a list of five priorities for the Public Art Program from 1 to 5.

Summary of Findings

Several themes emerge from the questionnaire results that cut across multiple questions and help us understand people’s relationship to the Public Art Program and the impact they feel it should have on El Paso in the future.

The existing vision, goals and directions still largely resonate.

64.2% of respondents felt the vision was still “important” or “very important”, while 12.1% were neutral and 23.8% felt it was “unimportant” or “very unimportant”. For four of the five existing program goals, about 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that that goal should remain a goal for the program in the coming decade. One goal — “support economic growth” — was slightly lower, with only about 76% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it should remain a goal. Similarly, when asked if each of the program’s four key directions should remain as directions for the coming decade, about 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each direction.

Respondents have a desire to know more and be informed.

Almost half of the people (44.4%) who took the survey said they were not aware that the City of El Paso has a public art program and 72.9% said they had not engaged with the Public Art Program yet (versus those who had served on Artist Selection Panels, applied for projects or rosters, or collaborated with the program in other ways).

A common theme seen throughout the survey in respondents' comments was a desire for more awareness of the program, its opportunities and the existing Collection. For example, one respondent wrote, "There should be more education and outreach, most people don't know about the art available to see in El Paso. And they need participation and engagement to feel like it belongs to them as citizens of El Paso."

When asked what should be added to the vision, one of the most frequent types of answers had to do with raising awareness of the program and boosting marketing and promotion. For example, one respondent wrote, "More media coverage so more people are aware" and another wrote, "more info on where artworks are located." Suggested goals to add included: "Ensuring that the arts and the program are well known in the community," "have local El Pasoans be informed of new large local public art installations and locations," and "Make El Paso arts and culture more accessible to and prominent in the entire El Paso community."

And for the final question, which asked respondents to rank five priorities for the program from 1 to 5, the second highest ranking priority was "Promote the community's access to, appreciation of and enjoyment of existing public art."

Increased community involvement is desired.

Throughout the survey respondents expressed a desire for increased community involvement in projects. One of the largest categories of answers to the two questions about what to add to or change about the vision and the goals were statements related to community involvement. Respondents expressed a desire to engage children and youth in creating artworks, for programs that collaborate with schools and for more participatory projects in general. Some examples of responses indicating the importance of engaging people with art and the artmaking process are:

- "Community involvement, to include children to imagine pieces and work with local artist to curate it into a vision/art piece so it helps children feel integrated and passion for the arts within our city"
- "Creating public works of art is important but just as importantly is having the local populace engage with the art."
- "Participatory projects. People need to self-express and providing opportunities for art exploration is pivotal."

Suggestions also included "projects that collaborate with community organizations and nonprofits to support their efforts," as well as getting the community involved in the

decision-making process through “projects that consider the recommendations of the people and neighborhoods that will be impacted by the project. What do they want to see in their community?”

El Pasoans want to support local artists.

Creating and broadening opportunities for local artists was mentioned across the survey, including comments questioning the transparency of the artist selection process and expressing a desire to see a wider range of local artists commissioned for projects. Overall “Support the development of public art practice by artists based in El Paso” ranked as the #1 priority for the program in Question 12, which asked respondents to rank a list of five priorities from 1 to 5.

Support for local artists was also one of the most frequently mentioned themes in response to the question of what should be added to or changed about the vision. Just a few of these answers read:

- “Diversity in local art projects. Seeing the same five artists receive public funding while many other artists are overlooked is not helping keep artistic skills here in El Paso. Artists should not have to leave the city to find support or work.”
- “Engaging more artist for projects. Less use of the established artists.”

- “I truly think the majority of public art in El Paso should be created by El Pasoans — whether ones that live here now, or have since moved away. I used to not think this way, but have changed my mind. If local talent cannot engineer certain art works, the city should bring in contractors to assist locals to learn this new skill.”

- “If it’s El Paso it should be from the people of El Paso”

- “More public artworks by local artists”

Murals are very popular.

When asked to name their favorite artwork in El Paso, murals were the most frequently mentioned type of artwork. The top answer overall (9 responses) was Mountain Lion by Bordalo II, a piece made from recycled trash attached to a building’s façade, that many people describe as a mural. Six respondents said murals in general were their favorite, because, for example, “they showcase our culture and embrace the vibrancy of El Paso.” Seventeen more people answered with specific murals, some commissioned by the Public Art Program and some not, including Animo Sin Fronteras by El Mac, the El Paso Strong mural, murals by Carlos Callejo, CIMI, Gabriel Gaytan and others.

Diversity and multiculturalism are important.

The importance of reflecting and showcasing El Paso’s multiculturalism and diversity was seen throughout the survey. The most frequent response as to what should be added to or changed about the vision was that it should represent all of the cultures in El Paso. For example, one respondent wrote

that the vision should “include the diverse diaspora of nationalities, races and cultures that thrive in El Paso” and another stated that the vision “needs to include ALL different ethnic groups and diversity.”

Similarly, one of the top types of answers as to what should be added or changed to the goals were statements about showcasing the breadth of El Paso’s cultural diversity — Latinx, Black, indigenous, Chinese, military culture and border culture were all mentioned.

Art should be downtown and beyond.

“Downtown” and “Parks and Trails” tied for the most important places for public art. Each was selected by 69.6% of respondents. Behind them were “Neighborhood Streetscapes” (56%), “Recreation and Community Centers” (52%) and “Libraries” (46.1%), all places in neighborhoods and at the center of everyday life.

Transit and travel-related spaces ranked lower than downtown and these neighborhood gathering places. “El Paso International Airport” was chosen by 41.9% of respondents, “Gateways to El Paso” by 40.3%, “TXDoT highway infrastructure” by 39.3%, “Roundabouts” by 26.7% and “Sun Metro infrastructure” by just 17.3%. Three of the top most recognized projects was Bienvenido by Christopher Weed — located in a roundabout — and two of the works on Brio RTS lines; since they are familiar with some of the highly visible works in these places, people may feel that the need for art in these places has been met.

Three of the current key directions for public art point to where art should be located — projects that “reinforce places of gathering and meaning in neighborhoods throughout the city,” projects that “strengthen downtown and other areas of urban investment as pedestrian oriented cultural and economic resources,” and projects that “create a more visually appealing experience moving in and around El Paso for visitors and residents.” For each of these, more than 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the direction should continue to guide the program for the coming decade.

Art can be a tool to revitalize neighborhoods.

“New development areas — urban, commercial, housing” was also a less popular choice for where art should be located, with only 23.6% of respondents selecting this as an important place for public art. This points to the last theme seen in the survey — a desire for public art to be used as a tool for neighborhood revitalization.

Many of the write-in answers for “What are the most important places for public art to be located in El Paso?” indicated a preference for art in “older established neighborhoods,” “uplifting older border communities,” and “historical locations,” and addressed ideas about neighborhood revitalization. Respondents stated they would like to see art in “blighted” neighborhoods,” “areas without art,” “older border communities,” “older established neighborhoods,” “districts that need or missing art,” on “empty lots,” and “anywhere but downtown.”

Using art to revitalize neighborhoods was also a common answer for what should be added to the key directions. For example, one respondent wrote, “To build of communities and neighborhoods that have been neglected or abandoned such as the north east and south El Paso” and another stated, “To figure ways to beautify existing structures with art (and not build new ones). To identify blighted areas of the city that need art more than elsewhere!”

Open Houses

The consulting team facilitated four Open Houses on April 7 – 10, 2025. Each Open House had a specific geographic focus: Council Districts 1 and 8 (Westside), Council Districts 5 and 6 (Eastside), Council Districts 2 and 4 (Northeast) and Council Districts 3 and 7 (Mission Valley).

Participants at Open Houses were invited to:

- Place dots on the map to indicate where you would like to see public art in the future. Use the post-it notes to share your impressions of existing works.
- Envision new public art in your neighborhood. Share a word or short phrase you would want to use to describe it.
- Review the vision, goals and directions from the current El Paso Public Art Master Plan. Share your thoughts on these statements and how they can be improved, as well as other reflections in the Exit Questionnaire.

The responses for each element are listed below.

Place dots on the map to indicate where you would like to see public art in the future.

Downtown Notes

- Parks can use more public art. Children’s theme.
- Adding color to make the pieces stand out (train fence)
- I love the Aztec Calendar located in downtown El Paso and would love to see more love given to it. It represents this community and the respect is shows for indigenous.
- Not Whole Fence — needs purple lighting and more descriptive plaque
- Artwork should be distributed through the city. Not ignore downtown but don’t forget about the rest of the city.
- Maya Plaza Collaboration
- Rio Grande neighborhood in general is an art desert.

Downtown Dots

- Soccer fields north of Armijo Park
- Intersection by Guillen Middle School
- Delta & Tays
- Fire Station 11
- Aztec Calendar Park

- Kansas & Franklin
- Union Plaza Park
- Carouso Park
- John Karr Park
- Dunn Park
- Fire Station 3

Mission Valley Dots

- I-10 — eastern gateway to El Paso
- Ysleta Mission

Westside Notes

- Rio Grande Trail – bridge over berm at Valley Creek Park
- Combine Art & Benches — Riverbend walking trail
- Overlook at Transmountain
- Chamizal Mural makes you want to learn
- Large mural behind Bassett Place that was redone recently is my favorite. I like murals with animals and birds and nature, and that feel relaxing. It has brought life back to the area.
- Fonseca Drive — Ascarte Park Golf Course

Westside Dots

- Rasler Canyon Nature Preserve/Trailhead
- City TASA Shared Use Path pending submission
- Montoya Heights Park
- Don Haskins Rec Center
- Tom Lea Upper Park/Rim Road
- Scenic Drive/Richmond Avenue/ Newman Park
- McKelligon Canyon Road @ Davis-Seamon

Eastside Notes

- Art that welcomes you into the district — Edgemere, Zaragoza, Montwood
- Ocotillo is an effective gateway

Eastside Dots

- 375 & Edgemere
- Linear Parks along Holly Springs and other linear parks
- Dog Park at Rainbow Vista Park
- Planned Montwood extension
- 375 and Zaragoza
- Desert Sands Park
- Burning Mesquite Park

**Envision new public art in your neighborhood.
Share a word or short phrase you would want to use
to describe it.**

Westside

- Kinetic
- Interactive (2)
- Multicultural
- Unique
- Public art that can be used for physical exercise
- Emphasize the migrant “the culture pass”
- Emphasize the culture of two cities
- Inspiring
- Envisions (marker signs)
- Wind/reed system
- Lights & Lasers — projections on buildings
- Community
- Friendship
- Isolation
- Interactive
- Motion/capture
- Video technology
- Musical (2)
- Reflective of area
- Ocean/desert
- Manta ray, whales, octopus
- Historic marker
- Identifying signs & art
- Multi frame
- Childlike
- Representative of our culture
- Unorthodox in form
- Chess
- Refraction / light / sun projector
- Innovative
- Natural
- Surrealism
- The colors of the border
- Healthy

Eastside

- Los colores
- Rebirth
- Fossils
- La historia deportes
- More art, colorful art
- Connection with Chihuahua
- Las esculturas de Sebastian
- Lights downtown
- Tadpole shrimp (Hueco slug)
- Interactive
- Pay tribute to people in our community
- Guide to murals
- Like benches, shade, look modern
- Natural looking
- Likes Miner Pick at UTEP
- Lion downtown
- Flowers catch light

- Community collaboration
- Artwork that makes you think, dream or imagine
- Murals that depict unity, peace
- Colorful
- Representation of mental health
- Animals with a connection to Mexico
- Stargazing night
- Public art tours
- Doesn't like purple thing on airway
- I love that the cloud changes with the weather and that it's dynamic

Northeast

- We need art
- Bold colors
- Culturally healing artwork

Mission Valley

- We need more art in public spaces like libraries, community centers, parks, roundabouts
- More art appreciation in the community
- Water features

- More art in/at libraries to communicate its certain community and environment, what libraries represent, what that location represents.

Review the vision, goals and directions from the current El Paso Public Art Master Plan. Share your thoughts on these statements and how they can be improved, as well as other reflections in the Exit Questionnaire.

1 Do the current vision, goals and directions for public art still make sense today? If not, how should they change?

- The vision, goals and direction are very sounds. Local artists keep the culture alive.
- I think overall yes. My favorite current ones are the goal of promoting authentic images and public art projects that reinforce places of gathering.
- Yes — expand the goals to incorporate culture of migration.
- Yes. In a lot of areas I have seen more public art and I appreciate the art a lot. We can have more. Ask for more ART.
- Yes, but I would like to see more local artists represented and having them integrate art with the students, schools, community members.
- Incluir programas en las escuelas en diferente niveles. (Include programs in schools at different levels.)
- Organizando tours escolares visitando arte publico. (Organizing school tours visiting public art.)

2 In your own words, how does public art benefit El Paso? Your immediate community?

- Public art has always communicated cultural importance. El paso especially has deep roots embedded in Spanish culture. Art has been used to express problems and ideas, people use it to communicate what they've experienced and it shouldn't be taken away.
- Public art helps me be proud to be from El Paso. In my immediate community it brings color, life and a sense of safety.
- Energizes the sense and encourages mindfulness.
- Yes. It allows us to enjoy urban places and increases our identity, representation of the culture and create a fun environment.
- I think, when an area is attractive, people take more care of it, so less letter & vandalism.
- Art is a reflection of the community, it provides positive benefits through increased pride in the community.
- Aumenta el sentido de identidad. (Increases the sense of identity.)

3 What places do you think would be good locations for public art?

- Upper and general east sides; especially at bus centers & the poorer population should be exposed to various mediums of art.

- I think places of high foot traffic, especially parks.
- Transmountain overlook(s).
- Parks.
- On the sides of the freeway
- Downtown buildings.
- Rio Grand Trail (Valley Creek Park).
- Any place with foot traffic.
- Downtown is becoming very vibrant, but also many don't travel outside of the community so we need to place the art through the city.
- Todas las areas del El Paso. (All of the areas of El Paso.) West-East-Far East-Central).

**4 Do you feel connected to the city's public art?
If not, what could help you feel more strongly connected?**

- Yes. One of my favorite pieces is the mural used to create a cat out of objects.
- Yes, I feel connected.
- Yes. Connected to history and culture.
- The artworks that are reflective of the culture and environment are what make me feel more connected.

- Yes. I enjoy viewing the art, it has become a part of the city and provides pleasure and connectedness.
- Puntos relevantes propios de la comunidad historia, herencia cultural. (Relevant points of the community's history, cultural heritage.)

5 Please share any questions, suggestions or concerns you might have about public art.

- One of my concerns is the representation of the Aztec Calendar. It is in poor shape and we want to help develop a new one.
- Maintenance of existing artwork is a concern. How is it budgeted?
- You need to get the word out to the general public about all the public art, where it is located, provide tours, information, brochure, maps, etc.
- Elaborar catologos y distuboirlos en lugares tuisticos y districtos escolares. (Prepare catalogs and distribute them in tourist attractions and school districts.)





Roger Stoller, *Lmara*, 2016

Appendix C: Credits

Mayor

Renard U. Johnson

City Council

District 1, Alejandra Chávez

District 2, Dr. Josh Acevedo

District 3, Deanna M. Rocha

District 4, Cynthia Boyar Trejo

District 5, Ivan Niño

District 6, Art Fierro

District 7, Lily Limón

District 8, Chris Canales

City Manager

Dionne Mack

Deputy City Manager

Richard Bristol

Managing Director, Quality of Life, Museums and Cultural Affairs Department

Ben Fyffe

El Paso Public Art Program

Miriam Garcia

Adrian Guzman

Museums and Cultural Affairs

Advisory Board

Valeria Contreras

Bianca De Leon

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Dr. Christopher Olivares

Vanessa Tena

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Public Art Committee

Angel Bataller

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Sebastian Escobar-Garcia

Dr. Karen Herman

Patrick Hernandez-Cigarruista

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Stephanie Barrios-Urrieta

Claudia J. Cardoza

Ricardo A. Isaias

Madison Kaigh

Josue J. Munoz-Miramón

Consultants

Meridith McKinley, Aliza Schiff

Via Partnership, LLP

Todd W. Bressi

Public Art • Placemaking • City Design

Kerry Doyle



Adrian Lopez, *Desert Agave*, 2021