

PUBLIC ART

A PLAN FOR WINSTON-SALEM AND FORSYTH COUNTY, NC



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Introduction

What is Public Art?

Public art includes any work of art purchased with public funds, or that exists in the public realm. Whether it's on private or public property, if it can be seen from public spaces like sidewalks, streets, courtyards, parks, even parking lots, it is public art. Public art can be created in any medium, whether it's sculpture, painting or fountains. Even artfully created benches or bus stops can be public art. For the purposes of this plan, we will not consider architecture itself to be public art; however, buildings and structures can have public art incorporated into their design.

Why Public Art?

When the City-County Planning Department was seeking public comment for *Legacy 2030*, Winston-Salem and Forsyth County's comprehensive plan, public art was one of the topics that generated the most support. There are many reasons for such support. Public art has the potential to contribute to our unique sense of place, encourage creative place making, transform underused spaces, and enhance our roadways, gateways, public spaces, and parks.

There's an economic argument for public art, too. A 2014 *Urban Studies* article suggests that "the arts are a necessary component of innovation districts," such as the one growing around our community's universities and downtown. And, a 2012 Knight/Gallup study indicates that cities that invest in public art help create emotional attachments to their community in ways that contribute to higher economic growth, basically saying that when people are proud of their communities, they invest in their communities.

Public Art in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County

Winston-Salem and Forsyth County's current approach to public art is indirect and often passive. Local arts organizations have taken the lead in creating public art, but they don't often have the space to display it. The City and County have ample public space that's perfect for art, including in front of our schools, libraries, public assembly facilities, and parks, but do not have the central organization that can connect artists to those places.



Denver Convention Center

Public Art in North Carolina

Most of North Carolina’s largest cities are purposeful in their investment in and creation of public art (**Table 1**). They typically appoint a public art commission or advisory board, which is administered by a municipal department, to assist in implementing public art projects. Many of these cities also fund public art through their municipal budgets.

Table 1. NC Municipal Public Art

City	Public Art Plan?	Governance	Funding
Asheville	Yes	Municipal Public Art & Cultural Commission, administered by Parks & Recreation Department	1% of capital construction project funds for public art
Cary	Yes	Municipal Public Art Advisory Board, administered by the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department	Capital Improvement Budget
Durham	Yes	City/County Cultural Advisory Board, administered by Economic and Workforce Development Department	General Fund
Charlotte	Yes	City/County/Nonprofit Public Art Commission	City and County 1% of capital improvement project funds for public art
Greensboro	No	Nonprofit Public Art Endowment	Nonprofit fundraising
Hickory	Yes	Municipal Public Arts Commission, administered by Planning Department	Public/Private
Raleigh	Yes	Municipal City Arts Commission, administered by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department	1/2% of capital construction project funds for public art
Wilmington	No	Nonprofit Arts Council of Wilmington	Nonprofit fundraising

Solving the Problem

Public art is rarely the work of one person. It takes teamwork and organization. It takes vision, partnerships, and administrative capacity. It needs the backing of an organization that can navigate the obstacles inherent in using public space, raising funding, and executing grand ideas. Without a formal public art process in place, arts organizations run into roadblocks. Permission to use public space is more difficult to come by, as is grant funding.

This plan is the first step toward solving these problems. It proposes the organizational infrastructure – a public art program and commission – needed to facilitate public art by uniting artists, ideas, funding, and public space into a more beautiful, thoughtful, and innovative public realm. It lays the groundwork for creating public art in a deliberate way and proposes an organization that can both fund public art projects and assist local arts organizations to display their art for the public.



Mickey Coffee Pot, Winston-Salem, 1956

Vision

Project Types

Successful public art ideas and proposals will inspire pride in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, define neighborhood identity, educate, celebrate, and encourage conversation. They will elevate the stories, relationships, perspectives, and narratives of the community. They will link us together. Public art pieces should be dynamic, innovative, and interactive. They should surprise and delight us.

Public art project types may include but are not limited to:

- Sculptures;
- Murals;
- Fountains;
- Mosaics;
- Photography;
- Interactive art;
- Light projections;
- Sound art;
- Earth works and other environmental installations;
- Aerial art, meant to be seen from the upper floors of a building;
- Functional pieces, such as bus stops or bike racks;
- Prints and banners;
- Ornamental elements designed to be part of another City or County project, such as a bridge.



Liege, Belgium

Public art projects may be temporary or permanent. A space could be dedicated for rotating artists, where a new mural is painted every year. Some projects should be meant to be viewed during the day, others at night. They should engage different age groups, including children. They can be conceived to be part of other activities, such as a scavenger hunt.

Locations

One of the purposes of this plan is to expand the City and County's public art offerings beyond the Downtown Arts District. To bring public art to the rest of Downtown, city and county neighborhoods, parks, greenways, and beyond. To expand the audience for public art here and make it accessible to more of Forsyth County's residents and visitors.

Public art should be located throughout the community, including but not limited to the following places:

- Active pedestrian areas;
- Incorporated into other City or County projects (benches, bike racks, bus shelters, bridges, etc.);
- Community and neighborhood gateways;
- Schools;

- Libraries;
- Farmers markets;
- Playgrounds;
- Near restaurants and bars;
- Semi-public spaces (privately owned, but visible from public space);
- Underutilized, blighted, or abandoned spaces;
- Underpasses;
- Murals on streets and sidewalks;
- Murals on buses;
- Crosswalks;
- Parking lots;
- Traffic circles;
- Utility boxes; and
- Places that surprise.



Orlando, FL

Implementation

1. Public Art Commission

To implement the vision of our community with dynamic, innovative, and interactive public art, this plan recommends the creation of a City-County Public Art Commission. The structure of the proposed Commission and its duties follow.

Commission Responsibilities

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Art Commission would be the appointed body that implements the vision of this plan through the City-County public art program. The Commission and its dedicated staff would meet monthly to continuously coordinate public art projects throughout the county. By administering the City-County public art program, the Commission would:

- Commission works of public art;
- Designate sites where public art would be an asset;
- Serve as the artist selection panel;
- Determine feasibility of proposed projects;
- Determine budgets for eligible projects;
- Review the design, execution, and placement of artwork;
- Build partnerships with Forsyth County’s arts organizations and neighborhood associations;
- Research potential public art funding opportunities, including grants;
- Oversee the City and County’s public art collection, including deaccessioning City- and County-owned public art pieces;
- Advocate and build community support for public art; and
- Market and advertise the public art program and individual public art projects.



West Fourth Street, Winston-Salem

Staff Responsibilities

The Public Art Commission would be staffed by the Planning and Development Services Department along with other City and County offices and departments. The City Manager’s Office/County Manager’s Office, along with Planning staff, would administratively support and oversee the public art program and its budget. Administrative support would include:

- Support to the Commission, including meeting support, executing contracts, and making payments to artists and other partners;
- Coordinating with appropriate City and County departments for maintenance, repair, community outreach, permit approvals, and other requirements of public artwork.

The City Property Facilities Management Department should be responsible for maintenance and repair of public art pieces in the possession of the City. The County General Services Department should be responsible for maintenance and repair of public art pieces in the possession of the County. Artwork

should be considered to be in City or County possession if it is owned or hosted by the City or County for a defined period of time. Planning staff would determine maintenance and repair needs based on annual inspections.

The Marketing and Communications Department should assist with public art community outreach efforts, including publication design and printing, website design and maintenance, and video production.

The Transportation, Utilities, and Engineering Departments should serve as consultants to the Commission as needed.

Commission Membership

Members of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Art Commission must have a strong interest in the visual arts and live in Winston-Salem or Forsyth County. Overall, Commission racial, ethnic, and gender membership should reflect that of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. It is proposed that the Commission have nine (9) members in the following categories:

- Two (2) civic/business leaders;
- Three (3) professionally involved in the visual arts, including artists, arts organization administrators or fundraisers, art professors, art teachers, curators, graphic designers, and architects; and
- Four (4) members of the community who are passionate about public art but do not necessarily have a professional arts background.

The City and County would each appoint one Commission member for the general community member category. The remaining seven Commission members would be appointed by the City and County proportionally to the amount of funding each body contributes to the public art program's annual budget. Commission members should not be replaced mid-term due to a public art budget change by the City or County. New appointees must meet the open seat's qualification requirement (civic/business leader, arts professional, or general community member).



San Antonio, TX

City appointees must live in Winston-Salem and would be appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. County appointees must live in Forsyth County and would be appointed by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners. Members would serve four-year terms*. Members would only be able to serve two consecutive terms, but may be reappointed after two years off the Commission. If a member needs

to step down before his or her term is complete, the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners or the Mayor and City Council would appoint a new member to complete that term. Commission members appointed to an incomplete term would have the option to renew their membership for one complete term if the term they were completing had more than three years remaining or two complete terms if the term they were completing had fewer than three years remaining.

The Commission would elect a Chair who would serve a two-year term and could be reelected to serve up to three consecutive terms. The Commission would hold one meeting per month. A quorum of two-thirds of the Commission's voting members would be required in order to conduct business.



North Trade Street, Winston-Salem

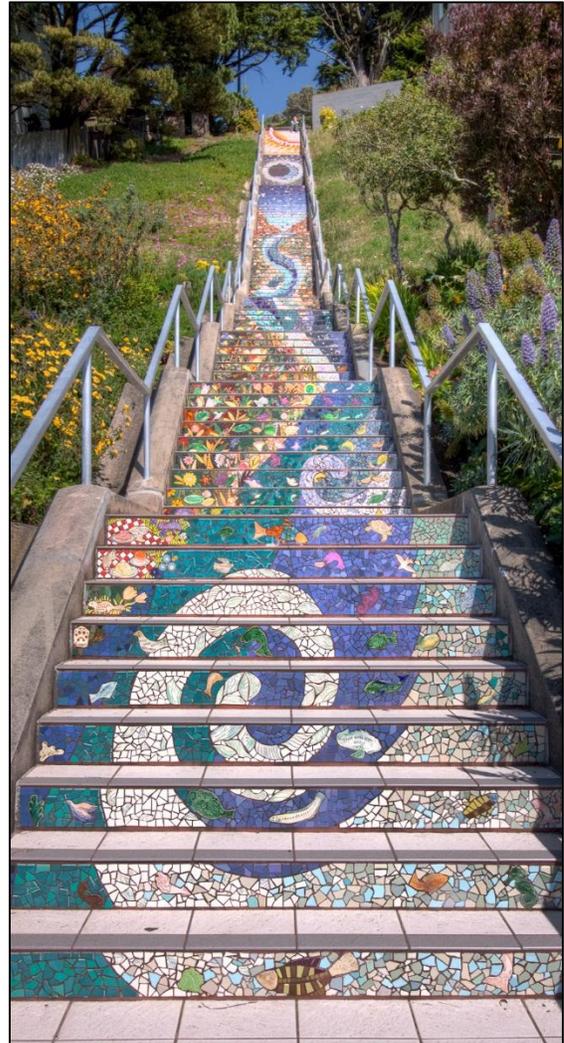
The Commission would create a Community Engagement Subcommittee and, for each approved public art project, a Project Implementation Subcommittee. Other subcommittees may be appointed at the Commission's discretion. Subcommittee members would be appointed by the Commission's Chair and must include at least one Commission member. Subcommittee sizes would be determined by the Commission. Subcommittee meeting schedules and rules would be set by each subcommittee.

*For the Commission's first year, four members would be assigned two-year terms so that membership partially rotates off every year after the organization's fourth year. These two-year appointments would be proportional between City and County appointments based on the amount of funding each body contributes to the public art program's first annual budget. The City Council and Forsyth County Board of Commissioners would determine which of their appointees will be assigned two-year terms.

2. Funding

Funding options will be necessary only if the City or County want to invest in public art projects themselves. In addition, the Public Art Commission could facilitate the creation of public art by community organizations that can be hosted on public property. The Commission could also partner with City and County departments to create and host functional works of public art, such as artistic bus shelters, bike racks, or benches. Such projects could be paid for by the hosting department or donation, and possibly supplemented by the Commission's budget when a functional art piece costs more than was budgeted for the original item. The Commission may also pursue outside funding sources, such as grants and donations of money and supplies. Certain projects may be funded through partner organizations or crowdfunding platforms.

To actively create public art throughout Winston-Salem, the City should consider appropriating funds in its budget specifically for that purpose. The City should commit the remaining balance of its public art reserve (approximately \$110,000) and restore a \$50,000 annual appropriation from the Occupancy Tax fund to be designated for the public art program. The Commission should investigate other mechanisms to fund the public art program, including "Percent for Art," in which a percentage of the City's capital improvement budget is set aside for public art, or incentives for developers to create public art amenities.



San Francisco

A care and maintenance budget must be included in each public art project's budget. The City or County should provide insurance for each artwork for liability and in the event that it is damaged beyond repair. Insurance for liability and professional indemnity should be provided by the artist until an artwork is taken into possession by the City or County.

3. Process Framework

Components

The Forsyth County Public Art Commission and its staff should be tasked with facilitating public art projects by coordinating four main components:

- Ideas and proposals,
- Artists,
- Space, and
- Funding.

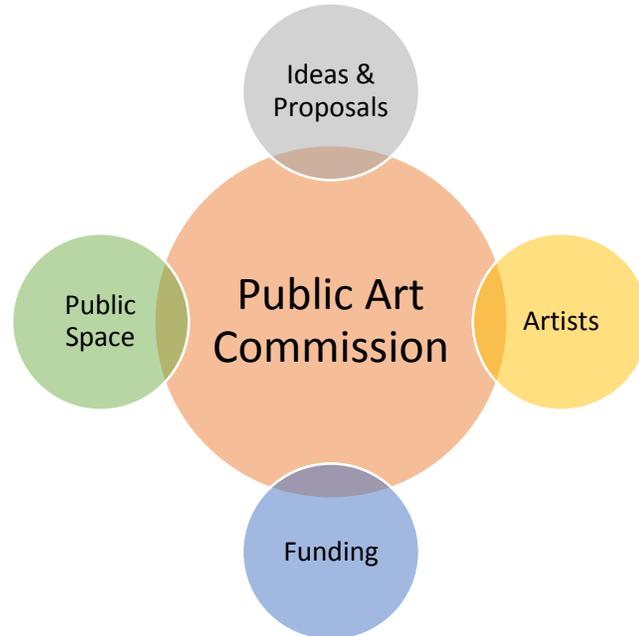


Figure 1. Public Art Process

Ideas and Proposals

The Public Art Commission should solicit ideas and proposals through a number of processes, including competitions. Competitions and calls for proposals may be limited to a particular theme or space. Ideas and proposals may be submitted by artists or citizens who intend the idea to be executed by an artist of the Commission’s choosing. Public art projects may be conceived as permanent or temporary pieces.

Artists

Artists who produce public art pieces for the Commission should be selected based on their talent and ability to create compelling work. There will be many opportunities for local artists as well as those from other communities. In some situations the Commission may purchase a completed work.

Space

Public art, by its very definition, is located in the public realm. The public realm can be space owned by the City of Winston-Salem or Forsyth County, whether it’s a park or plaza, or the lawn in front of a school, library, or other public building. It can also be a place in the public right-of-way, such as a sidewalk, the center of a traffic circle, or even a bus shelter. However, the public realm need not always be publicly owned



Charlottesville, VA

if it can be seen from public space. A prominent wall of a privately-owned building that can be seen from a public street or sidewalk may be considered to be an appropriate space for public art.

Public art should be a major component of our downtown in addition to being equitably distributed throughout the community. The Commission should evaluate key places where public art would be an asset to the community. The Commission should consider City- and County-owned sites for public art throughout Winston-Salem and Forsyth County and should also work with volunteer property owners to host temporary or permanent public art pieces. Context is extremely important. A public art piece that fits in one setting may not necessarily work in another. The Commission need to evaluate that public art pieces are appropriate to their environment.

Funding

Art isn't free and public art in particular can be expensive. If Forsyth County's public art program is to be successful, the Commission will need to cultivate a variety of funding sources and create multiple partnerships to pay for public art projects. In addition to managing any City or County budget dedicated to public art, the Commission should build relationships with local arts organizations that express interest in creating public art and find opportunities to host art pieces not owned by the City or County on public property. It may be possible to realize a greater number of public art projects by creating matching grants that can fund artists who are also backed by a local organization or who are raising money through crowdfunding or other methods. More public art projects may also be created if the Commission can supply artists with physical resources, such as paint or other artistic materials. When selecting public art projects, the Commission should consider a piece's ongoing maintenance costs.

4. Community Engagement

Community engagement will be integral to the success and advancement of Forsyth County's public art program. The Public Art Commission will need to build and maintain relationships not only with artists, art lovers, and art supporters, but also – and especially – with those who are not already engaged in the arts. The Commission should be responsible for coordinating public art marketing, advocacy, and education strategies. A subcommittee with expertise in these fields may be appointed by the Commission to guide these efforts.



Naperville, IL

Marketing

Marketing strategies should be developed to connect people to the public art program and specific public art projects. The Commission should create separate marketing strategies to reach artists, art lovers, art supporters, and those not engaged in the arts.

Artists will need to be made aware of the public art program and opportunities to contribute ideas and create works of public art. Art lovers will need to be informed of public art projects, unveilings, and ways to participate in the creation of certain projects. Art supporters will also need to be informed of opportunities to contribute to public art projects, whether through hosting public art in a space visible to the public, or through donations of time, supplies, or funding.

Marketing to those not already engaged in the arts will be a special challenge, but is key to the endeavor of growing the public art program. Among this group may be art lovers, art supporters, or even artists in the making. The best way to get this group involved may be to create dynamic, innovative, and interactive public art pieces; however, the Commission should also connect to potential art lovers through strategies that consider Forsyth County's diverse population. The Commission should consider how age, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, neighborhood, and identity may influence how the community could engage with public art.

Marketing should include traditional media, such as print advertising and mailings, as well as nontraditional media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, or dedicated smartphone apps. Public art projects can have marketing strategies built in, perhaps through a design that's meant to encourage interaction with viewers through their smartphones. The Commission should also connect to community ambassadors, including key influencers and institutions that could promote public art projects. Public art work and unveilings should be cross-promoted with other events, such as the anniversary of a historic event, the opening of an exhibition, or one of the community's theater, music, or film festivals.

Advocacy

Advocacy strategies should be developed to create long-term broad public support and community involvement for the public art program. The Commission should engage individuals, organizations, and institutions that are interested in public art with the goal of finding opportunities to share resources, including space, marketing capacity, funding, and even pieces of art. The Commission should occasionally produce publications and studies that demonstrate the positive impact of public art in Forsyth County.

Education

The Commission should also work to clarify the public art process and proactively educate artists, art lovers, art supporters, and those not already engaged in the arts. The public art program's website should be a clearinghouse for information on the program and its associated documents, including requests for proposals (RFPs) and requests for qualifications (RFQs).



Goteborgs, Germany

5. Next Steps

With adoption of this plan, a key implementation step is to create a Public Art Commission that can facilitate public art projects throughout Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. This will be a huge first step, but it is hardly the beginning. Following are the actions the Commission will need to take in its first years:

- Recruit and appoint members of the Community Engagement Subcommittee.
- Annually determine fiscal year goals for public art implementation based on each year's budget.
- As public art projects are identified and approved, recruit and appoint members of each Project Implementation Subcommittee.
- Research Percent for Art and other mechanisms for future funding of the Public Art Program.
- After the Commission is well established, create a long-range document that identifies specific sites and public art projects to be implemented over a five- to ten-year time frame. Community input from local artists, arts institutions, neighborhood organizations, and the public at large should be incorporated.

6. Action Agenda

ACTION/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING*
Interlocal agreement between the City and County establishing a Public Art Commission and defining how it will be staffed.	City Council/ County Commissioners	Immediate
Appoint a nine-member Public Art Commission to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the creation and hosting of public art throughout Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, and • Manage the City's and County's investment in public art. 	City Council/ County Commissioners	Immediate
Determine budget and funding sources for Public Art Program.	City Council/ County Commissioners	Immediate
Recruit and appoint members of the Community Engagement Subcommittee.	Commission	Short Range
Annually determine fiscal year goals for public art implementation based on each year's budget.	Commission	Ongoing
As public art projects are identified and approved, recruit and appoint members of each Project Implementation Subcommittee.	Commission	Ongoing
Research Percent for Art and other mechanisms for future funding of the Public Art Program.	Planning Staff	Short Range
Create a document that identifies specific sites and public art projects to be implemented over a five- to ten-year time frame.	Commission	Long Range
Inspect completed public art pieces once per year to determine maintenance and repair needs.	Planning Staff	Ongoing

*Timing:

Immediate: Current Fiscal Year;

Short Range: 1 to 2 years;

Long Range: 2 to 5 years;