

*Greetings From*

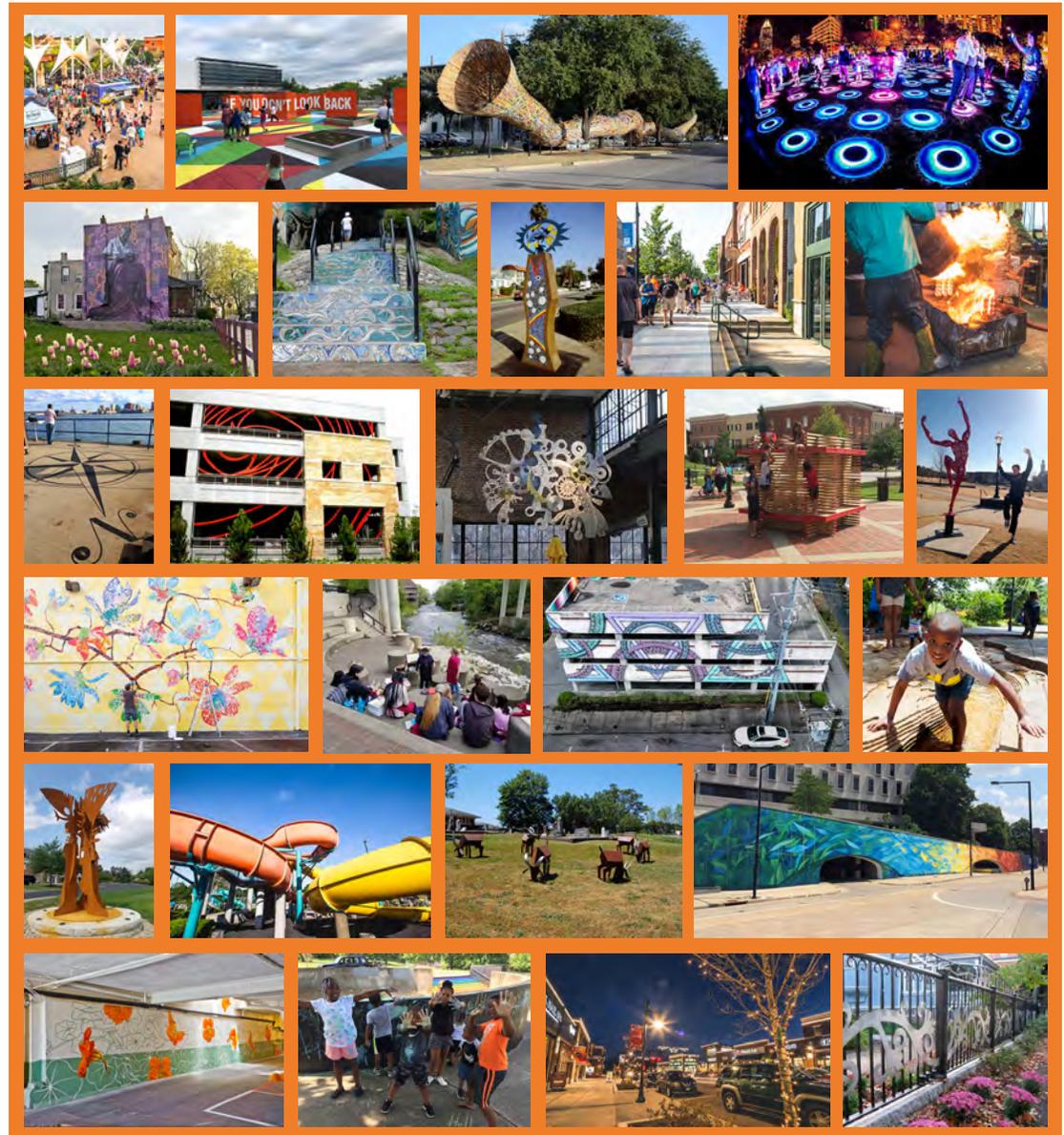
**CUYAHOGA  
FALLS**

*Ohio*

**Cuyahoga Falls  
Public Art Master Plan**

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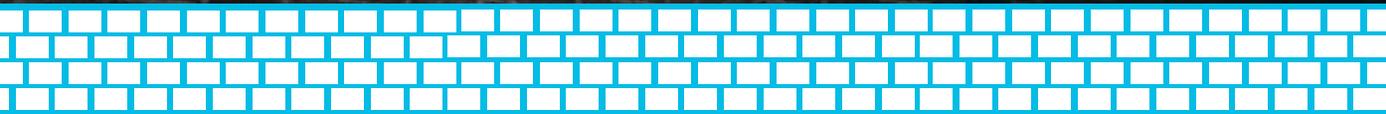
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# Executive Summary

Public art is bursting out all over in the Cuyahoga Valley, including right here in Cuyahoga Falls.

Don Drumm, commission for Triad.  
Photo: Todd W. Bressi

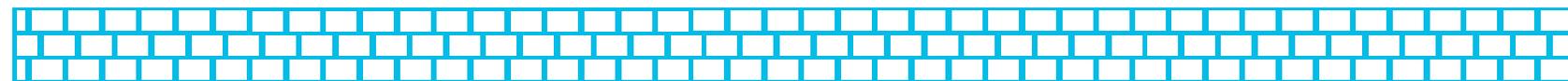
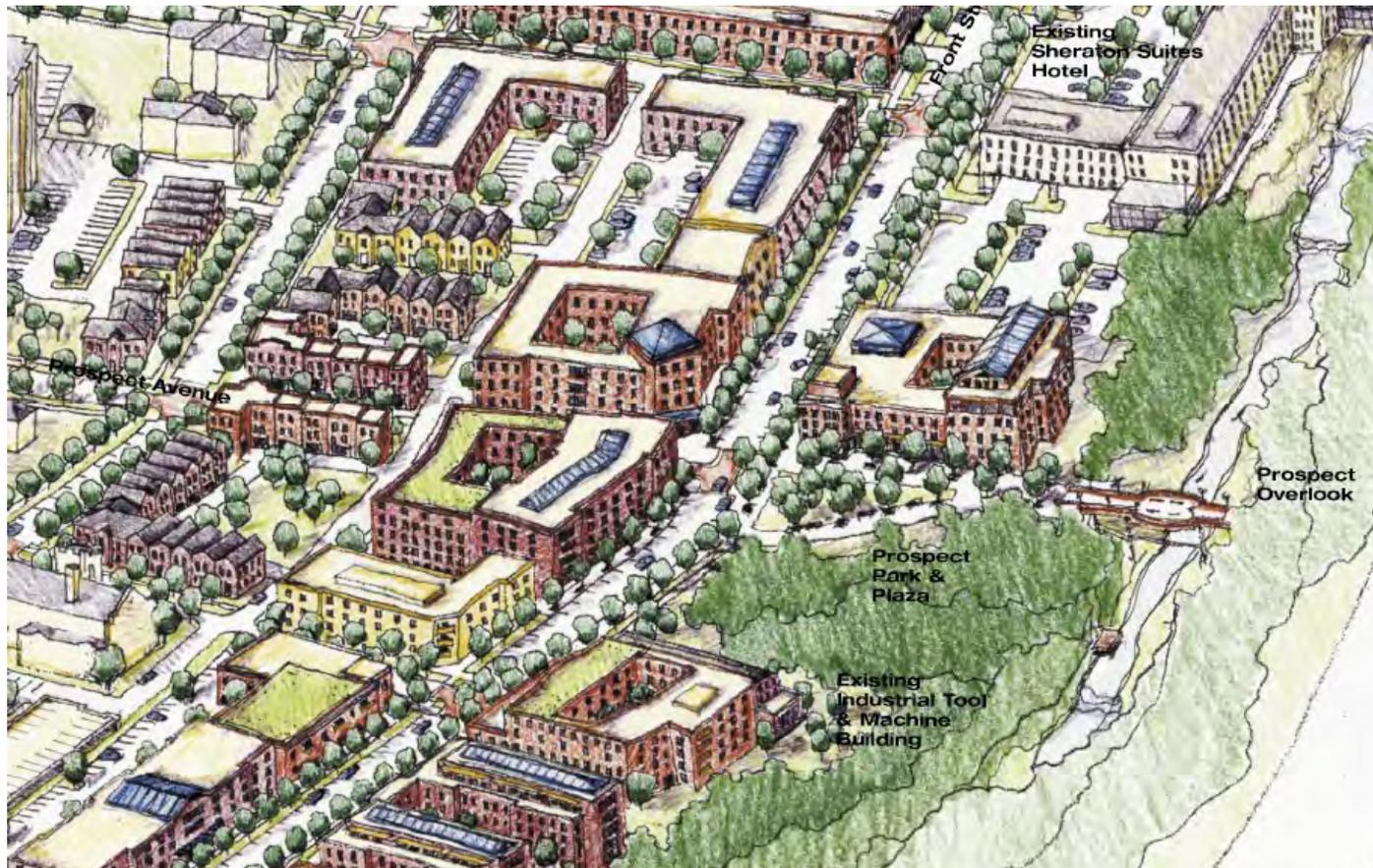


From well-resourced arts initiatives in Cleveland and Akron to scrappy efforts in regional cities such as Canton, Kent and Massillon, Cuyahoga Falls is surrounded by communities that consider public art as vital to their cities.

At the same time, Cuyahoga Falls has taken significant steps to plan for and invest in its future. The City of Cuyahoga Falls' new General Development Code embraces national best practices for traditional town planning and urban design. Its recent reinvestment in Front Street by reinstalling a Main Street-style streetscape in

place of the former pedestrian mall has brought confidence, vitality and investment to the historic downtown.

With this in mind, Cuyahoga Falls has set out to develop a public art master plan that will chart a direction for a unique public art program in the city. The process was initiated by the Planning Division of the Community Development Department, facilitated by public art consultant Todd Bressi, and guided by an advisory committee comprised of a wide cross section of community leaders.



# What We Learned

The master plan process included extensive community engagement and research into regional and statewide precedents for public art.

The research phase of the planning process made it clear that Cuyahoga Falls is not alone. More than a dozen other Ohio cities of all sizes have launched similar public art initiatives. The aims for public art, approaches to public art, and strategies for funding and implementing programs vary widely.

- For the most part, in Ohio cities, public art is a highly collaborative enterprise, with cities collaborating with arts non-profits and downtown organizations in a variety of ways. Public art programs largely operate through contracted entities, such as arts councils and other non-profits, that enter into agreements with cities and can also raise funds independently.

- Common program areas include murals, bike racks and downtown streetscapes.
- Unique program areas include light and interactive art, sculptures in roundabouts, and murals that involve young adults as an employment readiness program.

Ohio cities fund public art through a variety of sources, including:

- Annual capital budget allocations,
- Hotel/bed taxes,
- Admissions taxes,
- Downtown program funds,
- “Sin taxes” on items such as alcohol and cigarettes, and
- Partnerships with businesses, developers and institutions.

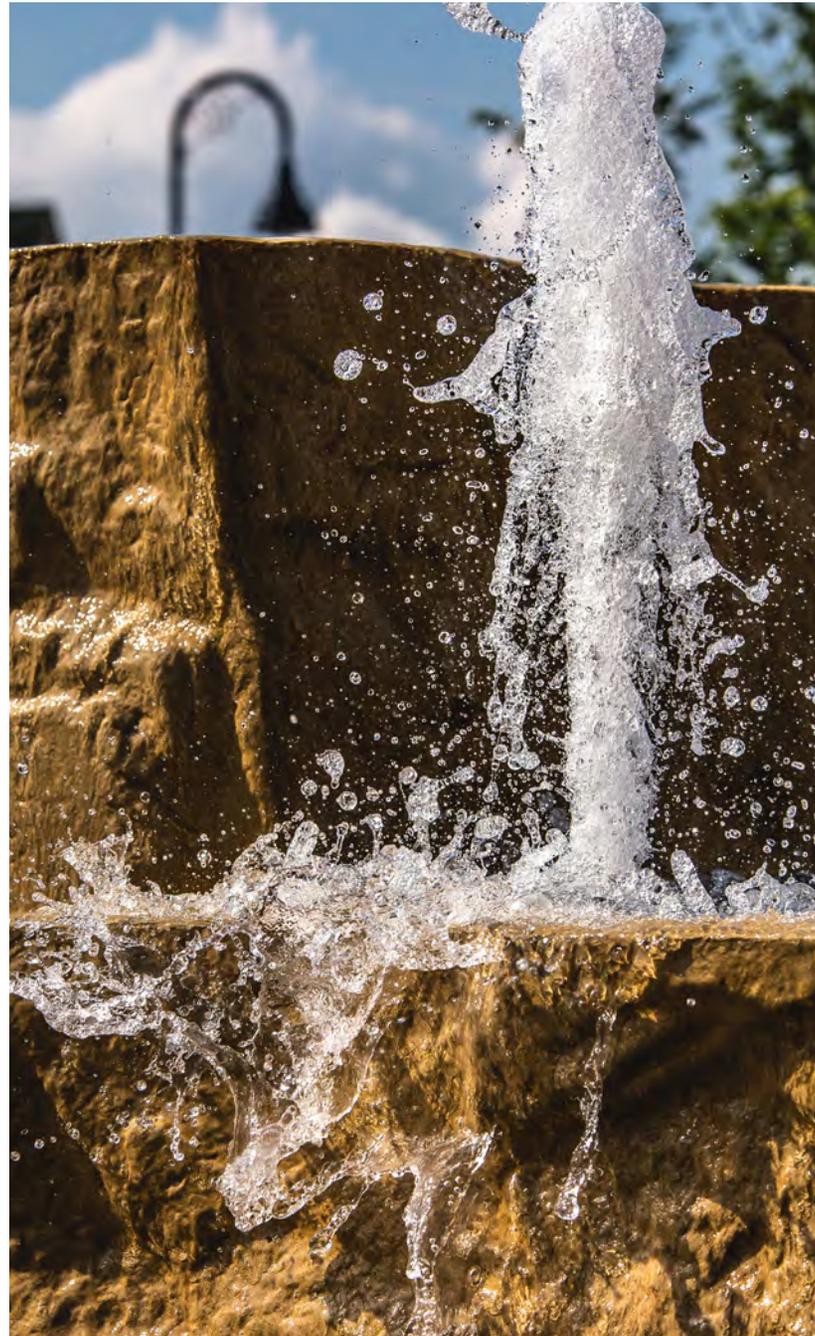


The research phase also underscored that Cuyahoga Falls has the right resources for a strong public art program.

- A grassroots arts community that is leading civic efforts
- A creative community organized around design, food and the visual arts
- Recent plans with an emphasis on traditional urban design approaches
- Strong parks and open space resources and traditions
- Recent public realm investment in Front Street
- Nearby creative communities in Akron and Cleveland, providing expertise and inspiration
- A variety of non profits ready to bring professional expertise and volunteer energy

The public engagement phase of this planning process indicated a clear set of community desires:

- A clear priority for public art with visual impact —enhancing the appearance of public spaces; creating a welcoming first impression; and creating memorable landmarks.
- An overwhelming interest in seeing public art downtown / along Front Street and along the riverfront. In those areas, artwork is preferred in gathering places, stair connections and “surprising” locations that pedestrians can experience.
- An interest in seeing art at major city gateways and in neighborhood parks.
- A preference for murals, light installations and temporary installations.
- A preference for integrating artwork into functional elements, for murals with historical or cultural themes, and for sculptures with a wayfinding function.
- An interest in asking artists to explore the city’s walkable downtown and the city’s connections to the Cuyahoga River.



Front Street Fountain. Photo: City of Cuyahoga Falls

# How this Plan is Organized

Every public art master plan is unique to the community for which it is created. “*Who is Cuyahoga Falls?*” and “*What Inspires Us?*” set the stage by describing what makes Cuyahoga Falls unique, and what type of public art people hope to see in their community.



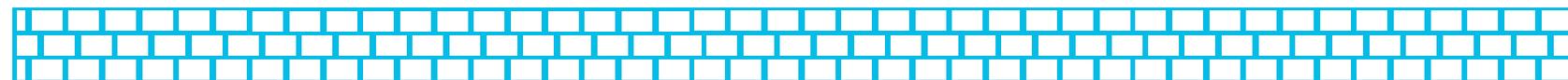
“*Imagining Public Art Here*” outlines the general framework and priorities for public art in Cuyahoga Falls, as well as specific opportunities within that framework. Specific and typical locations for public art are mapped, when possible.



“*How We Will Get There: Implementation Plan*” focuses on the nuts and bolts of implementing public art projects in Cuyahoga Falls. It presents a framework of planning tools, proposes a new board for governance purposes, identifies several funding sources, and discusses how donations should be managed. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of key players in the creation of public art projects.



“*Best Practices Guide*” is a compendium of public art processes. They are drawn from the best practices in the field, and while they are not specific to Cuyahoga Falls, they should be incorporated into the policies and procedures that are followed here.



# What this Plan Proposes

The proposals in this Master Plan draw from community input as well as research into City plans and priorities to identify opportunities for public art. Here are the key recommendations:

## Goals for Public Art

The public engagement process indicated the following goals for public art:

- Welcome people to the city and create a positive first impression.
- Enhance the appearance of public spaces.
- Create memorable, highly recognizable landmarks.
- Reveal authentic aspects of Cuyahoga Falls – its history, its entrepreneurial spirit, its connection to the river and its community life.

## Opportunities for Public Art

Cuyahoga Falls should focus on the following key creative directions for public art projects:

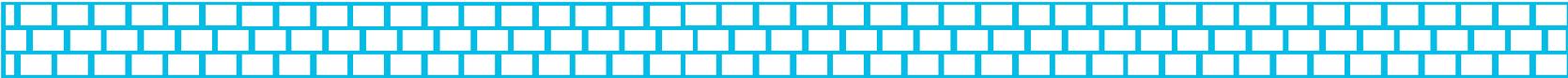
- Set the Table: Front Street and Downtown
- Own the River: Connecting to the Cuyahoga
- Build the City Beautiful: Gateways, Corridors and Centers

## Implementing a Public Art Initiative

Cuyahoga Falls must take several key steps to implement a public art initiative.

- Create a Public Art Board that plays a governance role, with oversight on public art planning and project development, approval of art projects and donations on City property, and approval of mural applications.

- Create an annual work plan that anticipates near term (next fiscal year) and midterm (two or three years out) projects that will be commissioned for the city. The work plan should include recommendations for projects and locations, proposed budgets and funding sources, and information about ongoing projects.
- Create individual project plans for each approved public art project. Project plans should include a work plan, schedule, budget, the recommended artist selection process, a community engagement and marketing plan, and maintenance protocols.
- Create a public art inventory and conservation/maintenance plan.
- Create a dedicated income stream for public art; consider community development funds and admission taxes as key sources.
- Adopt a policy regarding the uses of public art funds.
- Adopt a policy for donations and memorials.
- Adopt an approval process for murals, as well as minor revisions that relate to murals in the General Development Code and Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines
- Create a guide for developers indicating priorities and opportunities within the city.
- Revise the General Development Code to provide more direct encouragement of public art in new development and open spaces.
- Require developers to meet with the Public Art Board for informational discussions about including public art in new developments.



# Getting Started: Immediate Next Steps

Cuyahoga Falls can move its public art initiative forward through several immediate next steps that include project development, planning and policy implementation.

## Project Implementation

Cuyahoga Falls should begin with these immediate projects:

### Parking Deck Projects

The City could use funds allocated for painting its downtown parking decks to jump start an art project. The artist's scope could include interior or exterior murals, wayfinding on all three decks (red, green, blue), and a landmark feature in the glass tower of the green deck. The parking decks would be a good starting point because they are city-owned, they are highly visible and funds could be leveraged for public art projects.

### River Totems

Downtown wayfinding, particularly for connections to the river, is another priority for the Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Partnership. To address this, "River Totems" should be an early action project, with a focus on two-dimensional installations on sidewalks or walls.

### Front Street Streetscape / Utility Boxes / Planters

Utility boxes, traffic signal boxes and planters along Front Street would be a good starting point for public art upgrades to the streetscape. The process is simple and inexpensive and the locations are highly visible. The fabrication and installation of vinyl wraps could be handled by local companies, so the project would be accessible to many artists and arts organizations in the region.

## Planning

Cuyahoga Falls should initiate Front Street Placemaking, a planning process to examine potential uses, activations and short- and long-term improvements for downtown's three major spaces: the fountain and plaza just north of Stow Avenue, Falls River Square and High Bridge Glens Park.

This would set the stage for a holistic range of improvements, including public art, in these areas. This placemaking activity could be planned, organized and reported out on in 2020. City agencies should include Planning and Parks and Recreation. A natural partner would be the Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Partnership.

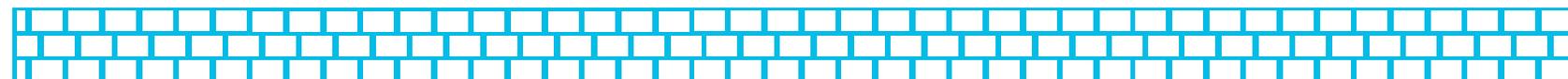
## Policy Implementation

Cuyahoga Falls should move forward by establishing the following policies:

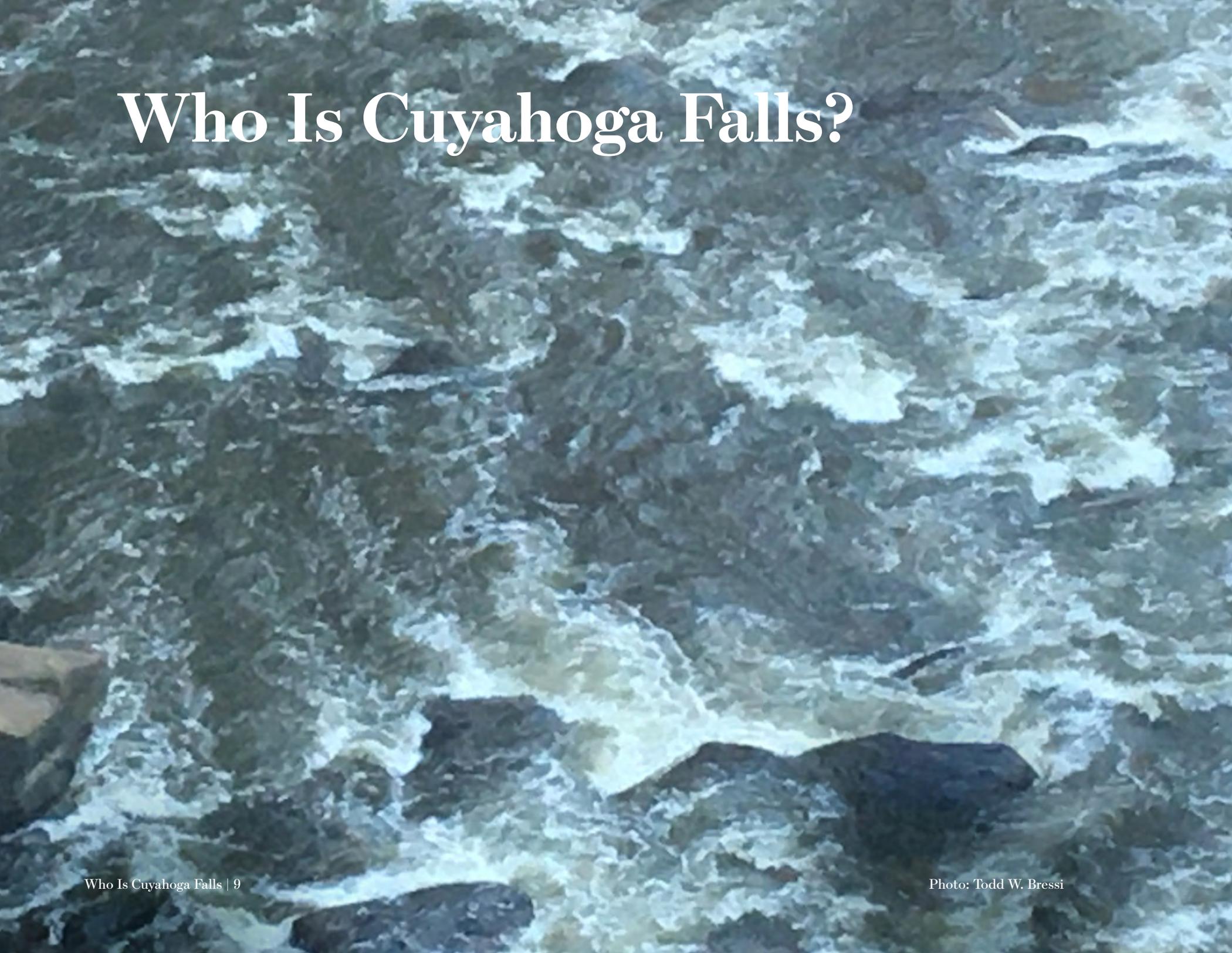
- Establish a Public Art Board to advise Council on public art activities,
- Establish ongoing funding for public art, either through transfers from community development fees or through a set aside of capital development funds,
- Streamline the mural approval process by creating a definition of "mural" to the City code; creating an application, review and approval process for murals; and guidelines for murals in the downtown historic district; and
- Establish guidelines for the donation of public art.



Jet Martinez, *Nasturtiums*, San Francisco



# Who Is Cuyahoga Falls?



# Small Town, Big City

“We have the amenities, on a smaller scale, that are available in larger cities, while maintaining a small-town feel. A standard question when I get back from the store is “did you see anyone you knew?” And the answer is almost always ‘yes’ — whether it was just a familiar face with whom I exchanged a hello or smile or it was a full blown catch-up conversation with one of our neighbors, one of our children’s teachers, or someone from church.”

Cuyahoga Falls benefits from being part of, yet apart from, a larger region that reaches from Akron to Cleveland and offers a plethora of arts, culture, economic, educational, recreational and social opportunities. At the same time, the city features a traditional historic downtown, turn-of-the-century “streetcar” suburbs, and more recently-built suburban-to-rural neighborhoods.

People in Cuyahoga Falls like the feeling of having the best of both worlds; access to the region’s resources, but a community that has a small-town, neighborhood feel.

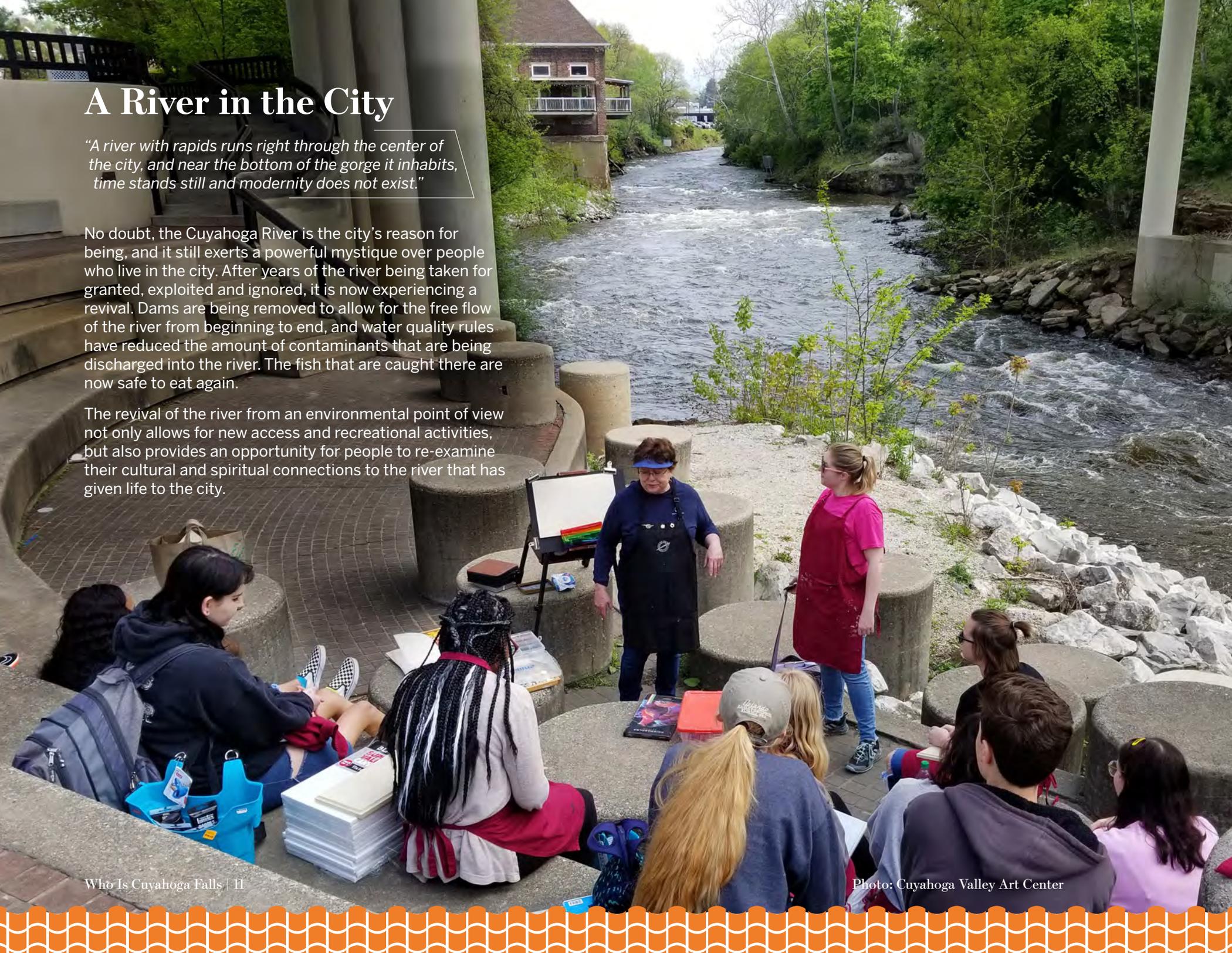


# A River in the City

*"A river with rapids runs right through the center of the city, and near the bottom of the gorge it inhabits, time stands still and modernity does not exist."*

No doubt, the Cuyahoga River is the city's reason for being, and it still exerts a powerful mystique over people who live in the city. After years of the river being taken for granted, exploited and ignored, it is now experiencing a revival. Dams are being removed to allow for the free flow of the river from beginning to end, and water quality rules have reduced the amount of contaminants that are being discharged into the river. The fish that are caught there are now safe to eat again.

The revival of the river from an environmental point of view not only allows for new access and recreational activities, but also provides an opportunity for people to re-examine their cultural and spiritual connections to the river that has given life to the city.



# A Resilient Place and People

“We are celebrating restoration of the river valley. Every one of us is part of something bigger, the Cuyahoga watershed and the Great Lakes ecosystem; we all live in that and engage in that.”

The cities along the Cuyahoga River were developed during the industrial era, which took its toll on the natural landscape, especially the river itself. The Cuyahoga River in Cleveland famously caught fire several times through the late 1960s, occurrences that played a large role in the passage of the national Clean Water Act.

Today the industrial economy has moved on, but the region is thriving anew, through arts, culture, education and new types of “making and doing” industries. Cuyahoga Falls has evolved from an industrial community to a bedroom suburb of Akron to an independent community that is interconnected with a newly dynamic region.

At the heart of this is Cuyahoga Valley National Park, an unusual national park that was established twenty years ago. Its current action plan positions the park as an experiment in human and ecosystem renewal:

“We look for themes that are timeless and classic and resonant. Rural landscape, river, history of farming, the citizens’ conservation movement that got this park established, the power of recovery — if we get out of the way that can happen successfully.”



# “Natures Playground”

“I love the many parks in and around Cuyahoga Falls. Standing at the overlook over the river downtown makes me happy; it’s so beautiful and we’re so lucky to have this in our backyard.”

People have been attracted to the natural wonders of the Cuyahoga River Valley since the city’s earliest days. Pleasure grounds such as Silver Lake and High Bridge Glens, with features like dance halls, amusement rides and even a zoo, attracted both residents and visitors from afar.

Today Cuyahoga Falls residents enjoy diverse recreational amenities not found in most similar size cities — a state-of-the-art natatorium/community center and a large outdoor swim facility; kayaking, biking and skiing; a regional outdoor music center, a downtown ice-skating rink; neighborhood parks and quiet nature walks. These facilities are operated by public agencies such as the City, the regional Metro Parks and Cuyahoga Valley National Park; non-profits such as the Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition and the Cleveland Musical Arts Association; and private outfitters.



Left photo: City of Cuyahoga Falls, Right: Image courtesy Todd W. Bressi



## Makers and Doers

Cuyahoga Falls has been a place of makers and doers, part of a broader region that has prospered because of its industrial innovation.

For a moment in the city's history, the falls of the Cuyahoga River (a drop of 220 feet, more than half of the entire descent of the river between its headwaters and Lake Erie) supported more industries than any other Ohio settlement. At first, basic industries such as construction supplies, household materials and machinery took root. Then, at the turn of the Twentieth Century, the rubber industry – the region's economic backbone for nearly a century – emerged.

Although the days of heavy industry have passed, Cuyahoga Falls' historic "making and doing" spirit lives on. Artists in Akron are known for their metal work, and contemporary creative craft businesses are finding their niche in Cuyahoga Falls, many of them in buildings that once housed the city's historic industries.

# Community

“The free community band and chorus concerts. The monthly folk/contra dances. The Irish and Italian festivals. Oktoberfest. The art center. The kayak races. The historic charm. Clean, safe downtown area.”

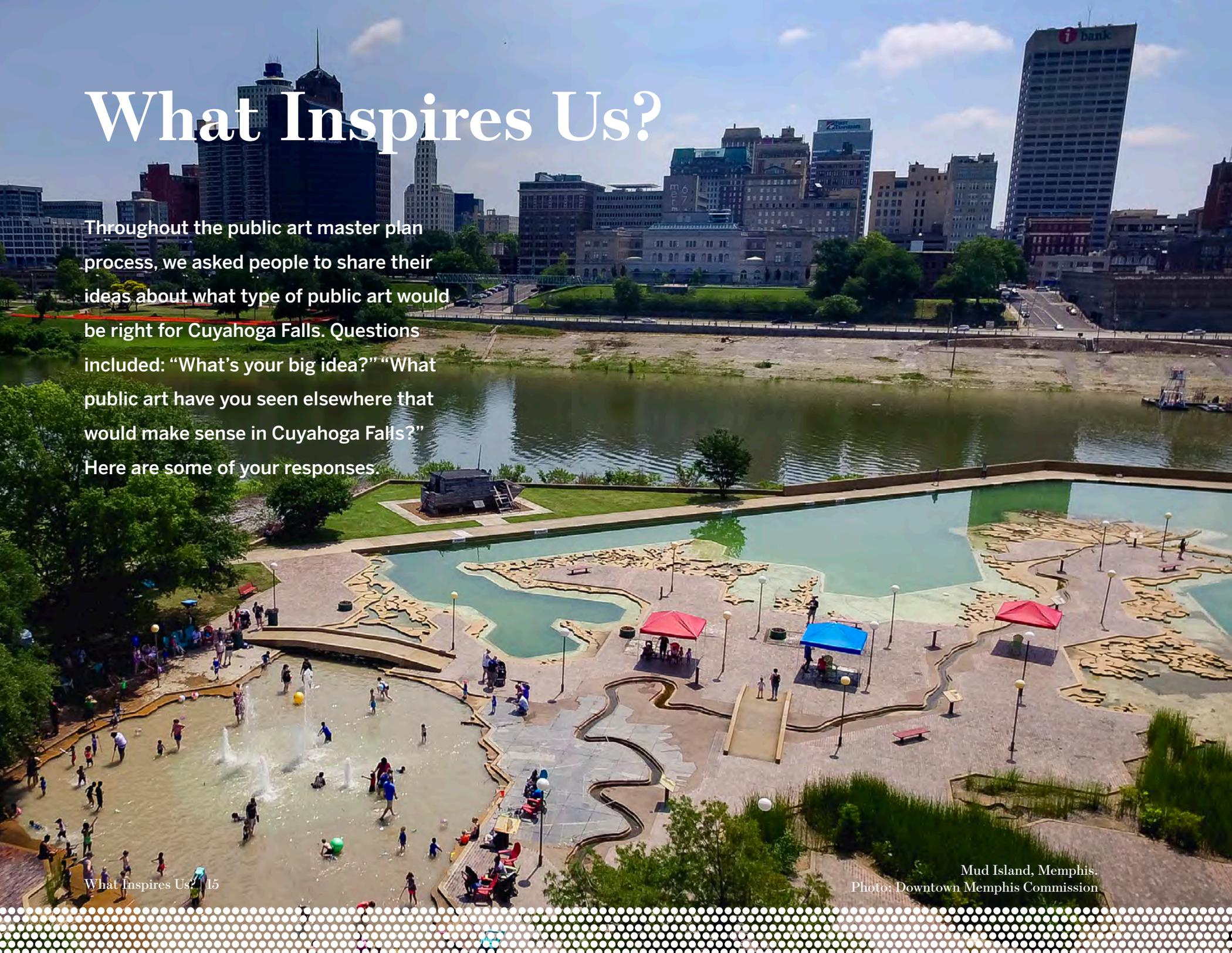
What makes Cuyahoga Falls special to people is its sense of community. This sense of community traces its roots to the spirit with which early residents built its business, civic, social and religious institutions.

Today, that spirit is reinventing itself anew. It can be seen in the many community activities — such as arts programming, cultural festivals and arts events — that are anchored in places like downtown, the Natatorium and Waterworks Park. It is reflected in the welcome that the City is offering to many refugees who have resettled in the area.



# What Inspires Us?

Throughout the public art master plan process, we asked people to share their ideas about what type of public art would be right for Cuyahoga Falls. Questions included: “What’s your big idea?” “What public art have you seen elsewhere that would make sense in Cuyahoga Falls?” Here are some of your responses.



Mud Island, Memphis.  
Photo: Downtown Memphis Commission

# Murals

People in Cuyahoga Falls are aware of the excitement that murals are bringing to cities across the country, and would like some of that to rub off downtown. Artists and property owners are eager to get started on projects.



Philadelphia

“Murals in Philadelphia ... create a sense of community, especially when they serve as connective tissue through a community or neighborhood, not just individual pieces randomly placed.”

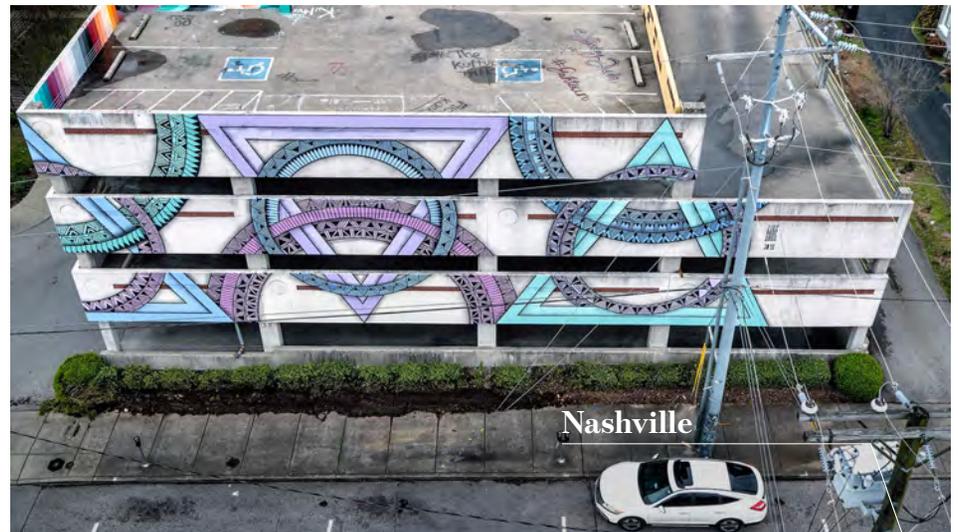
Donald Gensler,  *Holding Grandmother’s Quilt*.  
Photo: Steve Weinik, Mural Arts Philadelphia



Short North

“Columbus has great examples of public art. It greets you at the Short North as you get off the highway and it makes a fun and welcoming statement to visitors.”

Short North District, Columbus. Photo: Todd W. Bressi



Nashville

“Nashville’s murals have become a destination point. People go hunting to find the perfect Instagram shot.”

Chris Zidek, *Sacred Geometries*, commissioned by Nashville Walls.  
Photo: Those Drones, courtesy Nashville Walls Project

# Akron

Public art is thriving in next-door Akron — from murals and other community-based projects, from traditional metal sculpture to temporary installations by internationally-recognized artists. The artists and the organizations that support them can be models and resources for Cuyahoga Falls.

“I like the emphasis that artists in Akron have given to the importance of welcoming the immigrant community and of recognizing minority and working class groups. I also like that Akron artists strive to make the city more festive and colorful while asking residents to think critically about their city.”



*Rainbow Bridge*, produced by Art x Love for @PLAY (Akron, OH). Photo: Art x Love

“The artwork in downtown Akron represents a sense of authentic community that the Falls is trying to capture.”



Jessica Lofthus,  
*Cascade*, Parking Deck Mural.



“I like the iconic art pieces that Akron installed on the main roads where you’re entering the city. The blimp and rubber industry are highlighted on those.”

John Comunale,  
*Welcome to Akron North*.  
Photo: David B. Lile

# Functional, Interactive, Mapping

Cuyahoga Falls is interested in art that people can engage with, whether it's functional artwork, a playful installation or an artist-designed interactive public space. People would like to see public art help bring public spaces to life.



**Kent Bike Racks**

"Downtown Kent has wonderfully artistic practical pieces ... they help exemplify the downtown shopping district there."

Tom Hubbard, *Child's Jack* (bike rack), Kent OH.



**21 Balançoires**

"Interactive art exhibits (including visual art, music) that allow the public to participate by creating pieces by the community and for the community. For example, a traveling 'musical swing' installation that traveled to several different cities was a wonderful way for strangers to interact and create a 'song' together by swinging on a swing."

Daily Tous Les Jours, *21 Balançoires*, Montreal.  
Photo: Daily Tous Les Jours



**Mud Island**

"I absolutely love the river walk in Memphis depicting the topography, cities and watershed of the Mississippi River in the sidewalk culminating at a Gulf of Mexico public swimming pool. It is complete with riverbank plant life. We could do something like that along our Cuyahoga River."

Mud Island, Memphis.  
Photo: Downtown Memphis Commission

# Hometown Makers, A Sculpture Walk

Many cities organize temporary sculpture exhibitions to promote their downtowns. In Suwanee, Ga., the well-established bi-annual SculpTour offers sculptures for sale, and allows people to vote on a “People’s Choice,” which the City then purchases with funds from a sponsor.



Suwanee, GA, SculpTour

“Columbia, Mo., has fun sculptures all over their downtown each summer. They have a different theme each year, and local artists make them. They are sold after Labor Day to benefit local charities. My kids had to take pictures with every single one each time we visited!”

Kimber Fiebiger, *Mr. Eggwards*. Photo: City of Suwanee, Ga.



Don Drumm Studio

“Cuyahoga Falls would love to see more sculpture, not surprising for a place whose history is intertwined with industry and manufacturing. The work of regional sculptors like Don Drumm and John Communale is particularly beloved, and a temporary sculpture exhibition would build on the already popular annual Artwalk.”

Sculpture by Don Drumm. Photo: Jessica Hill

# Imagining Public Art Here

## GOALS

Welcome people to the city and create a positive first impression

Enhance the appearance of public spaces

Create memorable highly recognizable landmarks

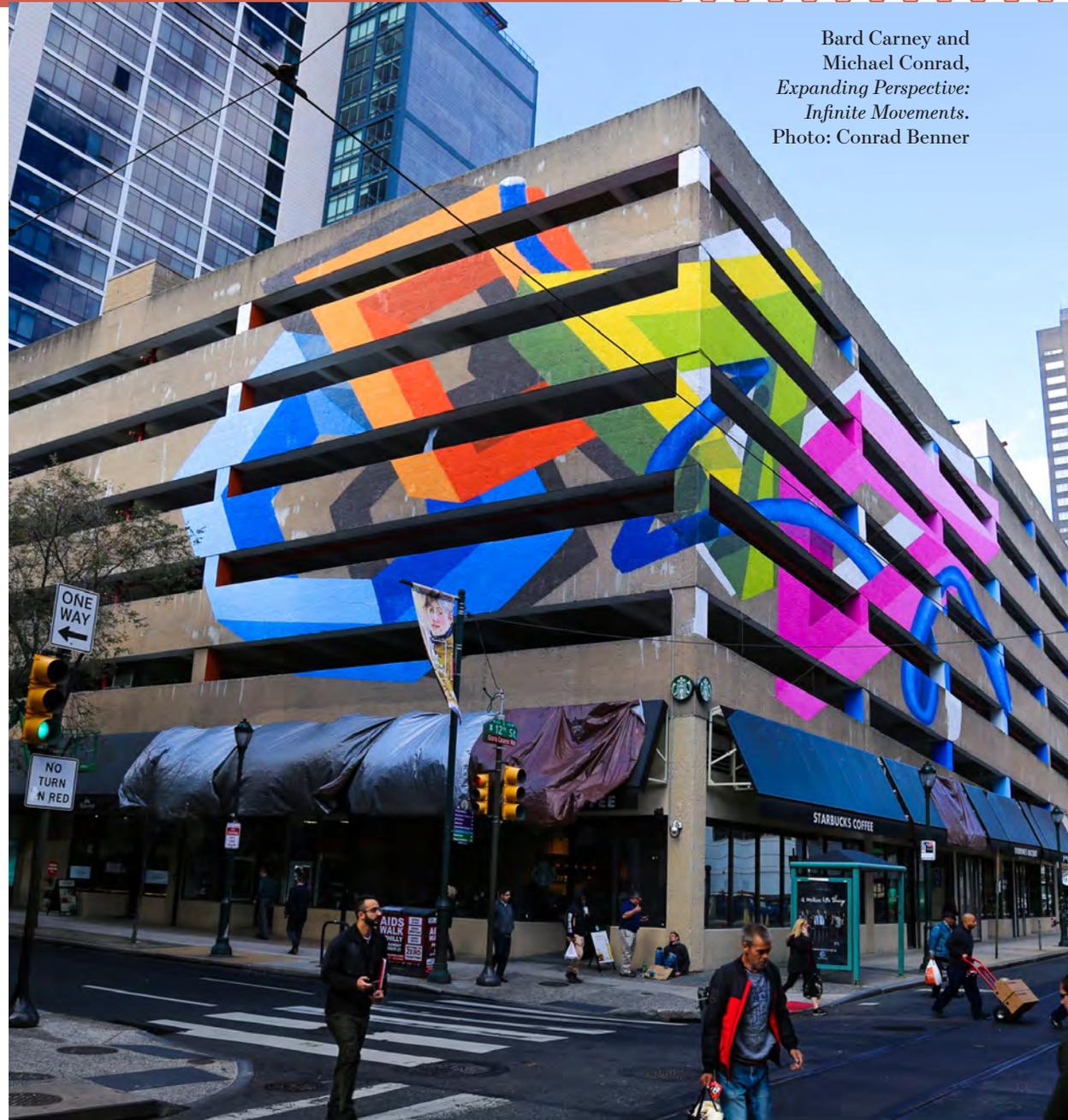
Reveal authentic aspects of Cuyahoga Falls

## FOCUS AREAS

Build the City Beautiful Gateways Corridors and Centers

Own the River Connecting to the Cuyahoga

Set the Table Front Street and Downtown



Bard Carney and Michael Conrad,  
*Expanding Perspective:  
Infinite Movements.*  
Photo: Conrad Benner

# ① Set the Table Front Street and Downtown

The downtown area should be the priority focal point of public art efforts. It is very much regarded as the key gathering place in the community, particularly because of its river access and the events and festivals that occur there. It is central to Cuyahoga Falls' history of industry, entrepreneurialism and community building.

Today, people are excited about the recent redesign of Front Street, the new businesses that are moving in, the events that occur there and the prospects for the future. Public art will be a welcome part of the mix.



# Front Street Placemaking

There are three major open spaces along Front Street: the fountain and plaza just north of Stow Avenue, Falls River Square at Broad Boulevard, and High Bridge Glens Park across from Prospect Avenue. There is also a discussion of a creating a temporary public space in the vacant lot at the southwest corner of Front Street and Portage Trail (the City is reserving the lot for development in the long term).

Each of these spaces currently has its own character and function. Each is a potential location for public art. However, in each space, public art should be part of a broader range of improvements and programming that work together to enhance those spaces. The type of public art that is pursued — from permanent integrated artworks to temporary event-based artworks, from functional to participatory or interactive artworks — will

depend greatly on the overall planning, design and programming of these public spaces.

Public art recommendations for these spaces should follow a new round of planning for the public spaces overall. The process should include downtown businesses, the Parks and Recreation Department and the community at large so that the spaces can be envisioned in the context of a revitalized Front Street.

There are many approaches that a project like this could take. One approach to consider is asking artists to create temporary projects that explore possible features and uses for spaces.

This is a process that the City should undertake in conjunction with the Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Partnership and other downtown stakeholders.



Potential locations for placemaking study



Photo: Todd W. Bressi

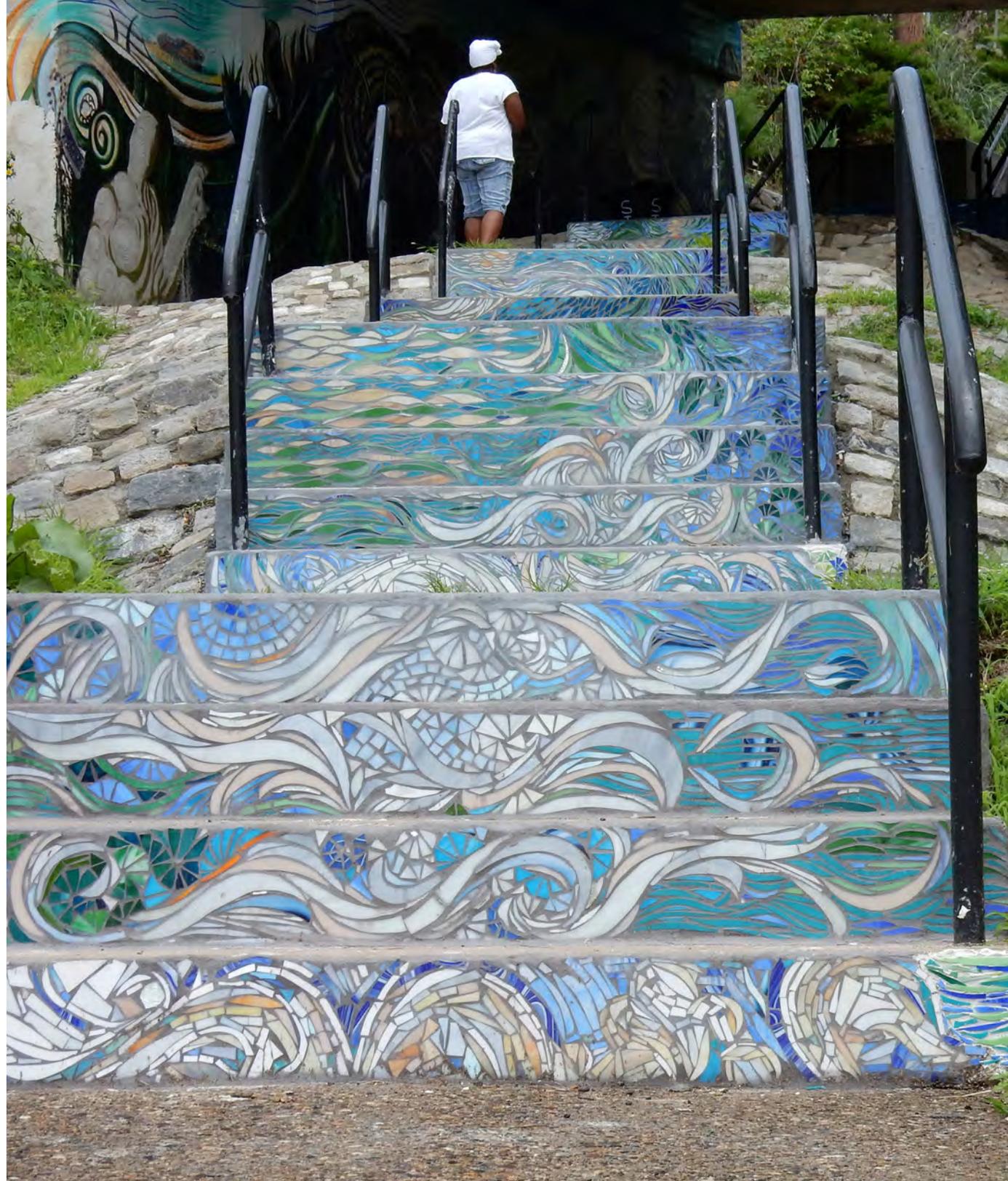
# Connective Passages

One unique feature of downtown Cuyahoga Falls is the mid-block passages that lead from parking garages along Old Town Loop, across Front Street and down to the river. In the community engagement visual preference question, which asked what artworks people would like to see in Cuyahoga Falls, stairway enhancements were most popular. The Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Downtown Assessment Resource Team Report also proposed this idea.

Artworks could be installed in these passages in a number of ways. Mosaic, paint or tile could be applied to stairway risers to create a stunning visual effort, or could be used to ornament the walls along the stairs. Light could be incorporated into the walls with inexpensive LED strips, or strung over the walkways.

Some of the walls along these passages are owned by the City, some are owned privately. The City should sponsor a demonstration project on one of its passages and then consider strategies for supporting projects initiated by others.

Beth Clevestine and Paul Santoleri,  
*Water Under the Bridge.*  
Photo: Steve Weinik, Mural Arts Philadelphia



## Curated Murals/Wall Projects

Murals, or wall art projects, are very popular and highly desired in the downtown area.

One approach to encouraging more murals would be to clarify the rules and decision-making processes surrounding the approval of murals, an idea discussed elsewhere in this plan. Clarifying the rules would be important for commissioning murals in key locations, such as the north wall or back wall of the Cuyahoga Valley Art Center.

Another approach would be to curate a project for two-dimensional artworks to be installed throughout the downtown area. This would involve commissioning a number of pieces with a consistent approach, theme and/or media and installing them at multiple locations so that people encounter them as they walk downtown. This is a project that would depend on clarifying the rules about murals. It could be led by a local arts non-profit.

Ben Volta, *Bloom*. Photo: Steve Weinik, Mural Arts Philadelphia



# Front Street Streetscape

There was strong interest in the community engagement process and in discussions with the DTCF Partnership Design Committee to seek out artistic enhancements of everyday infrastructure along the Front Street streetscape.

Based on the existing streetscape and amenities, the best opportunity to focus on would be the oversized plant pots that line the street, which could be covered with vinyl wraps in the manner that utility boxes often are. Another good opportunity is the City-owned utility boxes at intersections and near the fountain, which could also be covered with vinyl wraps. This is a project that the City can develop in partnership with a local arts organization.

The transitional blocks of Front Street, south of Broad Boulevard and north of Stow Avenue, include additional landscape features such as plantings and decorative stones that were saved from nearby excavations. Subtle public art projects could be integrated into these streetscapes. For example, poetry could be easily carved into the stones. This is a project that the City could develop in partnership with a local arts organization.





## Public Art at Events and Festivals

Cuyahoga Falls sponsors a number of annual cultural festivals as well as summer events, all of which are popular, take place along Front Street and are regarded as important part of what give Cuyahoga Falls its identity. Public art could be connected to these events in several ways.

One approach would be to commission small temporary projects in conjunction with major festivals. The advantage to this is the project could expose a built in audience to the idea of public art, and benefit from the overall marketing of the festival. The project could be scalable, starting small and growing as experiences and resources grow. It could be led by a local arts non-profit, and funded through a partnership with a sponsor.

Another approach would be to launch a new event that is related more to public art and cultural, historic or environmental aspects of the city that make it unique. For example, a summer “kinetic derby” festival could celebrate Cuyahoga Falls’ history as a hands-on, entrepreneurial manufacturing city. In the dark cold months when there are few organized activities downtown, a winter “fire and ice” festival could celebrate the presence of the river and its notorious history of having caught on fire. A festival like this would be a long-term goal, that could be planned after a few years of organizing the small, temporary artworks described above.



## Parking Deck Projects

There are a number of parking decks that serve Front Street businesses and activities. Most are accessed from Second Street or Old Town Loop. Although the decks were not mentioned very often in public feedback as a specific opportunity for public art, enhancing the ordinary features of the city was a strong interest. Because of their location and scope, these projects would likely need to be commissioned and managed directly by the City.

### *Red and Blue Decks*

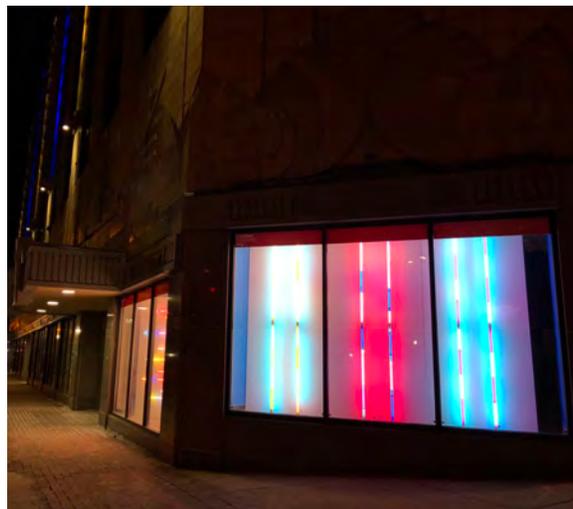
One approach would be to commission an artist to design colors and graphics that serve as wayfinding devices linking the entrances to the parking decks and the pedestrian connections to Front Street. Another approach would be to commission smaller unique projects. This could be an opportunity to replace the over-sized signs on these decks, perhaps in coordination with renaming the decks.

### *Green Deck*

Commission an artist to develop an artwork in the glass facade of the pedestrian entrance on Front Street. Possible approaches include translucent appliques that add color to the glass, vinyl appliques that create silhouettes, or lighting in the decorative cornice. This could be a signature, iconic artwork for Front Street, as it would be highly visible and terminates the view of the segment of North Front Street that approaches downtown on an angle. A second opportunity would be to create enhancements on the exterior concrete walls.

# Curated Storefronts Sculpture Walk

Even though more and more stores are opening on Front Street, there are still a number of vacant storefronts. Many cities are making vacant storefronts lively and interesting by installing temporary art exhibitions; the closest example is Akron's "Curated Storefront." Front Street's shop windows could be turned into a rotating gallery of temporary art through a variety of approaches, such as installations, panels in the windows, or window appliques. This project could be led by a local arts non-profit, with support from organizations in Akron that have experience in this approach.

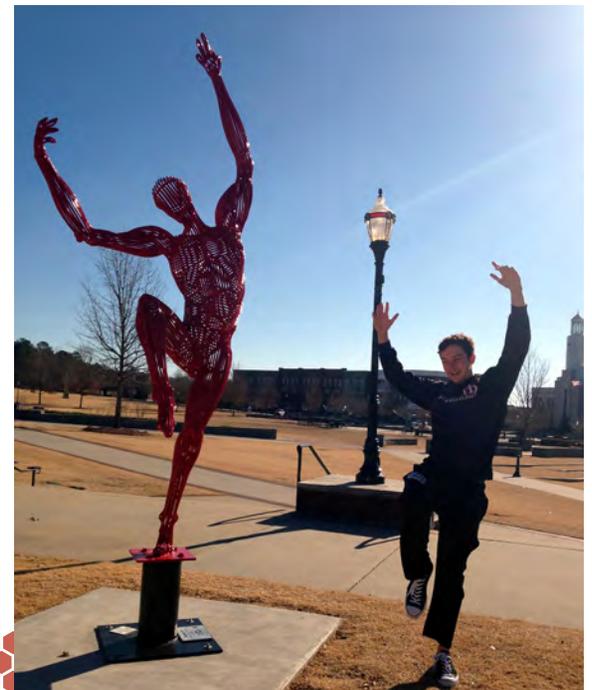


Left: Steve Levy and Casey Vogt, *Color Me Impressed #1-#4*, Akron. Produced by Curated Storefront. Photo: Curated Storefront

Top right: Benson Sculpture, *Tic Tac Toe City Bench*. Photo: Todd W. Bressi

The Front Street and Riverfront Parkway corridors have been enhanced by recent improvements to the streetscape and landscaping, but those enhancements did not include public art. A common strategy for enlivening public spaces like this is to organize temporary sculpture exhibitions, in which loaned sculptures are placed in key locations for a fixed period of time. Many cities have found that this is a good approach to creating additional interest to a downtown area and encouraging more people to walk around. In one case, a city raised funds to purchase the sculpture that is best liked by the community, as determined by a voting process.

The key steps to creating a temporary sculpture exhibition are identifying sites and clearing permissions, establishing an artist selection or jurying process, and raising funds for artist honoraria. In Cuyahoga Falls, many of the locations recommended for permanent artworks could be locations for temporary exhibitions until permanent artworks are commissioned. This project should be led by a local arts non-profit, with partnership and support from the City.



# Church Square

Church Square is a unique location in Cuyahoga Falls, donated by Judge Joshua Stow almost two hundred years ago “for the sole purpose of building churches in the center of town.”<sup>1</sup> Today, three churches (First Christian Church, First United Methodist Church and St. John’s Episcopal Church) occupy this large block between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets and Portage Trail and Stow Avenue.

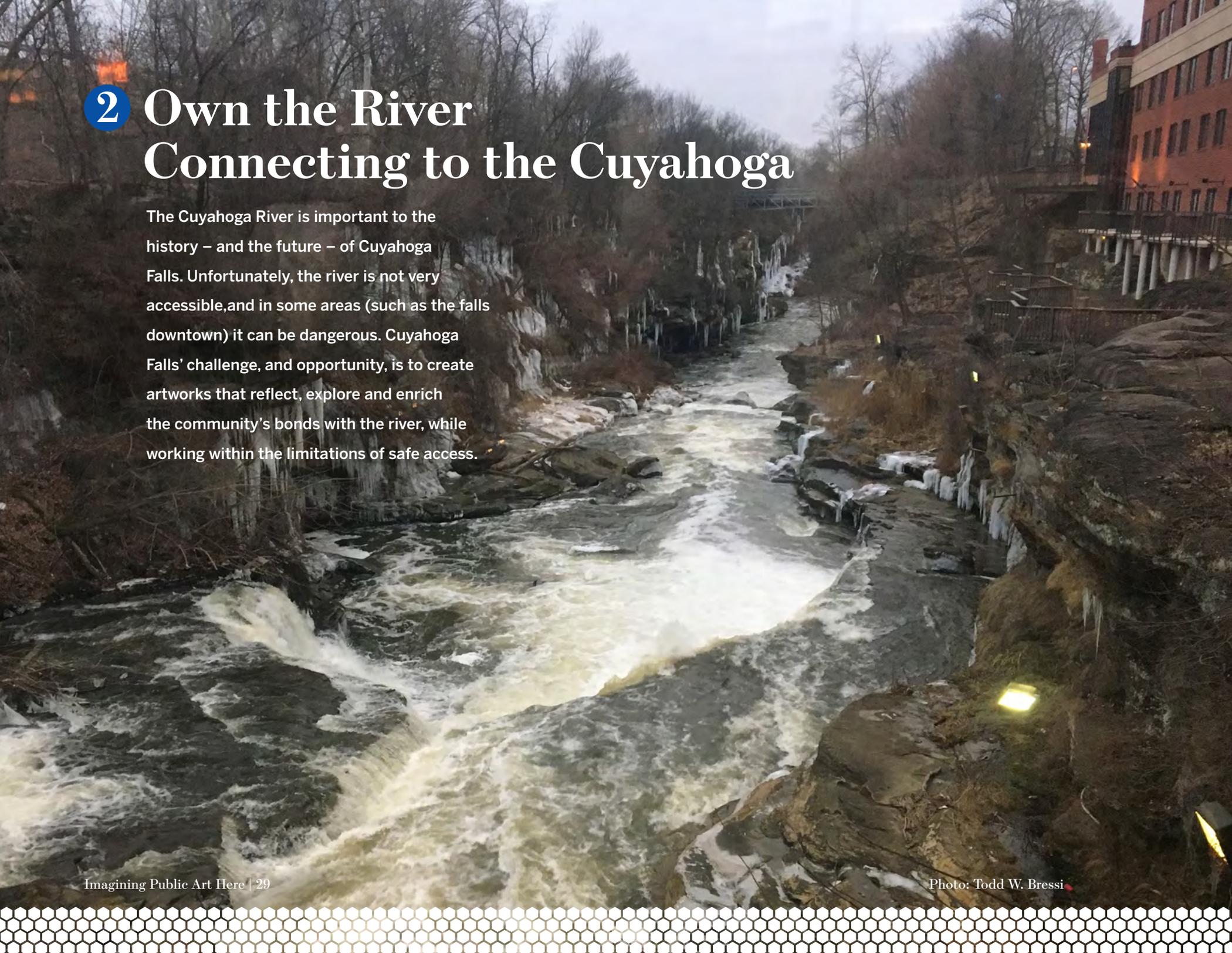
The churches frame a grassy through-block green that would be a suitable location for a public art project, perhaps a contemplative space that reflects that pastoral or spiritual work of the churches

in this block. A project here could also provide a link with the government area (City Hall, Natatorium) across Stow Avenue.

Such a project should be developed by the churches themselves, working out processes of site permission and funding, in conjunction with an arts organization or professional who could oversee the artistic development of the project. In the near term, this could be a location for artworks related to the temporary sculpture exhibition described above.

1. Carolyn Vogenitz, *Cuyahoga Falls Then and Now* (Akron: Waterside Publishing, 2002), 157.





## 2 Own the River Connecting to the Cuyahoga

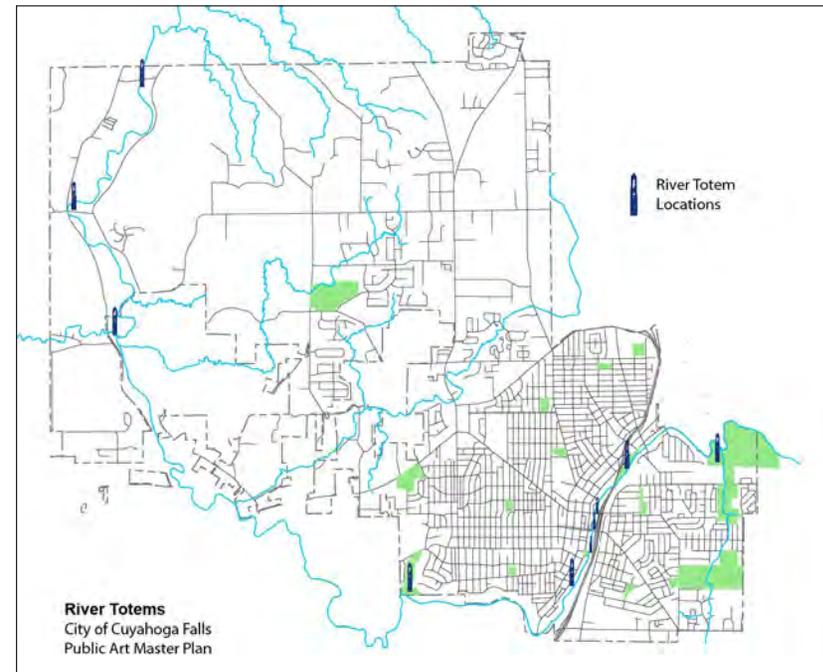
The Cuyahoga River is important to the history – and the future – of Cuyahoga Falls. Unfortunately, the river is not very accessible, and in some areas (such as the falls downtown) it can be dangerous. Cuyahoga Falls' challenge, and opportunity, is to create artworks that reflect, explore and enrich the community's bonds with the river, while working within the limitations of safe access.

# River Totems

A unique approach for Cuyahoga Falls would be to commission sculptural markers that indicate locations throughout the city where people can access the river. These markers could be an element that varies from location to location, but is incorporated on a standard base or column. Each totem should come with a story, developed perhaps in collaboration with a musician or writer, and reflecting some segment of the culture and history of the city. Over time, the totems could become a unique and well-known feature of the city, as Akron's gateway sculptures are.

Potential locations could include places like High Bridge Glens Park, the amphitheater, access points near Portage Trail, the Glens Trail, Riverfront Park, Waterworks Park and Hampton Hills Metro Park. They could be built incrementally as opportunities, funding and partnerships arise.

Because of its scope and complexity, this project would be best led by the City. A key City partner would be the Parks and Recreation Department. Outside of the downtown area, partnerships might be possible with Metro Parks and Friends of CVNP. This project should take into account the proposed wayfinding and interpretive signage for the riverfront, and designed and located so as not to conflict.



Left, San Diego neighborhood marker.

Center, Liz LaManche, *Dock Tattoo Project*, Boston.

Photo: Liz LaManche

# River Relate: City Parks

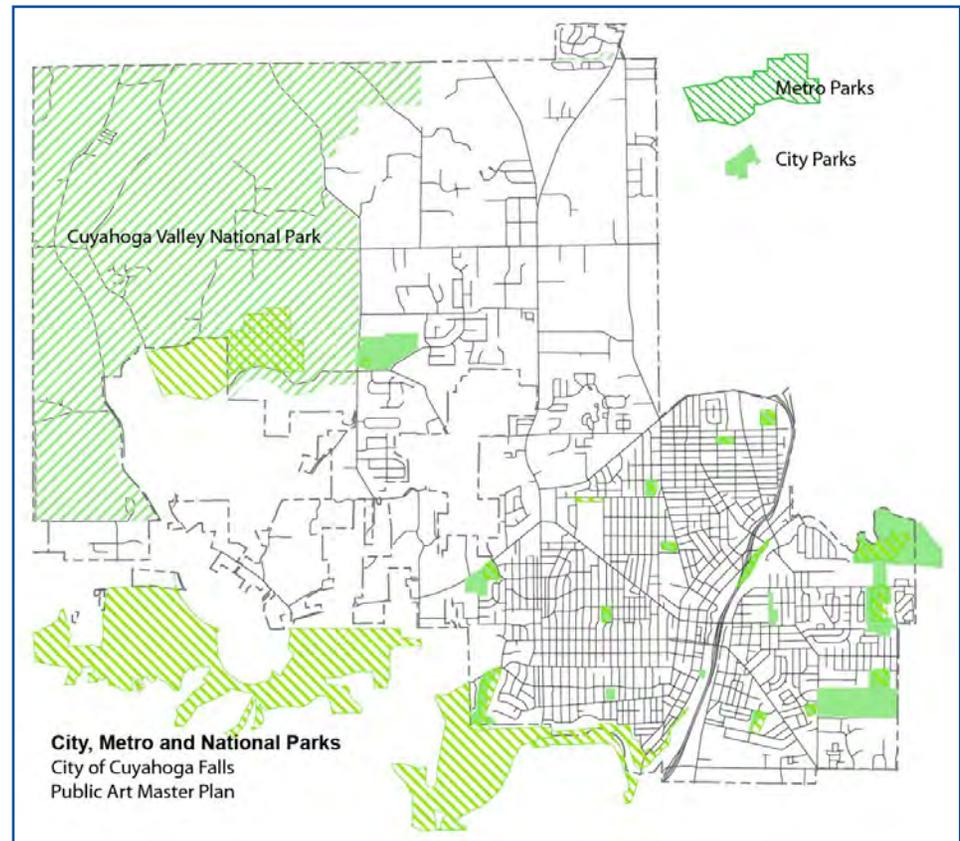
Parks are important to the quality of life of Cuyahoga Falls residents, who have access to a variety of local (City), regional (Metro Parks) and national parks (Cuyahoga Valley National Park).

Each park organization has a specialized mission. City parks most directly serve a recreational purpose, especially facilities like the Natatorium, Waterworks Park and the Downview Sports Center. Metro Parks focus on the appreciation and stewardship of natural resources. Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) focuses on preserving and reclaiming the rural industrial heritage of the river valley, with an eye towards demonstrating how a sustainable, 21<sup>st</sup> Century landscape would function.

For the most part, City public art resources should focus on City parks; however, this plan also includes recommendations suggestions for trail art, river markers, environmental projects and gateways that could be located in other park areas. City park staff say the spirit of the City's parks is to be colorful, engaging, playful and whimsical. Residents say that parks are often the heart of a community, a place where people come together to relax and play. The master plan steering committee suggested that parks throughout the City could be places of exploring people's relationship to the river. All of these aspects of City parks could be embraced through public art projects.

Based on the community engagement process, Kennedy Park and Valley Vista Park might be the highest priority for public art projects; Keyser Park is also worth consideration because of its size and citywide draw.

Further research with the users and managers of these parks would be warranted to determine whether, and how, public art could enhance these parks.



# Environmental Projects

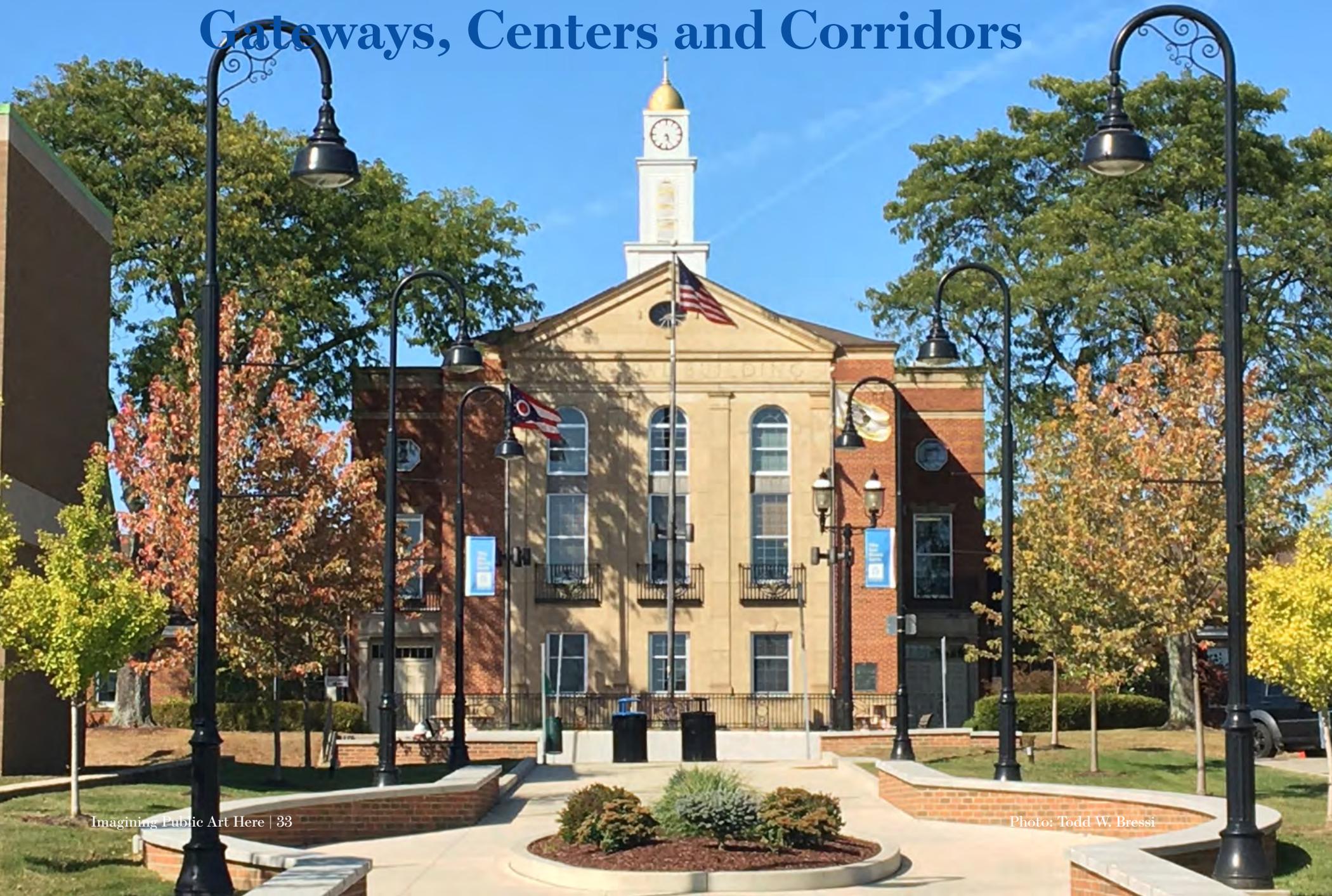
Cuyahoga Valley National Park has embraced a future-oriented vision, based on imagining the transition from an industrial to a sustainable landscape, through ecological restoration projects and sustainable management practices for agriculture and tourism in the river valley. At the same time, the Cuyahoga River will be at the heart of the Parks' interpretive and recreation programs. This theme was not picked up in the public engagement process, but it is a unique and powerful vision with local resonance and national consequence, and may be worth considering as an opportunity for public art nonetheless.

The City should continue exploration with CVNP and Friends of Cuyahoga Valley National Park about how public art can embrace this environmental vision for the river valley. The gateway project recommended for the area of the Hunt Farm Visitor Information Center and the "Blossom Corridor" project recommended for Steels Corners Road could be opportunities for testing this idea.



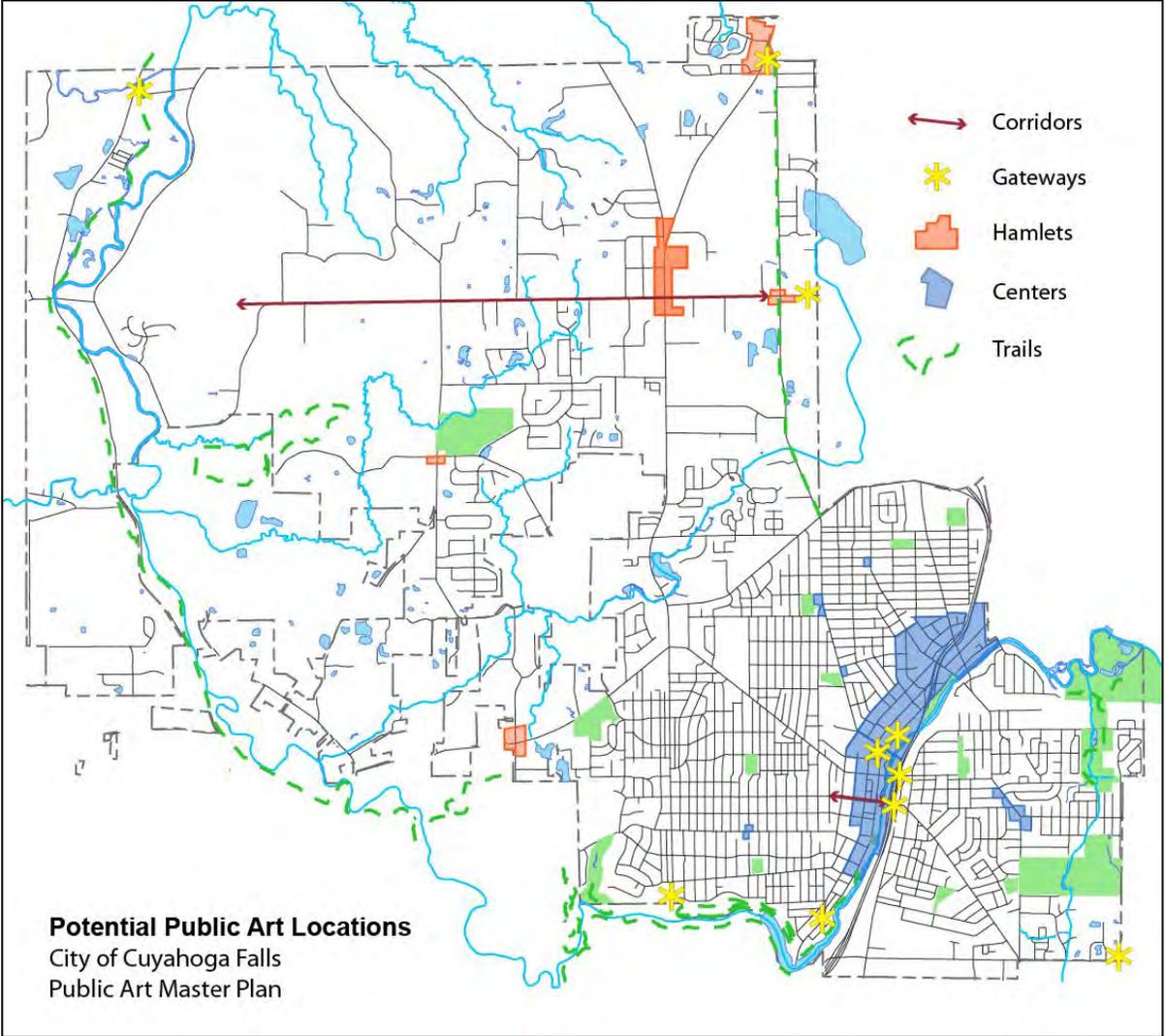
Mark Parsons, *Big Burr*, installation in Montgomery County, Md.

# 3 Build The City Beautiful Gateways, Centers and Corridors



# Gateways, Centers and Corridors

“Building the City Beautiful” means working conscientiously to include public art in places that are centers of activity, major entryways and familiar paths of movement. Altogether, these public artworks can create a shared image of the city that is vivid, memorable and meaningful.



# Gateways

Gateways are places where people enter Cuyahoga Falls or particular areas of the city. Though they are not called out as formal design elements in the City's General Development Plan, several were identified in the research and engagement for the public art master plan.

## Front Street / Second Street Split

The Gorge Terrace Plan calls the reconfiguration of the intersection where Front and Second Streets converge, and for some of the former street space to be turned into a green with space for a gateway feature. This location is arguably a gateway to both the city and downtown. This feature could be a sculptural artwork, which could be commissioned in conjunction with the design and construction of the space.

## Front Street / Oakwood Drive / Riverfront Parkway

This intersection is arguably the north entrance to the larger downtown area. Because of recent streetscape improvements and traffic controls that require all vehicles to stop at this intersection, it is a visually appropriate place for a welcoming sculptural artwork.

## Front Street / Levinson Lane

The north end of downtown Front Street, where a fountain is located, is a familiar gateway for people entering downtown. From the plaza and fountain, a pedestrian walkway (Levinson Lane) provides a framed view of City Hall, which also serves as a symbolic gateway to the city. The fountain plaza and walkway are potential locations for traditional, sculptural gateway artworks.

## Downtown Bridges

For many people, the major entries to Cuyahoga Falls are the interchanges with State Route 8 and Portage Trail and Broad Boulevard. This infrastructure is under the control of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), so a partnership for any public artworks in these areas would be required. In particular, the City should be prepared to pay for the artworks as well as maintain them.

For the Broad Boulevard underpass, enhancements such as painting or retaining walls or simple light projects could be considered.

For both the Broad Boulevard and Portage Trail bridges, a variety of enhancements could be considered, such as decorative pilasters at the end of the bridges or, for Portage Trail, ornamental fencing to replace the chain link safety fencing.

ODOT has from time to time allowed the incorporation of public art into new construction projects, with examples in Cleveland and Columbus. There are no examples of retrofits of existing highway infrastructure.



Peter Schiffern, *Muwekma Ohlone Tribute*, San Jose  
Photo: San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs

## Cuyahoga Valley National Park

The area near Riverview Road and Bolanz Road (Hunt Farm Visitor Information Center) is one of the key gateways into Cuyahoga Falls through Cuyahoga Valley National Park. It is a busy location because of an information center that is there, as well as a popular farm stand.

The Park's public art experiences to date have largely related to projects sponsored by Friends of Cuyahoga Valley National Park. They have included residencies for artists working in media like photography, and cultural events and programming that draw visitors to the park.

Given CVNP's mission, it would be interesting to combine the idea of a gateway at this location with the idea of creating an artwork related to environmental issues or sustainability. This gateway area might be the location of a temporary, rotating commission that explores issues of land management, native vegetation, and the Cuyahoga River watershed. This should be a project undertaken in partnership with CVNP and the Friends organization.

## Subdivision Entrances

It is typical for subdivisions to have gateway or entry features. Usually these involve landscape and features like monument walls. Developers should be encouraged to involve artists in the design of these features, potentially through the use of small sculptural or relief elements incorporated into the designs.

## Other Gateways

Other potential roadway gateways to consider are Akron-Cleveland Road / Wyoga Lake Road, Riverview Road, and E. State Road.

Gateways along regional trails, such as the Ohio & Erie Canal Tow Path Trail and the Hike and Bike Trail, could let people know when they are entering Cuyahoga Falls.



Iwate Kyoto, *Barn Dance*, San Jose  
Photo: San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs

# Centers

Centers are places in Cuyahoga Falls where activity will be focused around mixed-use activities, walkable streetscapes and public spaces.



## Mixed-Use Centers and Hamlets

The Cuyahoga Falls' *General Development Plan* envisions redevelopment throughout the city taking the form of neighborhood sub-centers called mixed-use centers and hamlets. These would be compact, walkable areas with usable public spaces such as parks, greens, plaza/squares and courtyards. Some of these areas might be developed by single entities, while others might be built incrementally by various entities.

These places are potential settings for a variety of artworks, commissioned by a development entity or by the City as part of an infrastructure project. The City's development code could be amended to encourage public art, particularly through one of the following strategies.

## Streetscape Elements

Seating, bike infrastructure, district banners, planters and utility boxes are opportunities for functional artworks.

## Functional and/or Ornamental Elements

Functional and/or ornamental elements of buildings, such as cast-concrete features or metal fences or window guards, could be created by artists.

## Open Spaces (Greens, Plazas, Squares, Courtyards)

New open spaces are possible locations for sculptures, streetscape or playscape elements, or landscape features that serve a placemaking function. This can be called out directly as an opportunity in the General Development Code.

Left to Right, Richard Duca, Boston. Photo: Christine Lanzl, Mark Reigelman, *Euclid Avenue Planters*, Cleveland. Photo: Mark Reigelman, Susan Wallace, *Este y Sud*, Austin. Photo: Susan Wallace

# Corridors

Corridors are routes that pass through Cuyahoga Falls and are memorable because of their character or the places they connect. Front Street might be the first that comes to mind, and several others came up as good locations for public art.

## Blossom Corridor

The Blossom Music Center is a major destination for visitors to Cuyahoga Falls. While visitors come from many directions, one of the most direct routes is along Steeles Corners Road from State Route 8. In the long run, permanent artworks could be considered at the entrance to Blossom as well as at the intersection with State Road and the city's eastern gateway, as those areas are improved. The right of way on the north side of Steeles Corners Road, between Northampton and the entrance to Blossom, would be an interesting location for seasonal, temporary installations.

## Trails

Currently two regional recreational trails pass through Cuyahoga Falls — Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the Hike and Bike Trail. Other regional connections are planned through Gorge Park and along the river. The City itself is planning segments along Wyoga Lake Road and the Mud Brook – Mill Pond Corridor. This trail network provides access north to Cleveland and south / west / east to the rest of Summit County, and could conceivably be a resource for recreation tourism. At the same time, the city's leg of the Cuyahoga River has been designated as a water trail.

The community engagement portion of this plan did not reveal a strong interest in public art on trails, but it's certainly

worth consideration because trails will evolve into an increasingly important recreational resource, regional connection and economic development resource for the City.

The City should consider including public art in new recreational trail segments that it helps build or fund. Key locations for public art could include trail heads, trail junctions and entries to the cities. These can be designed as part of a typical trail project as standard elements that can accommodate artist designed features.

In addition, the River Totems described previously could be prioritized for locations where there are put-in locations for people who are accessing the water trail.



Phil Procter, *The Herd*, Suwanee. Photo: City of Suwanee

# How We Will Get There: Implementation Plan

# Planning Framework

Cuyahoga Falls' public art initiative will depend on a framework of planning documents and processes — a Public Art Master Plan, an annual work plan for the proposed Public Art Board, specific plans for individual projects, and a maintenance and conservation plan for the artworks that the City owns.

## Public Art Master Plan

The Cuyahoga Falls Public Art Master Plan establishes priorities for public art and a framework that the City, regional organizations like Metro Parks, independent arts and civic organizations, and developers can use to create public art projects.

The City of Cuyahoga Falls created the Master Plan and follows its direction in managing an ongoing public art initiative. The Master Plan is also resource for independent arts and civic organizations and developers, providing oversight for projects that require collaboration with or approval from the City, or providing guidance for projects that are created independently.

The Master Plan has three sections: a Creative Plan, an Implementation Plan and a Best Practices Guide.

### Creative Plan

The Creative Plan sets out a long-term foundation for public art:

- A vision for how public art can transform Cuyahoga Falls
- Overall goals for public art projects
- Priorities for focusing public art investments
- An inventory of specific opportunities and potential projects

## Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan sets out processes the City and others can follow to implement public art projects. These are specific to Cuyahoga Falls and include:

- Planning Framework
- Governance (Public Art Board)
- Funding
- Project Implementation (Processes and Partnerships)
- Donations

The Implementation Plan also sets out specific policies that should be adopted:

- Murals
- Public Art in Private Development
- Code Amendments and Policies
- Donations

The Implementation Plan also sets out roles and responsibilities for the various entities that will be involved in implementing public art in Cuyahoga Falls.

## Best Practices Guide

The Best Practices Guide outlines model policies and procedures for various aspects of operating a public art initiative. These are more general and are adapted from best practices around the country:

- Approaches to public art
- Artist selection
- Public engagement
- Communications and Audience Engagement
- Collection management, conservation and maintenance
- Relocation and removal
- Public art in private development
- Public art best practices

## Public Art Project Plan

Public art projects require careful planning to ensure that they are well conceived and enduring. A key tool for accomplishing this is a Public Art Project Plan. This is a foundational document that guides the planning of a project and provides a basis for managing the project, for ensuring continuity when stakeholders change, and for accountability and evaluation.

The Public Art Board should adopt a Project Plan for any project it undertakes, as well as for any project that other organizations create on public land or with public funds. Generally, a Project Plan should be developed by Planning Division staff and a Task Force.

Each Project Plan can be more or less detailed, depending on the circumstances. Each plan typically includes the following:

- A statement of project goals, including a reference to how the project relates to the overall vision for public art in Cuyahoga Falls as well as any relevant City plans,
- A description of the project location and other information about the proposed siting,
- Plan for project management,
- A list of project partners and their roles,
- A list of stakeholders and a plan for engaging them in a meaningful way,
- A recommended artist selection process,
- Criteria against which the artist selection and artistic concept can be evaluated,
- A budget and funding sources,
- A project schedule,
- The artist's scope of work,
- A community engagement strategy, and
- A marketing and audience engagement strategy.

The Project Plan may be more or less comprehensive, depending on the nature of the project. Some aspects of it, such as marketing and audience, might be finalized only after the project is underway.

A Project Plan would not determine the concept for the project, although in some circumstances the goals might include a theme to which artists are asked to react.

## Annual Public Art Work Plan

Each year, the Public Art Board should create an Annual Work Plan. The Work Plan should identify projected sources of funding, priority initiatives for the City to focus on, and proposed budgets and locations for specific projects. The Work Plan should also track projects that are still in process; special activities such as grant applications, community engagement and planning; and maintenance and conservation priorities.

Generally, the Work Plan should be developed by Planning Division staff and the Board, in collaboration with relevant City departments. The Work Plan should be recommended by the Board and submitted to City Council for final approval as part of the annual budget process.

After the Work Plan is complete, a Public Art Project Plan would be developed for each approved project.

## Inventory, Conservation and Maintenance Plan

There is no comprehensive inventory of public art in Cuyahoga Falls. The City has several artworks in Keyser Park, at the Front Street Gateway and in the downtown library.

The Planning Division should create a baseline inventory and map of artworks on public property. The inventory should include basic information such as the name, artist name, date of the artwork, location of the artwork, medium and dimensions, as well as information about how it was added to the City's collection. This project could be undertaken in collaboration with the library or the Historical Society.

With the baseline inventory complete, the Planning Division should retain a professional conservator to prepare an assessment of the artworks in City ownership. The assessment would record the condition of each artwork, make conservation recommendations, estimate conservation budgets, and establish priorities.

The projected conservation budget is a key element, as it should serve as a basis for ongoing City funding for art conservation. The conservation assessment should be completed a minimum of every ten years.

The implementation priorities of the assessment should be incorporated into each Annual Work Plan. Planning Division staff should outsource the oversight of maintenance and conservation to a qualified public art conservator.



Joe Frohnapfel, *Chief Pontiac*, Keyser Park.  
Photo: Todd W. Bressi

# Governance: Create A Public Art Board

Cuyahoga Falls' public art initiative will require the creation of a Public Art Board. The Board's key role will be governance, setting priorities for the public art initiative through the annual work plan and providing oversight of public art projects that involve City resources (such as funding), are on City property, or require approval under other City codes and policies (such as the sign code).

## Role

- Create and approve Annual Work Plan for public art, in time for the proposed public art budget to be incorporated into the annual budget project,
- Appoint Task Forces to work on specific projects,
- Review and approve "project plans" for proposed artworks commissioned with City funds,
- Review and approve artworks commissioned with City funds and/or proposed for City property,
- Review and approve artworks proposed for donation to the City,
- Review and certify that mural proposals for private property are exempt from the sign code, and
- Conduct informal informational meetings with private development applicants.

## Composition

The Board should consist of people who are residents of Cuyahoga Falls and who bring a variety of perspectives, with an emphasis on experience in art, design, planning and public place management. The Board should have seven members, including:

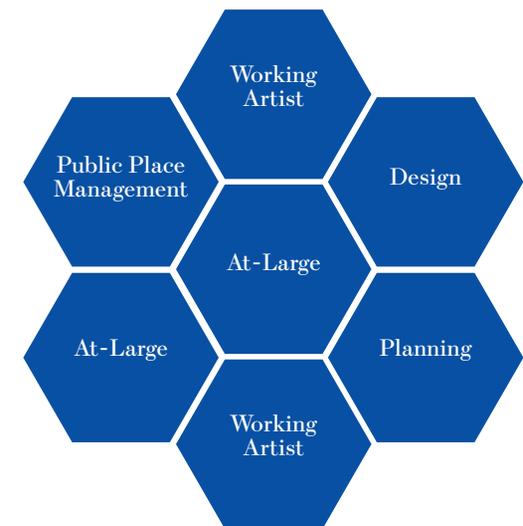
- At least two working artists, preferably one in two-dimensional media and one in three-dimensional media
- At least three people from the following fields: design, planning or public place management

Other members should be members of the public art large. At its discretion, the Board could appoint an additional youth representative who should serve for a one-year term. The youth representative shall be a full-time student at the high-school or undergraduate college level, who is enrolled in a visual art program or coursework and is nominated by an art faculty member.

## Operation

- The members of the Board should be appointed by the Council.
- The Board should have bylaws that guide its operation.
- The Board should be staffed by the Planning Division.
- The Board should meet on a regular schedule that meets its needs, but at least quarterly.

## Public Art Board



# Funding

Cuyahoga Falls will require a predictable public art funding stream, which will enable it to develop long-term strategies, develop ongoing partnerships and attract external funding from private sources. It should also develop a clear policy about how public funds could be used.

## Strategic City Resources

The City has several potential sources of recurring revenue for public art: admissions tax, community development funds, and capital budget funds. The City also can also tap into tax increment financing funds for artworks related to infrastructure or developments built using that financial mechanism.

### Admissions Tax

Ohio municipalities are permitted to levy a tax on admissions to places of amusement or entertainment, such as movies, theme parks and professional sports, as well as on country club dues. The tax is generally charged as a percentage of the cost of entrance to entertainment events. The State Department of Taxation reported in 2016 that 63 cities had a levy, ranging from 0.5 to 8 percent, with most assessing between 3 and 5 percent.

Cuyahoga Falls' admissions tax is set at 3 percent, which is in the lower-midrange of what is allowed by the state. The City's FY19 budget

anticipated \$685,200 in revenue from the admissions tax.

A modest increase in this tax to 3.25 percent would yield \$57,100, which could be applied specifically to public art or more broadly to arts and culture activities.

### Community Development Funds

The City currently levies a fee on new homes. The fee currently generates approximately \$50,000 per year in revenue, though that varies depending on the rate of home construction. This funding is held in reserve for special community development projects, as determined by the Community Development Department.

A percentage of these funds could be used to fund public art on a one-time basis, an occasional basis or an annual basis.

### Capital Budget Funds

The City's capital budget is projected to range from \$11.6 to \$16 million over the next five

years. There are a variety of funding sources for the capital budget, the major ones being bond issues, income tax revenues, special assessments and grants. Most expenditures are for debt service, equipment and maintenance.

Many cities establish policies that provide for one percent of major capital expenditures to be dedicated to public art, or for a lump-sum amount for public art be included in the capital budget. In Cuyahoga Falls, that approach could suggest a capital budget set-aside of \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year over the next five years.

### Tax Increment Financing

Another opportunity relates to projects that are receiving City assistance, such as a tax-increment-financing mechanism to support public infrastructure related to new development. Funding for public art should be included in the budgets of infrastructure projects that receive this assistance.

## External Resources

While some public art projects might be funded entirely by the City, the City should also consider using its resources to leverage external funds. There are several approaches to consider.

### Developer Contributions for Public Art

Many cities across the country require or encourage developers to include public art in their projects as part of the development approval process, or request voluntary contributions for public art. This is in addition to the regular development fees that cities typically assess. While no Ohio cities currently have developer requirements or fees for public art, there are numerous examples of Ohio developers who have included public art as an amenity in their projects.

At the outset, Cuyahoga Falls should consider encouraging developers to include public art in their developments. This can occur through amendments of the development code to encourage public art in certain types

of development and open spaces. This can also occur by requiring developer to meet with the Public Art Board for informational purposes, to discuss how artists might be engaged in their project.

Developer participation in public art is discussed further in the policy section of this master plan.

### Placemaking Organizations

In many cities across the country, including several in Ohio, public art is a tool used by placemaking organizations (such as a main street organization, business improvement district or arts district) as a tool for marketing and placemaking. Those organizations sometimes apply their own funds and sponsorships to public art projects, and sometimes have access to grants from main street or preservation organizations. These funding streams are usually very modest and best suited for temporary projects or in association with special events.

In Cuyahoga Falls, the Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Partnership (DTCF), the Friends of the

Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition are the main organizations of this type. DTCF is still in the early stages of developing its capacity and has no dedicated funding stream, while the Friends generally focus on programming arts events, and the Canalway Coalition has completed murals in Akron. The City should consider establishing partnerships with organizations like this to leverage additional financial resources through grants that might be available to these organizations.

### Grants

The two major sources of national grant funding specifically for public art are ArtPlace America and the National Endowment for the Arts, particularly its Our Town program. Both are annual grant cycles that emphasize creative placemaking approaches that integrate the arts into broader community initiatives and emphasize public engagement in project development processes. Both programs emphasize strong, meaningful and sustained connections between arts organizations, public agencies and grassroots groups.

## Funding Approaches

The City should develop several mechanisms for funding public art projects. All projects funded directly, through contracts or through matching grants would have to follow the City's public art process, including approval by the Public Art Board.

### Direct Funding

The City should directly fund projects that it is managing directly. This would include projects on City facilities, such as the downtown parking garages.

### Contracts

The City should fund projects developed by Partner Organizations. These should be lump-sum contracts that include the cost of the artwork, as well as project management and organizational overhead.

### Matching Grants

The City should fund projects through a matching grant process.

For certain projects in the Public Art Master Plan, such as River Markers, the City may issue a call for proposals to potential Project Partners

or artists, who would have to supplement the City grant with their own funding. For other projects, the City might collaborate with specific Project Partners on grant applications and provide matching resources.

Budgets should include the cost of the artwork, project management and overhead.

## Uses of Funds

Whether disbursed directly by the City, through contract or through matching grants, public art funds should be used only for the following purposes:

- Artist selection costs, such as artist travel and honoraria, related to artist proposals.
- Artist fees and artist travel and expenses that are related to the commissioning of a work of art.
- Artwork fabrication, storage and installation.
- Acquisition of existing works of art.
- Project consultants and contracted services, if related to the commissioning, acquisition or conservation of artwork.
- Education, outreach and publicity for the specific public art project being funded by the City, including collateral materials and special events.
- Curatorial services.
- Public art planning, generally or related to a specific public art project.
- Conservation and maintenance.
- Administration of public art projects, including management of artist selection and project management.
- Other purposes recommended by the Planning Division or the Board, and deemed necessary for the successful implementation of the program.

Public art funds should not be used for:

- Commissioning or purchase of existing works of art outside of the approved selection processes.
- Mass-produced work, with the exception of limited editions controlled by the artist.
- Artwork produced or designed by artists not recommended by the Public Art Board.
- Decorative, ornamental or functional elements that are designed by the architect or landscape architect that has been hired by the City to design the related capital project.



Richard Duca, Boston. Photo: Christine Lanzl

# Project Implementation

Cuyahoga Falls will undertake many types of public art projects, with a variety of partners. In order to ensure the success of each project, the City should follow this project implementation protocol.

## Project Development Process

The City should use the following general process for developing and implementing a public art project. The Planning Division should serve as overall facilitator and administrator of this process.

### Work Plan

First, a project should be added to the Public Art Work Plan. Usually the Work Plan would be updated annually. Projects should be added during the course of the year only under unusual circumstances, such as the need to reallocate money committed to another project. Projects should be derived from the list of projects in the Public Art Master Plan.

### Project Plan

For each project, the Public Art Board should develop and adopt a Public Art Project Plan. The contents of a Project Plan are described elsewhere in this Master Plan. The creation of a Project Plan can include the initial phases of engaging the community and building partnerships, as well as technical research.

### Identify the Organizational Partner

For each project, the Planning Division should identify the Organizational Partner that will implement the project. In some cases this will be a City agency. In other cases, it will be an arts non-profit or civic organization. In rare cases, the Planning Division would act as the Organizational Partner.

The Organizational Partner can be identified directly, particularly if it has a natural connection to a site or a topic for the project, or through a competitive process such as a request for proposals. The Organizational Partner should enter into a contract or grant agreement with the City for the production of the project.

### Identify the Project Coordinator

The Organizational Partner selected to implement the project (or the Planning Division, if it is acting as the Organizational Partner) should identify a Project Coordinator. This person could be an in-house staff member, a consulting arts professional or in some cases an artist with the appropriate experience and skill sets.

### Establish a Task Force

Once a Project Plan is adopted, the Project Coordinator should organize a Task Force, whose role would be defined by the Project Plan based on the needs of the project, but would usually include artist selection and concept approval. A Task Force brings additional voices to the guidance of a project by including project-specific stakeholders, as well as public art experts and Public Art Board members. The Public Art Board may serve as the Task Force, if recommended in the Project Plan.

### Recruit and Select an Artist

The Implementing Organization should issue a Call to Artists, according to the process outlined in the Project Plan. The Project Coordinator should facilitate the selection process; the Selection Panel should recommend artists and artistic concepts; and the Public Art Board should approve the artist and concept selection.

### Contract with the Artist

The Project Coordinator should oversee a contract with the artist that is recommended by the Public Art Board. The contract should include the scope of work, fee, schedule and other relevant terms and conditions. The scope of work may vary depending on the project, but will generally include final design and engineering, fabrication of the artwork, and installation of the artwork. The contract should be between the Artist and the Organizational Partner.

### Concept Design

If the artist is selected through an interview process, the initial step should be to develop a Concept Design. The Project Coordinator should organize necessary meetings with project stakeholders. The Concept Design, along with an updated budget and schedule, is presented to the Selection Panel for review and recommendation to the Public Art Board for its approval.

## Final Design

Once the Concept Design is approved, the artist may develop final design and any engineering drawings necessary for approval before proceeding with fabrication. The Project Coordinator should coordinate technical review by appropriate City departments. If the artist proposes any significant changes from the original concept, the Project Coordinator should secure Public Art Board approval before approving changes. If the City requests any modifications to the project, the Project Coordinator should review the proposed changes with the artist.

## Fabrication and Installation

Once the final design and engineering drawings have been approved, the artist may proceed with the fabrication and installation of the artwork. The fabrication and installation may be done by the artist, or part or all may be done by subcontractors supervised by the artist or the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator should monitor the fabrication and installation through visits to the artist studio, fabrication location and installation site. The Project Coordinator should coordinate installation with the artist and the appropriate City department(s) or location managers.

## Communications, Submittal of Project Documentation and Project Closeout

The Project Coordinator should plan and implement a strategy for communication about and documenting the project, based on the requirements of the Project Plan. The artist should be required to submit all required paperwork, including all drawings and a maintenance and conservation worksheet, prior to project closeout and final payment.



Boa Mistura, *Roots of Rubber*. Photo: Downtown Akron Partnership

## Partnerships for Project Development

### Commissioning City Projects

The City will need to rely on outside assistance to commission public art projects. It will need to contract with arts consultants, arts organizations, civic organizations and/or artists themselves to manage various aspects of project development and implementation.

The City should keep three overarching goals in mind: help as many organizations as possible to develop the capacity to implement public art; encourage all projects to follow the policies, procedures and best practices outlined in this plan; and encourage project management to be performed by paid arts professionals. (Projects receiving city resources or approvals would be required to do this, and these costs should be factored into public art budgets).

### Expanding the Capacity for Public Art Organizations

There are a number of organizations in Cuyahoga Falls, or nearby, that could one day provide the capacity to sponsor public art: the Akron Art Museum, ArtsNow, Collide, the Cuyahoga Valley Arts Center, Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Partnership, the Friends of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, and Metro Parks.

The City can help these organizations grow their capacity by contracting with them to produce public art projects, with enough funding for them to work with a seasoned public art professional to develop those projects and to cover their administrative costs.

### Regional Collaboration

The City's need for public art capacity is mirrored by other communities in Summit County. All could use help, but none have the resources or the volume of public art commissioning necessary to develop in-house expertise (such as a dedicated staff person).

The City should explore working with ArtsNow, Collide and the Cuyahoga Valley Arts Center to develop short-courses and workshops that would help artists, arts professionals, organization staff and others learn the basic of public art project development and management.

The City should also explore with ArtsNow the possibility of hiring an arts professional that would support the development of public art projects throughout Summit County.

# Donations

Donations can be an important tool for Cuyahoga Falls. They can provide resources for the City to build its public art collection, and they can foster civic investment and pride by providing people an opportunity to shape the public environment.

However, when accepting donations of public art, the City must act with the broad public interest in mind when considering such donations. Considerations should include fiscal impact of such donations, the public's use and enjoyment of public space and the general aesthetics of the city. Not every proposed donation may be appropriate.

## Principles for Donations

The City should encourage donations of public art, guided by the following principles:

- Donors should first be encouraged to provide funds to support new commissions that are recommended in this Public Art Master Plan.
- If donors remain interested in donating artwork to the City, the donation should be made with the intent of locating the artwork at one of the locations suggested in the Public Art Master Plan. The most important consideration to evaluate is the appropriateness of the artwork in the context of the site in which it would be located.
- The City should consider, where necessary, the exhibition of a proposed donation through a long-term loan, rather than an outright donation. That would allow the City or the owner to remove the artwork after an agreed-upon period of time and process.
- Because of the small number of spaces available for donated artworks in the city, the acceptance of donated artworks

should occur only after careful consideration. The City should adopt a donation policy as recommended elsewhere in this plan.

In order to facilitate a fair assessment of proposed donations and loans, the Planning Division should coordinate the review of proposed donations and loans with the Public Art Board, as well as with other public agencies, board and commissions, and should conduct appropriate community engagement.

Proposed donations and loans should be evaluated to determine whether they are in keeping with the community's overall goals and expectations and adopted plans and policies, whether they are placed in appropriate locations and integrated appropriately with their sites, whether proper advance planning and preparation has taken place, and, in the case of memorials, whether they serve a purpose appropriate to the interests of the public.

Monument in Broad Street median.  
Photo: Todd W. Bressi



# How We Will Get There: Policies for Public Art



# Murals

Artists and property owners have expressed a great interest in creating murals in Cuyahoga Falls, and the public has expressed a great interest in seeing them.

However, efforts to create murals have run into a quirk in the City's sign code: While the sign code specifically exempts artworks that are "officially designated" by the City, the City has no process for providing that designation.

In addition, provisions of the City's downtown preservation guidelines appear to prevent murals from being painted on the walls of many historic buildings. The guidelines state that original materials, such as brickwork, cannot be painted over.

There are several changes to the code and guidelines that could clarify the rules for making murals.

Potential mural walls near Portage Trail and Front Street. Photo: Todd W. Bressi



## Define “Mural”

The code should include a definition for what constitutes a mural as opposed to a sign. Factors to consider are:

- The creator of a mural should be an artist, selected because of his or her professional qualifications as an artist
- The mural should have an artistic intent, as determined by the artist independently of the owner of the wall
- The mural should not include Sign Content (as defined by the General Development Code), such as logos, text, names or colors reflective of or proprietary to a business

A definition is included in the definitions section of this plan.

## Create an Approval Process

The City should create a process for implementing the sign design section of its Development Code by evaluating mural proposals and determining that they can be exempted from the sign requirements:

- Applicants should make an application to the Planning Division, providing a sketch of the mural concept.
- Planning Division staff should review the application to ensure that the application does not violate any technical requirements, such as how it is attached to a building.
- The Public Art Board should review the application to ensure that it meets the criteria established in the definition of a mural. The Public Art Board should forward its certification to development review / code enforcement officials.

## Provide Guidelines for Murals in the Downtown Historic District

Most of the interest in creating murals in Cuyahoga Falls is in the Downtown Historic District. In this area, alterations to exterior walls must receive a certificate of appropriateness from the Design and Historic Review Board. The DHR relies on the *Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines* for direction.

A key provision in the guidelines would have a significant impact on new murals:

*Whether the walls are brick or wood, the original material should not be covered. The act of covering can be detrimental to the original materials and detracts from the original design, altering the original details and the original colors and textures of the building.*

This means that additional guidelines would be necessary to guide the installation of murals downtown. Issues to consider are:

- Determination of which buildings are historic or contributing, for the purposes of installing murals.
- Circumstances in which it is appropriate (if any) for murals to be painted on original walls of historic buildings
- Methods of attaching murals (mesh, vinyl) that do not permanently alter or damage the walls of historic buildings
- The amount of coverage of any particular wall that is consistent with the visual appearance of the historic district.

The guidelines should not extend to content, composition or style, which would be the purview of the Public Art Board.



Kim Beck, *Wildish*, Philadelphia. Photo: Steve Weinik, Mural Arts Philadelphia.

# Public Art in Private Development

Many communities require or strongly encourage public art to be a component of new development. Cuyahoga Falls should consider the option of encouraging developers to include public art, except in cases where a tax-increment finance district is being created, in which case public art should be included in the expectations for the project.

These provisions are most successful when they are carefully targeted — particularly to an area of the city that would benefit from art or a

type of development whose users would benefit from art. Additionally, these requirements are most successful when they are reinforced by other approved plans, codes, guidelines and informational resources that help provide a broader basis and context for public art.

At their best, however, approaches to public art in private development are long-term propositions, and they require close oversight for how public art is integrated into the overall development program.



New development at Portage Crossing. Photo: City of Cuyahoga Falls.

## Opportunities for Public Art in Private Development

### Downtown

Downtown is a focal point of arts, culture and entertainment activity in Cuyahoga Falls. As such, any developer or property owner receiving development approval or a zoning certificate should be required to consider public art in their project.

For new development, traditional approaches to public art should be considered. Artworks could be functional, integrated into the building design, or site specific pieces visible to the public.

For other projects requiring zoning certificates, the definition of “public art” should be loosened to include interior public artworks, such as interior wall murals or fixtures created by artists, but tightened to require the commissioning or purchase of artworks from artists in Summit County.

The approaches to public art should reflect the variety of opportunities that are available and the generally small-scale, local start-up nature of projects downtown.

### Mixed Use Centers and Hamlets

The General Development Code designates a series of “mixed use centers” and “hamlets” that would guide new development in a pattern reflects traditional town and village patterns. These would be compact and walkable areas

with mixed uses, including commercial and residential, that include usable public spaces such as parks, greens, plaza/squares and courtyards. Some of these areas might be developed by single entities; others might be built incrementally over time by various entities.

Developers in these areas should be encouraged to include public art in their projects. Alternatively, they could be asked to make a voluntary contribution to a public art fund that would be used to create public art specifically in that mixed-use center or hamlet where the funds are generated; the artwork should be related to a common space or gateway element that is part of the larger plan for that area.

### Residential Subdivisions and Overlay Districts

Many of the new residential areas and overlay districts in Cuyahoga Falls are built on contemporary subdivision models. Many of them have community features, such as entry features, shared mailboxes, or small community open spaces. Subdivision developers should be encouraged to incorporate public art into these features they are already designing. For example, sculptural stonework could be incorporated into an entry wall.

### Open Space Types

The General Development Code outlines a variety of types of open spaces that should be provided

by developers throughout the City. Several of those types (median, green, square) would be conducive to the inclusion of public art, which is often found in formal spaces such as these in traditional town development. Developers building these types of open spaces should be encouraged to include public art, or contribute to a fund that would pay for public art in that space at a future date.

### Informational Meeting

In areas where Cuyahoga Falls encourages developers to consider public art, the City should require developers to meet with the Public Art Board for informational purposes. The meeting should involve a discussion of the nature of the development project and opportunities for incorporating public art into the project. It should occur early in the development review process, after a site plan has been established, but in time for potential location for public art to be incorporated into the plan.

### Developer’s Guide

The City should produce a simple guide that illustrates the City’s vision for public art, explains the benefit of public art to development projects, points out typical opportunities, outlines a typical public art process, and includes examples of successful projects. A guidebook like this can help developers understand how to build public art into their design and financing processes.

# Codes for the Administration of Public Art

## General Development Code / Public Art Board

Cuyahoga Falls Municipal Code authorizes a variety of boards and commissions. The General Development Code should be amended to provide for a Public Art Board that has the authority and responsibility described elsewhere in these recommendations.

## General Development Code / Building and Site Design

The General Development code provides design guidance for three general areas of the city: Mixed-Use Centers, Residential Neighborhoods and General Areas. The design of buildings and sites is regulated by Section 1104, "Building and Site Design."

The design standards for each of these areas of the City should be amended to include provisions for circumstances in which public art is encouraged, and references to how public art can be used to achieve other design standards.

## General Development Code / Land Division and Infrastructure / Open Spaces

The General Development code describes several open space categories or types where public art is appropriate or could be appropriate. These are outlined in Section 1126-24, "Open Space Categories and Types." The code should be amended to indicate the appropriateness of public art in these open spaces.

### Median

A median is a continuous landscaped area that is designed as the focal point of a roadway. In order to be considered as open space, the median shall be wide enough and include pedestrian access, public art, or enhanced landscape design.

### Formal Green

A formal green is an open space for unstructured recreation or aesthetic landscaping. Generally there are few constructed elements in a formal green, except an entry to the space or a gathering created place. Either of these could be public art features.

### Formal Courtyard

A formal courtyard is an accessible small open space area generally serving one or a few surrounding buildings. Formal courtyards are primarily bordered by building facades, but have at least one side fully or partially boarded by a public right-of-way. They are constructed for pedestrian use, with intermittent landscape elements.

### Plaza / Square

A formal plaza or square is an open space for civic purposes and commercial activities. A formal plaza or square is largely comprised of constructed materials that can withstand heavy pedestrian traffic, but contains intermittent lawns, landscape beds, or trees in a formal pattern. Public art can be integrated into visual or functional features.

## General Development Code / Signs / Murals

Cuyahoga Falls' sign code exempts artworks that are "officially designated" by the City, but the City has no process for providing that designation. The code should be amended in several ways to clarify how artworks are designated.

- Provide a definition of mural and a process of determining what's mural
- Create a process for the Public Art Board to approve applications for murals.

## Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines

The Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines help the Design and Historic Review Board interpret and apply the City's historic preservation ordinance, especially in regard to issuing certificates of appropriateness for modifications.

The guidelines should be amended to provide clear guidance describing the circumstances when murals are appropriate, how mural might be installed, and how they might be integrated into the visual character of downtown.

Similar guidance should be included in any design guidelines that are developed for other areas of the City.

# Donations

The City should establish a public art donation policy that:

- States that the City's priorities for public art donations is for funds to help fulfill the recommendations of the public art master plan and for donations of artworks that help fulfill the plan recommendations.
- Establishes the submission requirements as outlined below.
- Establishes the review criteria as outlined below.
- Introduces the definition of "commemorative artwork" and "memorial" in order to clarify decision-making.

## Priorities for Donations

Donations of public art are welcomed as a useful way of building the City's public art collection and serving the social needs of the community. However, the City must act with the broad public interest in mind when considering such donations, particularly in regard to the fiscal impact of such donations, the general public's use and enjoyment of public space, and the general aesthetics of the City.

The City's preference should be for donated funds that can be applied to the commissioning of artworks recommended in the Public Art Master Plan. The master plan indicates the types of projects and locations where artworks could be supported by donations.

## Submission Requirements

When the City is contacted about the possibility of the donation of an artwork, a commemorative artwork or a memorial, the donor should be asked to submit an application the Planning Division, which should initiate a review process that includes:

- Consultation with other City agencies as appropriate,

- Review and recommendation of the proposed donation by the Public Art Board, and
- Final approval of the proposed action by the Mayor or City Council, as appropriate.

An application for the donation of an artwork, a commemorative artwork or a memorial, shall include:

1. Written and graphic descriptions of the proposed art project, including information about dimensions, materials, etc., and an artist's statement about the artwork.
2. The artist's resume and other credentials, including photographic examples of past work.
3. A site plan indicating the location of the art.
4. A cost estimate of the artwork if it is newly commissioned, or an independent appraisal of an existing piece to be donated.
5. An estimate of any site preparation, installation, and ongoing maintenance costs.
6. Depending on the structural and fabrication design of the piece, a certification by a

Ohio-registered architect, landscape architect, or professional engineer in regard to the stability and durability of the artwork, and any special installation requirements.

In addition, for commemorative artworks or memorials, the application should include:

1. An explanation of why the project should be displayed on public property and how the display of such serves a purpose appropriate to the interests of the public.
2. Evidence of community outreach and support for the project.
3. A statement of how the proposed project meets the special criteria for commemorative artworks or memorials described below.

Proposals for donating artworks to the City, including commemorative artworks and memorials, should be evaluated using the technical and aesthetic criteria that follow. The failure of a proposal to meet any of these criteria would be sufficient for denying the proposal, seeking revisions to it, or recommending that the artwork be accepted as a time-limited loan rather than a permanent donation.

## Technical Review

Technical review should be facilitated by Planning Division staff and should focus on the following issues:

- **Policy Compliance.** Is the proposed donation consistent with adopted policies, plans, codes and ordinances, including the Public Art Master Plan?
- **Ownership.** If the donor is proposing to donate an existing artwork, has the donor documented that the artwork can be legally donated? Artworks should only be accepted if they are accompanied by a legal instrument of conveyance of title, enumerating any conditions on the acceptance of the, and the appropriate warranty of originality.
- **Financial Costs.** Has the donor documented that the financial costs associated with the artwork have been adequately anticipated and can be met? These costs include, but are not limited to, shipping, insurance, site preparation, installation, dedication, signage and lighting.
- **Safety and Liability.** Is the artwork durable? Does it pose any safety or liability concerns? Does it meet all applicable codes?
- **Maintenance and Conservation.** Has the donor provided a professional art conservator's report indicating anticipated maintenance needs? The artwork shall be created from durable construction and materials, suitable for permanent location in an outdoor environment. It should be possible to clean, maintain, and repair the artwork with easily available materials and techniques.

- **Availability of Site.** Is the proposed site available for the installation of artwork? Are necessary electrical, plumbing or other utility requirements defined and available?
- **Appropriateness of Site.** Does the proposed siting respect existing officially adopted plans? Is the proposed siting consistent with the current use of the site? Does the artwork interfere with existing or proposed circulation and use patterns?
- **Identification Plaques.** Does the design of and text of plaques that will be provided for interpretation, donor acknowledgment and/or other purposes any applicable design requirements?

During the review process, the City may negotiate the placement and presentation of the artwork, the future costs to the City for maintenance or insurance, the length of any loan agreement, donor/leader recognition and other matters that will help make the proposal acceptable to the City.

If the proposal is found to be in compliance with these requirements, City staff should submit the proposal and a report to the Public Art Board for further consideration.

## Aesthetic and Site Review

Aesthetic and site review should be undertaken by the Public Art Board or by a task force appointed by the Public Art Board. The task force should include specific expertise and/or stakeholder representation.

The following criteria should be used for Aesthetic and Site Review of proposed donations:

- The artwork shall have been created by an artist, as defined in the City's Public Art Master Plan.
- The artwork shall be of a high level of quality, reflecting the City's overall desire for excellence in its visual appearance.
- The proposed donation must be consistent with the goals of the City's public art program.
- The proposed donation must contribute to the diversity of the community's public art collection.
- The artwork must be one-of-a-kind or part of an original series.
- The artwork should be appropriate in terms of size, scale, material, form and style for the location where it is to be placed. The artwork should take advantage of any special features of the site, such as light, landscape and viewshed.
- The placement of the artwork should not cause an over-saturation of public art in any area of the city. "Over-saturation" means a concentration of public art beyond that recommended in the Public Art Master Plan or the location of various pieces in such proximity to each other so as to detract from the visual setting and enjoyment of each piece or the overall landscape.
- The artwork shall be appropriate to Cuyahoga Falls' community standards in regard to the genre of the artwork and its materials. Artworks shall not advocate for a particular political or religious point of view, nor shall they promote disparaging, hateful or incendiary points of view.

## **Additional Criteria for Commemorative Artworks and Memorials**

In addition to the above criteria, the review of proposed donations of commemorative artworks and memorials should be based upon the following criteria. The failure of a proposal to meet any of these criteria may be sufficient for denying the proposal or seeking revisions to the proposal.

1. Proposed donations of commemorative artworks and memorials must have cultural significance to the general public, not just one individual or an interest group. The subject will be commemorated only if it is generally accepted that its long-term impact has uniquely shaped Cuyahoga Falls' history.
2. Proposed donations of commemorative artworks and memorials must concern subjects that have been tangibly and directly associated with the City. In the case of contributions of an individual or a particular group of people, for example, strongest consideration will be given to those who have had an impact on the history of Cuyahoga Falls overall, the state or the nation.
3. Proposed donations of commemorative artworks and memorials that recognize individuals should not be considered until at least five years after the death of the individual. Proposed donations of artworks or memorials that commemorate events should not be considered until at least ten years

after the occurrence of the event. Where an overwhelming and undisputed community consensus exists, proposals may be considered before these periods have passed.

4. Proposed donations of commemorative artworks and memorials that recognize organizations in general, or specific topics including but not limited to historical events, disasters or health-related themes, should not normally be considered, unless it can be demonstrated that the circumstances are unique to Cuyahoga Falls and that the event or topic has uniquely shaped Cuyahoga Falls' history.
5. Proposed donations of commemorative artworks and memorials must not duplicate the themes or subject matter of an existing memorial in Cuyahoga Falls.
6. Proposed donations of commemorative artworks and memorials shall not in any circumstances depict subjects that are trademarked or commercially licensed, nor shall any type of acknowledgment, including plaques, include logos or other commercial graphics.

## **Additional Considerations**

1. The donor shall be required to contribute funds for the installation of the artwork, including transportation, site preparation and installation.

2. The donor shall be required to contribute funds to an endowment for conservation and maintenance, equal to 25 percent of the valuation of the artwork.
3. The donor shall provide a title to the artwork, and a release allowing the City to use photographic reproductions of the artwork for non-commercial purposes.
4. The design of any plaques that interpret the donation must meet City standards. In particular, identifying plaques may not include any logos, photographs or other graphics meant to identify the individuals or entities that the artwork is honoring.

## **Final Approval**

City staff shall forward the proposal, the report and the panel's recommendation to accept or reject a donation to the appropriate public official for approval.

If proposed donation or loan is accepted, a formal agreement including all details of the proposal and any negotiated terms will be drafted with the donor or lender and executed by the appropriate parties.

# How We Will Get There: Roles and Responsibilities



Don Drumm, commission for Triad. Photo: Todd W. Bressi

## City Council

- Approve Public Art Master Plan
- Appoint members of the Public Art Board, as recommended by the Mayor
- Approve public art funding allocations
- Approve public art Annual Work Plan and budget, as part of annual budget approval
- Approve implementing policies and code revisions

## Public Art Board

- Develop public art annual work plan (with Planning Division staff)
- Approve public art project plans
- Approve artworks commissioned with City funds
- Approve artworks proposed for City property
- Approve artwork approaches and artwork concepts for public art created under a development requirement
- Approve donations
- Review and certify mural proposals
- Conduct informal informational meetings with private development applicants

## Task Forces

- Develop public art project plans (with Planning Division staff)
- Recommend the selection of artists
- Review and recommend artist concepts
- Support public engagement processes

## Planning Division Staff

- Develop public art annual work plan (with Public Art Board)
- Develop public art project plans (with Public Art Board)
- Facilitate preparation of maintenance and conservation plan
- Provide administrative support for processing mural approvals
- Provide preliminary technical review of commissions, acquisitions, murals and donations and report to Public Art Board
- Provide administrative support for grant applications
- Provide administrative support for managing maintenance and conservation contracts

## City Agencies

- Maintain artworks on agency property

## Partner Organizations

- Raise funds for projects
- Develop project plans for review by Public Art Board
- Manage project development
- Maintain artworks once complete

# Best Practices Guide



There are many approaches to creating public art, each appropriate in certain circumstances. However, there are also a set of best practices that have been emerging in the field and which, increasingly, are being documented in master plans and professional resource publication.

Altogether, these diverse approaches to public art provide a wide range of options to create projects that meet the needs of the community, address the opportunities that arise, and result in a diversity of artworks throughout Cuyahoga Falls. By following these best practices, Cuyahoga Falls can be assured that it is taking the strongest steps that it can to ensure that its public art resources are being used wisely.

This section covers the following topics:

- Approaches to Public Art
- Artist Selection Approaches
- Public Engagement
- Communications and Audience Engagement
- Collection Management, Conservation, Maintenance
- Relocation and Removal of Artworks in the Collection
- Public Art in Private Development
- AFTA / PAN Best Practices

# Approaches to Public Art

## Defining Public Art

### What is Public Art?

Public art is a dynamic field, with new approaches and ideas emerging day by day. However, the public art field has generally agreed that there are several key aspects of what makes public art:

- Public art is created by professional artists. This means someone who has a track record of exhibitions or commissioned visual or public art. Architects, landscape architects and other design professionals are not considered professional artists under this definition, unless they otherwise meet the criteria above.
- Public art is public. This means it is located in a place that is generally accessible to the public, with no barriers to access, such as having to pay.
- Public art is site-specific. This means it is created through a process that considers the physical, functional, social and cultural context of the place where it is located.

### What is not Public Art?

The public art field also generally agrees that the following do not constitute public art:

- Artworks that are decorative objects (unless created by an artist) or are mass-produced.
- Features that are decorative, ornamental or functional elements of the architecture or landscape design, unless they have been commissioned from a professional artist as an integral aspect of a structure or a site.
- Features that involve commercial expression related to the business or development where the artwork is located, or that otherwise would be considered a sign under a local code.

## Public Art in Capital Projects

One of the most common forms of public art is artwork that is related to public facilities and infrastructure, such as urban spaces, parks, trails and other open spaces accessible to the public; libraries and recreation centers; public safety facilities and transportation infrastructure. These types of projects are usually commissioned by public agencies or private developers.

In general, the approaches to this type of public art vary in terms of the degree to which an artist is integrated with a design team to which the artwork is integrated with an overall design. Following are some key differentiations.

### Integrated Artwork

An artist is selected to plan for and create an artwork in conjunction with the overall design of a larger capital project, but the artist works independently and the artwork serves mainly as a visual enhancement. Art projects can be integrated into architecture, landscape design, streetscape or infrastructure projects.

The artist is selected as early in the process as possible, through an approved artist selection process. The artist consults with the design team, the client department and the local community to identify opportunities and possible themes for projects. The element is usually designed and fabricated independently of the main project, and installed at the appropriate time during the overall construction schedule.

### Functional Design Feature

An artist is selected as the lead designer for a specific functional design feature — such as lighting, identity markers, fencing, pavements, seating or kiosks — that can be found in the

streetscape, open spaces, hike-bike trails or other public places. The artist (or the client department in conjunction with the artist) assembles teams of related professionals, such as architects, civil/structural engineers, and landscape designers to support the design, fabrication and installation processes. Such a project may be pursued in conjunction with, or independently of, a larger capital project.

### Design Team Project

An artist is selected at the start of the project to work as an integral member of the design team (architect, engineer, landscape architect, and others) to realize the design of a larger capital project.

The artist's thinking helps shape fundamental ideas about the project design, and usually results in a specific element that the artist might have more specific responsibility for designing. Most often, this element will be integrated into the architectural or landscape design project itself.

### Stand-Alone Artwork

An artist is commissioned independently of any capital project, or independently of the design and construction schedule of a capital project, to create a stand-alone artwork, which is usually site specific.

The artist consults with the design team (if applicable), the client or site users, and/or the local community to identify opportunities for projects. The result is a site-specific element that is conceived, fabricated and installed by the artist. This is an approach that can be used to retrofit completed buildings and public spaces with artworks.

## Engaged Approaches

### Civic Practice: Artists in Planning Processes

Artists are sometimes hired as collaborators in public planning processes to support the work of the process. Commonly, artists are involved as a way of stimulating public engagement with a planning process. In other cases, artists are asked to spur civic imagination by fostering understanding of little-known urban systems and stimulating consideration of alternative futures. This type of work is called “civic practice,” and it is especially common in projects related to environmental issues, transportation, public space activation and immigration.

#### Artist-in-Residence

An artist residency embeds an artist in public agency, a community or a similar setting that offers a productive environment for artists to research and develop new work. The residency serves as an extended research phase. The expectation should be that the artist would create a public art project that is based on the exploration conducted during the residency, and would engage with the general public in presenting the work. Artist residencies are almost always fixed in time.

#### Civic Imagining Projects

Civic imagining projects invert conventional public art thinking. Rather than drawing on the metaphor of the city as an outdoor gallery, or a canvas for artistic embellishment, civic imagining projects are speculative explorations that cast artists in the role of imagining creative solutions to the problems of the city itself.

“Civic imagining” projects borrow from the traditions of design charrettes or competitions common in other design fields, offering critiques of and visions for urban development. They engage the public in visionary exercises that transcend the boundaries of public engagement that is conventionally practiced in planning processes.

“Civic imagining” projects come in many guises. One of the best known projects is called *PARK(ing) Day* (Rebar Group, 2005), which started when a group of artists took over a metered parking space in San Francisco for two hours and turned it into a public green space, questioning the predominance of auto-oriented spaces in cities.

### Creative Placemaking

“Creative placemaking” is an emerging practice that promotes grassroots creative action to catalyze community and economic development. Creative placemaking has also been embraced by public agencies and developers who see it as a tool for creating a lively pedestrian realm and public spaces.

Creative placemaking is a generic term that has been used to embrace a wide range of creative activity and art projects. As the field of creative placemaking has evolved, there has been a debate about the relationship between placemaking and public art. A consensus is emerging that while the fields overlap to a great degree, they remain different in regard to their goals, the way that projects are developed and the way that artists are engaged.

### Social Practice Art

Social practice art is generally defined as projects that focus more on processes of engagement with communities for the purposes of generating social awareness, engagement or change rather than on purely physical or visual outcomes. Seminal projects in the U.S. range from *Project Row Houses* (Rick Lowe, ongoing), which has evolved into a decades-long community revitalization project in Houston, to the *University Avenue Project* (Wing Young Huie, 2010) an artist-instigated social-cultural investigation in Saint Paul, Minnesota, that relied on participatory photography.

### Temporary Artwork

An artist is commissioned to create an artwork that is presented only for a fixed amount of time, from a one-time event to a few years. The artwork might be the outcome of an artist residency or a community engagement process. Often, the artist retains ownership of a temporary artwork.

Temporary artworks are popular for a variety of reasons. First, they are generally less expensive and less complicated to produce than permanent artworks. They allow for more experimentation in regard to artistic approaches, themes and locations. That, in turn, allows more artists, communities and audiences to connect with public art.

# Artist Selection Approaches

There are a variety of processes for selecting artists for public art commissions. For each project, the process selected should be one that best reflects the circumstances and goals of the project, as well as best practices in the public art field.

## Basic Principles of Artist Selection

Selection processes should be competitive, except in situations where there are extraordinary circumstances, as expressed in the approved Project Plan.

Artist selections should be recommended by a committee that includes project stakeholders and arts professionals. Often these are called Selection Panels or Task Forces.

Artist selections should generally be made on artist qualifications. If artists are asked to prepare concepts as part of a competitive process, they should be compensated.

Artist selection processes must be consistent with the procurement procedures related to the funding source and/or the project sponsor.

## Open Competition

In an Open Competition, any artist may submit his or her qualifications, subject to the requirements established in the Call to Artists or Request for Qualifications. The Call or RFQ should be sufficiently detailed to allow artists to determine whether their artistic practice or qualifications are appropriate for consideration.

An Open Competition allows for the broadest range of artists to compete and can bring in new, otherwise unknown, and emerging artists. However, an Open Competition can

consume a large amount of staff and selection committee resources, and sometimes discourage established artists who prefer to respond to limited competitions or to be directly selected for projects.

## Limited Competition / Invitational

In a Limited Competition or Invitational process, several pre-selected artists are invited to submit qualifications. This method may be appropriate when looking for a small group of experienced artists, when there is a limited time frame, or if the project requirements are so specialized that only a limited number of already identified artists would be eligible. It is possible that the list of artists would come from a roster.

## Direct Selection

On occasion, an artist might be selected for a project without a competitive process. Direct selection can be useful on projects where there is an urgent timeline, a low budget, or unusually specific project requirements. It is possible that this artist would be selected from a pre-qualified list or roster.

## Roster

A roster is a pre-qualified pool of artists from which artists can be selected to participate in a Limited Competition/Invitational be selected directly.

A roster is based on a comprehensive review of qualifications from artists who respond to an open Request for Qualifications. This list could be focused on a specific set of opportunities, or be used broadly for a range of commissions. If the Roster is meant to be used for several years, it should be updated annually or bi-annually to allow new artists to be considered, and for roster artists to update their materials.

To create a roster, a public art program would issue a call to artists, inviting them to submit their qualifications for being added to the roster. The call to artists should outline the qualifications artists must have and criteria against which they will be evaluated, anticipating the types of opportunities that the public art program anticipates in the coming year or two. The call should also provide instructions for submitting and include background and reference information.

A Selection Panel should be organized to review the call and make recommendations as to which artists should be added to the Roster. Once selected, artists should be kept on the eligibility list for several years before they need to re-apply.

A Roster requires upfront work and ongoing management, but it allows for artist selection for specific projects to proceed much more quickly. This would be a viable strategy if the public art program were anticipating a large number of commissions over a short period of time.

## Request for Proposals (RFP)

A call to artists that asks for the submission of both an artist's credentials and a conceptual proposal for an artwork, both of which are the basis for selecting an artist. An artist interview is often part of this process.

## Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

A call to artists that asks for the submission of an artist's credentials, which is the basis of selecting an artist. An artist interview is often part of this process.

## Resources

*PAN Artist Selection Process Resource Guide (2013)*  
*PAN Call for Artists Resource Guide (2004)*

# Community Engagement

Community engagement is an important component of public projects, setting public art practice apart from artistic practice that is focused on galleries, museums or private clients. This is important as a matter of equity, to ensure that people have the ability to influence decisions that impact the places they experience and value. A public art project will have a very public presence for a very long time. It will play an outsized role in creating an image for the community where it is located, and creating an impression of that community in the public's mind.

It is important to ensure that public art is welcomed and seen as a positive addition to a community. Therefore, anybody planning a public art project should give careful thought to the community in which it will be located and set clear goals for the role they would like community stakeholders to play in the development of the project. With those goals in mind, you can then determine the best approach to involving the community at various phases, such as planning, designing, creating and celebrating the artwork.

Some key principles to keep in mind:

- While community engagement is an important aspect of a public art project, there is no single approach that is right for every circumstance. The approach depends on the nature of the project and the artist.
- Community engagement is necessarily an empathetic activity, it means looking at things from other people's point of view.
- The artist will play a key role in how community engagement is organized. The artist should help direct the strategy and the process,

which should build on practices that the artist is comfortable with.

- Some types of projects, such as murals, have more of a history and expectation of community involvement, in part because of the accessibility of the processes of design and creation.
- It is important to manage expectations. Make it clear from the outset what the community's role in the project will be, as well as what the boundaries are.

## Developing a Strategy

Every public art project should have a specific public engagement plan. This plan should:

- Identify goals for community engagement
- Identify key stakeholders, what would encourage and prevent them from participating, what their role would be, and what they would gain from participating
- Identify key milestones for community engagement
- Identify target audiences and vehicles for community engagement
- Set expectations for the artist's approach to community engagement

## Articulating Goals

Community engagement goals should take stock of the goals for the project and the impact the artwork will have on the community.

These are some common community engagement goals for public art projects (not all of these goals are relevant to every project):

- Create an artwork that conveys the community's vision and voice
- Create an artwork that fits into the context of its surroundings
- Inform the content and/or themes of the artwork
- Give people in the community a sense of empowerment through their participation in an art project
- Strengthen community social networks
- Connect people with community resources
- Obtain buy-in for the larger project that includes the artwork

## Identifying Stakeholders

The strategy should consider key stakeholders — people who will have an interest in or who will be affected by the project. Stakeholders can include:

- Nearby property owners, residents and business owners
- Other people who customarily use the place where the artwork will be located
- Organizations that serve the area where the artwork will be located or the groups of people who frequent the location
- Elected, appointed and volunteer leaders
- Staff of public agencies with responsibility for the place where the artwork will be located

## Community Partnerships

Communities often develop public art projects through partnerships with non-profit community groups, such as arts, social service, economic development or religious organizations. These

groups can bring outreach capacity and are likely to have experience with the specific community in which the project is being developed.

As in any partnership, it is important to establish the role, responsibilities, deliverables and compensation for the community partner. In particular, community partners should be resourced equitably for their involvement.

## Planning Phase

The early stages of planning an artwork can be undertaken in collaboration with the community where it is located. Consider consulting the community in:

- Finding a location for the artwork
- Learning what the community's needs and interests are
- Identifying potential stakeholders and participants
- Selecting the artist
- Researching and designing the mural
- Reviewing the artist concept

## Artist Selection Phase

There are a number of factors that must be considered in selecting an artist, including the artist's experience, technical proficiency and availability for the budget at hand. The artist's sensitivity to and connection with the community can be one of them. Most often, artist selections are made by Selection Panels or Task Forces with artistic and stakeholder representation.

The community can also play a role in selecting the artist, depending on the artist selection process that is being followed.

If the artist selection is based on qualifications and an interview, consider:

- Asking community stakeholders for recommendations about local artists to consider.

- Inviting community members to meet with the short-listed artists.

If the artist selection is based on proposals, then:

- Inviting community members to meet with the artists while they are developing their proposals.
- Inviting community members to review the proposals and provide comments to the reviewers.

If the artist selection involves an artist site visit, then:

- Arranging an opportunity for the artist to meet stakeholders in formal and informal types of situations.

It is not advisable to allow community members to vote on proposals because the final selection will need to be based on a range of criteria. The final selection should include the perspective of art and design professionals who are qualified to assess the artist's technical qualifications and practical considerations related to proposals.

## Research and Design Phase

The process of researching and designing an artwork can be a collaborative activity that involves people in the community where the artwork is located, or people in organizations related to the topic of the artwork.

- Begin the engagement and design phase before any concepts are finalized, potentially even before an artist is selected. Include all stakeholders and concerned individuals. Consider holding one or more community meetings, especially if a large number of people are involved, and make sure to include people who will be impacted by the artworks. The meeting can introduce people to the project and collect preliminary needs about the community's ideas about the goals and potential subject matter.

- Conduct additional research as necessary. Community members and community organizations, such as historical societies can often provide material that will contribute to the ideas the artist includes in the artwork.
- Sometimes, artworks are created with community participation in the design. In these situations, the artist's role is to facilitate a collaborative process in which people can contribute ideas that are incorporated into the artwork. There are many different approaches to this, depending on how an artist is comfortable in working and on the overall goals for the murals.
- Sometimes, the design of an artwork is reviewed. Whether or not there is a review depends on the ownership and goals of the project. If there is a review, it is best to conduct the review with the Selection Committee or Task Force that selected the artist. The review should include both stakeholders as well as arts professionals, to give the artist a full range of advice.

## Involving the Community in Creating the Artwork

Depending on the type of artwork, there may be opportunities for involving the community in the creation of the artwork. This is most common with murals. For guidance on how to include the community painting a mural, consult one of mural-making guides that are easily available online.

## Celebration Phase

When the artwork is complete, it is a good idea to plan a celebration for the community. There can be a short ceremony to dedicate the artwork, at which people who played a key role in project can speak. There should also be a celebration with food, music, dancing and other creative activities — whatever seems right!

# Communications and Audience Engagement

Effective communications and audience engagement are key components of any public art program. They are important for building awareness of and support for the program, and for providing audiences experiences that enrich their lives and foster social connections. There are several general aspects of communications and engagement that every public art organization should consider:

- Define Your Audiences
- Create a Strong, Consistent Program Identity
- Develop Key Messages
- Maintain Robust Platforms for Communicating with Audiences
- Provide Enriched Content
- Encourage Interaction with Public Art

In Cuyahoga Falls, the Division of Neighborhood Excellence, Communications and Community Outreach will be a key resource to the Planning Division and Public Art Board in developing a specific communications and audience engagement plan.

## Define Your Audiences

Public art programs should keep in mind the following general audiences when developing their communications and marketing strategies.

- **Project stakeholders.** This includes people who will be directly involved with or affected by the project. It can include residents and users in the area where the project will be located, organizations and businesses active in the area, and public agencies. It includes the entities that own the site and will manage it.

- **Public at-large.** This includes the broader public, whether or not they have a direct interest in the site or in art in general.
- **City leadership.** This includes elected, appointed and volunteer officials who have an interest in or authority over a site.
- **Arts stakeholders.** This includes artists, arts organizations and funders who have an interest in supporting, promoting and advancing the arts in the community.

## Create a Strong and Consistent Program Identity

It is important for a public art program to have a strong and consistent identity for two reasons.

First, a strong identity helps make people aware of public art and the resources that the City is investing in it. This is a first step towards building strong circles of audiences, supporters and funders.

Second, a strong identity helps build productive and enduring connections between the public art program and its audiences and stakeholders, including the broader community and public officials.

This is important in cultivating funders, recruiting artists, developing partnerships and elevating the organization's profile among its peers. For example, artists and collaborators will be more likely to want to work with the program if it is a known entity with a solid reputation. Funders will be more likely to support the program if they are enthusiastic about the program's vision and convinced that it can deliver. Audiences will be more likely to follow the program if they have a clear idea of what to expect from it.

A public art program's identity is defined by what it believes in and what it does — its values and the activities it undertakes. Its values and activities should be defined through strategic planning or master planning processes, as well as well-considered decisions about projects to take on.

A public art program's identity is communicated by how it presents itself. This relates to both the key messages it communicates and the appearance of its graphic materials, such as logo, print publications and web site.

## Develop Key Messages

Cuyahoga Falls' public art initiative should focus its public engagement, communications and education activities around several key messages.

- Public art builds on Cuyahoga Falls' key assets — the river, its reviving downtown, its parks and its sense of community. It provides experiences that connect people to each other and to their beliefs about what is unique and essential to Cuyahoga falls, and it results in enduring civic assets.
- Public art benefits Cuyahoga Falls economically as it strengthens the City's identity and quality of life, supporting the efforts that government, businesses and residents are already making
- Public art is best accomplished through partnerships of the public, private and non-profit sectors.

## Maintain Robust Platforms for Communicating with Audiences

Cuyahoga Falls should make use of multiple platforms to provide access to information about their work. These platforms should be cross-linked in order to maximize their efficiency and effectiveness. Using a diversity of platforms is important for several reasons:

- People are accustomed to accessing information from different platforms, depending on their preferences and circumstances, including whether they are at a computer with Internet access, connected via a mobile device, or without digital access.
- Different platforms have intrinsic strengths and weaknesses in communicating information.

### *Print*

Even though digital communication is becoming more and more prevalent, there is still a role for print materials. They are portable, easy to use in public spaces (where public art is likely to be found) easy to share, can have an artistic presence themselves, and can be physical reminders of a positive experience.

### *On-Site Signage*

On-site information is a key way that people learn about public art when they experience it in the city, particularly people who had not been aware of public art. Public art programs should invest in informative plaques, labels and other relevant on-site signage, which can inform people about the artworks they are seeing and direct them to web and social media resources where they can learn more.

### *Web Page*

A web page is useful as a comprehensive portal for people to access information about the public art program's resources, including archived content. Although a web site is best used on a computer at home or the office, it can also be mobile-enabled, allowing for easy browsing for people who are on the move.

### *Social Media*

People turn to social media channels to get up-to-the-moment information, to follow or participate in conversations that are user-generated, and to spread information through their networks. Social media can be used for general external communications for the program (such as announcements about artist opportunities and public events), for communications that engage and inform on-site users about the public art collection and audience engagement activities.

Social media applications are also important platforms for pushing information out directly to people through the public art program's networks and the networks of its followers.

### *General Interest and Arts Media*

Coverage in the local general interest media can increase the visibility, stature and value of the public art program to new audiences as well as internal stakeholders, external partners and peers. Public art programs should cultivate local and regional media to generate coverage of projects and events. In addition, public art programs should seek recognition in regional and national media — including on-line journals and blogs that cover art, and regional and national travel-focused media — for its projects and events.

### *Campaigns*

Audience engagement campaigns can capture and focus the attention of audiences for brief amounts of time. They are useful for attracting new audiences and reconnecting existing supporters to the program because of the sense that something new, urgent and exciting is happening. Campaigns can focus on:

- Specific projects, particularly when campaigns can be linked to specific milestones or campaigns.
- The overall program and public art collection, particularly through approaches — photo and selfie uploads, scavenger hunts and contests, for example — to encourage people to look at, think about and respond to public art in the community.

## Provide Enriched Content

Public art programs should provide a wide range of content about their projects, programs and partnerships. This is important for several reasons:

- Public artworks and programs generally have more to offer people than they can experience directly through a casual encounter with the art.
- People don't always have time to take in the artworks when they first encounter them and may want to circle back and learn more.
- Knowing more about public art projects and events generally makes people more appreciative of what they are seeing.
- Enriched information about public art can make people's experience more rewarding and their overall experience public art more positive.

These are examples of the types of content that a public art program should develop or make available across its platforms:

#### *Behind the scenes stories*

Often some of the most interesting stories about an artwork involve how it was put together. This can include information about the artist's vision, public engagement that led to the project, design and fabrication techniques, and the teams of people who were involved in making the artwork a reality.

Telling the artist's story or providing opportunities to hear directly from the artist can offer unparalleled insight into both individual works as well as how artists create a practice in public art.

The stories behind partners and partnerships with the community and with arts organizations could be further drawn upon to generate interest.

#### *Calendar of events*

Pushing out information about upcoming art events, rather than requiring people to look for it, could engage people who aren't already aware of public art and increase the number of participants in events.

#### *News reports and critical responses to projects*

Content developed by news organizations and by art critics can provide a broader context for the Program's offerings.

### **Encourage Interaction with Public Art Resources**

Interactive experiences help people connect with arts resources because they can result in experiences that users direct and are unique to them. Platforms that allow for people to engage in conversations with each other add interest

because people can express their own thoughts and enjoy learning what other people have to say about artworks.

These are examples of approaches to encouraging audience interaction with public art:

#### *Artist-led Engagement*

Artist-led community engagement processes can bring people into the planning and design of public art or other community planning processes. These processes should be pursued when appropriate to the goals of the project and the interests of the artist. When artists work with communities in this way, people have a positive connection not only to the project and to each other, but also to the public art program.

#### *Events*

Public events can attract people to public art projects. These can include performances, films and non-arts gatherings such as yoga classes or bike meet-ups. These can introduce new audiences to artworks and keep the artworks, and the places where they are located, fresh in people's minds.

#### *Artist Reinterpretations*

Consider commissioning artists to reinterpret elements of the existing collection; for example, asking composers, dancers or writers to create new pieces inspired by the existing collection. Philadelphia Mural Arts, for example, has commissioned composers to create and perform interpretations of murals, drawing entirely new audiences in experience older murals.

#### *Interactive Apps*

Interactive apps can not only help people access and navigate public art but also customize their experience of art. Many museums are incorporating and experimenting with interactive

apps that provide users with in-depth content, virtual and augmented reality experiences, and the ability to build a virtual collection or design and share their experience. For example, the Philadelphia Museum of Art sponsors an annual "hackathon" in which developers are supported in creating apps that help people engage with the collection; one night each year, museum-goers can meet the developers and test out the apps.

#### *Education Resources*

Public art programs can provide a platform to develop educational resources and programs that support arts education and career development in the arts.

One approach is to develop a curriculum kit of teaching materials that allow the City's public art resources to be a teaching and learning resource for schoolchildren. The curriculum kit should be developed in collaboration with teachers in the art programs in local schools.

#### *Dedication and Celebration Events*

As each project is completed, it creates an opportunity for a community celebration. All those involved in the selection and creation of the artwork, the general public and media should be invited to celebrate it and welcome it into the community. These events can be as simple as a press conference, or they may turn into a block party depending upon the scope of the project and its location.

#### *Tours*

Once the collection has reached a critical mass, approximately six projects, provide scheduled, docent-led tours of the artworks in the collection. They can be connected with bicycling or found tourism to expand audience.

# Collection Management, Conservation, Maintenance

Cuyahoga Falls' Public Art Master Plan recommends a baseline conservation study and an annual priorities for the maintenance and conservation of artworks that the City owns. Following are the key components of a collection management, maintenance and conservation strategy.

## Collection Management

### Project Records

Cuyahoga Falls should centralize and standardize its project records, building on the protocol outlined below. There should be one entity to maintain project records. Usually, this is public agency that oversees public art activities (such as the Planning Division); sometimes it is a non-profit arts organization.

A file should be maintained for each commission, acquisition or donation that is accepted that contains information such as:

- A copy of the artist contract, bill of sale or transfer of ownership
- A copy of project correspondence
- Plans and drawings generated by the artist during the commissioning process
- Hard copy images
- Photographs
- Maintenance instructions provided by the artist and subsequent conservation reports and records
- A brief description of the artwork suitable for publication
- A brief bio of the artist suitable for publication
- Press clippings

### Inventory

Cuyahoga Falls should maintain a standardized inventory of all artworks that it owns, acquires or commissions. The inventory should include the following information:

- Name and contact information for artist
- Title of work
- Location of work (kept in a format compatible with City's GIS system)
- Year completed/installed
- City department that is responsible for the artwork
- Media
- Dimensions
- Budget/cost and source of funds
- A unique number assigned to each artwork

### Conservation and Maintenance Protocols

Cuyahoga Falls should consider the following conservation and maintenance protocols, to ensure proper care of public art in the community.

- Identify conservation needs prior to the fabrication and installation of new works. Require, when necessary, that artists consult with a conservator during the design development phase of the project to identify the conservation needs of the project. Alternately, submit design documents for review by a conservator prior to executing or authorizing the fabrication and installation portion of a contract.
- Artists should be required, as a condition of their contract, to provide a maintenance guide for their artwork. The maintenance guide should include protocols for routine cleaning of the artwork, including the recommended

frequency, cleaning agents and methods. The guide should also include an inventory of, specifications for and sources of materials used in the fabrication of the artwork.

- Artists should be required to guarantee the artwork against any failures of workmanship for one year, and to assign manufacturers or fabricators warranties to the owner of the artwork.
- Artworks should be cleaned regularly and/or otherwise maintained by the public agency responsible for the facility, building or site in which the work of art resides. The agency should report any damage or conservation needs to the entity that oversees collection management, and should not perform any non-routine maintenance unless requested.
- The entity that oversees collection management should conduct a periodic conservation assessment of the works in its collection and ensure all necessary repairs are completed. The assessment should include budget estimates and priorities for conservation work. These recommendations should be translated into an annual conservation and maintenance plan. Funding should be sought from the community's capital budget, and implement the recommendations of the assessment through.
- All maintenance and conservation should be undertaken in a manner appropriate to the medium and characteristics of the artwork, following the protocols established by the artist, and in accordance with the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990.
- At least three percent of total budget for new commissions should be set aside in a Conservation Endowment.

# Relocation and Removal of Artworks in the Collection

The owner of a work of public art retains the right to relocate that artwork, or to remove it altogether — acknowledging, however, that the relocation or removal of an artwork before the end of its anticipated lifespan should be a rare and unusual measure, and that such actions must be undertaken in accordance with the Visual Artists Rights Act.

If the artwork is owned by the City, then a formal process should be followed. The process should include a careful evaluation of the proposal to relocate or remove the artwork, using pre-established criteria, and a recommendation to an authority responsible for making a decision. A typical process is described below.

## Conditions for Relocation

An artwork should be recommended for relocation from its site only if reasonable cause has been established by one or more of the following conditions:

- the artwork's present condition poses a safety hazard to the public;
- the physical context or site (building, wall, plaza, landscape) is being modified to the extent that the artwork is no longer viable,
- the use of this particular location may have changed, and/or the artwork may have lost its contextual meaning,
- the condition or security of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed in its present location, or
- relocation has been requested by the artist.

In addition, an artwork should only be relocated if a suitable new location has been found.

## Additional Conditions for Removal (De-accessioning)

An artwork should be recommended for removal (de-accessioning) only if reasonable cause has been established by one or more of the conditions for relocation, above, or one or more of the conditions listed below:

- the artwork has been damaged or has deteriorated to the point that it can no longer be represented to be the original artwork;
- the restoration of the artwork's structural or aesthetic integrity is technically not feasible, or the expense of restoring it exceeds 50 percent of the original cost of the artwork;
- the physical context or site (building, wall, plaza, landscape) is being modified to the extent that the artwork is no longer viable,
- the artwork no longer meets the mission for public art in Cuyahoga Falls; or
- the artwork is proved to be inauthentic or in violation of existing copyright laws.

## Procedures for Relocating or De-accessioning an Artwork

### Initiating the Process

Any request for relocating or de-accessioning an artwork shall be submitted to the Planning Division, who shall take the following steps to inform stakeholders of the request and to develop a report and recommendation for

the review and approval of the appropriate authorities. If necessary, the Planning Division should contract with a professional public art administrator to facilitate the process.

### Informing Stakeholders

The entity coordinating the process will ensure that all necessary stakeholders are aware of the process to relocate or de-accession an artwork by:

- consulting with the artist about the artist's intentions for the work and, in the case of a de-accessioning, the artist's interest in reclaiming the work,
- consulting with the affected public agencies,
- consulting the donor of the artwork, if it was a gift, and
- providing appropriate notification to project stakeholders and the public at large.

Feedback from the artist, the donor, stakeholders and the public at large should be collected and documented in a report.

### Report and Recommendation

The entity coordinating the process will prepare a report that includes:

- analysis of the reasons for relocation or de-accessioning;
- review of any restrictions that may apply to the disposition of the artwork, based on contract review or the condition of the artwork;
- appraised value of the artwork, if obtainable;

- feedback from the artist, the donor, stakeholders and the public at large;
- in the case of the relocation of an artwork, a recommendation for the new location for the artwork or for storing the artwork; and
- in the case of de-accessioning an artwork, a recommendation for the disposition of the artwork, considering (in order of preference): transfer to the artist; sale or trade; loan or donation to an arts nonprofit; or destruction.

### **Approval**

The entity coordinating the process will send the report and recommendations to the Public Art Board for a final decision.

### **Planning for Relocation or Removal**

It is common now in the commissioning of new artworks to consider issues of relocation or removal at the outset and recording them in the agreement with the artist and the owner of the artwork.

Artist agreements now commonly specify a time-limit for the useful life of an artwork, which might range from several years for a new media work to

twenty years for a mural to a much longer time frame for a traditional sculpture. For integrated artwork, a time-limit might relate to the useful life of the infrastructure or the site where the artwork is located.

These conditions are spelled out to the extent possible in order to lessen the surprise of a relocation or removal process, when it occurs, and to make the intentions of the project sponsor and the artist clear from the outset.

### **Temporary Artworks**

Temporary artworks are by definition time-limited, and therefore would not be subjected to a relocation or removal process.

### **Visual Artists Rights Act**

All relocations and de-accessions must be undertaken in conformance with the Visual Artists Rights Act, which offers the artist a protection of his or her right of integrity and right of attribution.

# Public Art in Private Development

Numerous communities around the country require developers to include public art in their projects, although none in Ohio do.

Following are some of the questions related to setting up a public art in private development requirement. There is no single best practice, except that all of these topics should be addressed in adopted guidelines; the approaches to public art in private development depend entirely on the circumstances of the community.

## What types of developer projects should be considered for public art?

Communities use various approaches. Requirements are commonly tied to specific zoning districts, to particular areas of the community, to developments of a particular scale or construction cost, and whether a project is receiving a public benefit or a discretionary approval.

## What will be required?

Communities use various approaches. Most allow developers to fulfill a requirement by commissioning public art on site or contributing cash to a fund. Some communities allow developers to fulfill a requirement by providing other kinds of arts facilities.

For situations where the commissioning of public art is required, some communities leave the type of art and budget are completely negotiable. Others establish budget minimums, either a flat rate or sliding scale based on project size.

Some communities provide a development benefit, such as extra square footage, if public art is included in a project.

## What is reviewed?

Depending on the community, the following aspects of a project are reviewed:

The general approach to the public art / goals for public art, the artist selection, the artist concept, the final project.

## Who reviews and approves?

Most communities tie the approval of public art to the overall entitlement process for a development. Reviewing authority can be vested in staff or a standing committee. Generally, approvals by a planning commission or a council only involve the overall conditions that a developer agrees to, not the selection of the artist or the artwork.

## Who monitors compliance?

Generally, the approving agency keeps records of the artwork and monitors ongoing compliance with the provision.

Record-keeping typically includes the original development conditions that must be adhered to, artist contracts, artwork title and maintenance protocols.

Generally, developers are responsible for ongoing maintenance and conservation for the artwork, and are required to see approval for any changes that impact the artwork, including de-accession or removal.

## Typical Roles and Responsibilities

### Typical Public Agency Responsibilities

- Provide background briefing on the community's approach to public art — its vision, priorities and processes — to the

development team (design consultants, arts consultant, artist); review guidelines with entire team.

- Provide art consultant information.
- Facilitate approval of developer's choice of artist.
- Facilitate review of artist's design concept.
- Approve completed project.
- Provide guidelines for signage, project documentation and maintenance.

### Typical Developer Responsibilities

- Implement public art projects according to site plan conditions and current guidelines.
- Retain an art consultant to oversee project.
- Select and contract with artist.
- Fund project, according to agreement with the City.
- Ensure project is completed within necessary time frame.
- Determine and implement a community education plan.
- Own artwork, maintain it and ensure public access.
- Provide documentation of completed project.

## Sample Considerations for Developer Projects

Each community should communicate clear expectations regarding art projects commissioned by private developers as conditions of development approval.

Public art created by private developers should have a clear, positive impact on the quality of public places. The artist should, whether working independently or collaboratively with other designers, help conceptualize and produce a project of artistic and visual distinction.

#### **Public Art Approaches to Encourage**

The following approaches to public art would generally be acceptable throughout the city.

*Architectural Integration.* Public art can be integrated into the architectural design or ornamentation of a building. In all cases, architecturally integrated art should be visible to the public, generally by incorporation into facades visible from major streets or public spaces, or at public entryways.

*Landscape/Plaza Integration.* In the event that a development project includes a publicly accessible outdoor space, public art can be incorporated into the design of that space.

The goal should be to integrate the public spaces (visually, functionally or through programming) into the broader public realm, and for public art to support that. The art project must be visible and easily accessible from a public street, not behind or between buildings or in semi-private areas like courtyards. The space, and the art, must be designed to provide full benefit to the entire community, not just the users of the property.

*Streetscape Integration.* Public art integrated with streetscape design should be encouraged only to the extent that it supports the goals and recommendations of streetscape designs that are already established.

*Feature Integration.* Public art can be integrated into features that are part of a master planned development, such as gateway features, pergolas and fencing.

#### **Public Art Approaches to Consider**

The following approaches to public art should be considered on a case-by-case basis, as they might not be appropriate in all circumstances.

*Outdoor Sculpture.* Sculpture located in private open spaces that do not serve any active pedestrian function (even if they are visually accessible) should not be construed as fulfilling any public art requirement. Such spaces include decorative landscapes at street corners, in building setbacks, or next to *portes cocheres*.

*Indoor Art.* Interior art in private commercial and residential buildings, even in semi-public gathering places like atria or lobbies, should not be construed as fulfilling any County public art commitment. Exceptions could be made in cases in which the interior spaces are managed for public use.

#### **Public Art Approaches to Avoid**

*Commercial Expression.* Projects that seek to promote the private nature of a development, by promoting commercial expression or creating a signature marking element, should not be construed as fulfilling any public art requirement.

# Americans for the Arts, Public Art Network

## Best Practices for Public Art Projects

These best practices were published in draft form by the Public Art Network in 2016. They are intended to guide public art administrators and practitioners in developing, drafting and executing public art projects.

1. Administrators should clearly represent the scope and budget of project in Calls for Artists and communications.
2. Artists should truthfully represent their role and the nature of past work when presenting portfolios.
3. Artists should design to available budgets and propose what they can realistically deliver within budget, especially during design competitions.
4. Administrators/Consultants should not ask Artists to appropriate or use designs proposed by other Artists in a competition (e.g. cherry pick from among other competitors). Nor should Artists use other Artists' ideas or concepts proposed during a competition.
5. Any organization or entity commissioning Artwork should pay Artists for design proposals.
6. Administrators should ensure a legal and fair process for developing projects and selecting Artists.
7. All organizations and entities commissioning Artwork should consider their process for developing projects and selecting Artists in light of the principles in Americans for the Arts Statement on Cultural Equity.
8. As reasonably possible and consistent with existing privacy policies and legal requirements, Agencies should protect Artists' private information.
9. Arts professionals should be involved in the Artist selection process.
10. Administrators/Consultants should not receive money from Artists being considered or awarded a project.
11. To avoid actual conflict or the appearance of impropriety, real or perceived conflicts of interest should be disclosed, and impacted decision-makers should abstain from involvement in the process.
12. All projects should have a written Agreement that includes a clear articulation of: scope of work, budget and schedule.
13. All parties should have time to read and understand agreements prior to signing, and may seek legal and/or business counsel.
14. Agreements should clearly articulate the process by which project changes are approved and any changes should always be made in writing.
15. If substantial redesign of a contracted artwork or an entirely new proposal is requested, due to no fault of the Artist, the Artist should be compensated.
16. Realistic life span of an Artwork should be mutually agreed by all parties and written into the Agreement.
17. Artists should choose appropriate materials for artwork based on the expected life. Care should be taken when integrating components into the Artwork that are not warranted for the minimum warranty period required in the Agreement. Attention should be paid to integrated components that may void underlying warranties.
18. Artist warranties should not exceed two years.
19. With regard to manufacturer warranties for integrated components, Artists should be required to only pass along those warranties provided by the manufacturer.
20. Where reasonable, obtainable insurance is required by law, municipal policy and/or in an Agreement, Administrators should work with Artists to assess the true cost of this insurance so that Artists can budget. As only licensed professionals can obtain professional liability and/or errors and omission progressive insurance, Artists who are not licensed professionals should have this requirement waived. However, Agreements may require licensed sub-contractors carry professional liability or errors and omissions insurance.
21. Administrators should not ask Artists to take on unreasonable or inappropriate liability.
22. Artists should have Agreements with their subcontractors, and include all relevant requirements of the prime contract in the sub-contract Agreement.

23. Project payment schedule should meet the cash flow needs of the Artwork schedule of deliverables.
24. Artists should retain copyright to their Artwork. However, Artists should expect to grant license to the contracting agency or ultimate owner for reasonable use of images of the Artwork for publicity, educational, and reasonable promotional purposes upon which the parties agree.
25. Artists and commissioning bodies and/or owners should provide reciprocal credit for their respective roles in commissioned Artworks.
26. Maintenance and conservation plans should be discussed and mutually agreed upon and Artists should prepare a detailed and feasible maintenance and conservation plan.
27. Commissioning bodies and/or ultimate owners should have collection management policies in place and notify Artists of these policies.
28. If an Artwork is damaged, Administrators should make a good faith effort to consult the Artist about repairs. Administrators are not obligated to work with Artists to make repairs, but should use best conservation practices.
29. If Visual Artist Rights Act (VARA) rights are waived, Agreements should nonetheless provide that, in the event of damage, alteration, or destruction of an Artwork that is not remedied to Artist's satisfaction, or relocation without Artist's approval, if the Artist believes the Artwork no longer represents his/her work, the Artist should have the right to remove his/her name from the Artwork.



# Definitions

## Annual Public Art Work Plan

The Annual Public Art Work Plan is a plan that is prepared each year and outlines which new projects the City of Cuyahoga Falls will initiate, indicating where the projects are located and what the proposed budgets will be. The Work Plan also outlines which projects are being carried over from previous years, as well as special initiatives and conservation / maintenance priorities. The Work Plan is prepared by the Planning Division, in collaboration with the Public Art Board, and approved by the City Council.

## Artist

An individual, or a team of people, who meets one or more of the following criteria:

- realizes income through the sale, performance, publication or commission of original works of art;
- has previously exhibited, presented, performed or published original works of art in museums, galleries or other recognized art venues and publications;
- has formal training or education in a field of art; and
- has received awards or other forms of recognition from arts juries, arts grant panels, and similar entities for his/her artistic abilities or accomplishments.

Environmental design professionals, such as architects or landscape architects, can be considered artists if they otherwise meet the criteria in this definition.

## Artwork

An aesthetic creation resulting from the skill and creativity of an Artist or Artists. An Artwork may be made of any materials or combination of materials and may be permanent, temporary, fixed or portable. An Artwork can be an integral part of a building or structure, and can be integrated with the work of other design professionals.

## Call to Artists

The general term for a request for artists to apply for a public art commission. A call to artists can be issued as Request for Proposals (RFP), which asks for the submission of both an artist's credentials and a conceptual proposal for an artwork, or a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), which asks for the submission of an artist's credentials.

## Commemorative or Memorial Artwork

An artwork whose purpose is to commemorate or memorialize an individual, organization, event or topic.

## Concept Design

The phase of a public art project in which an artist creates an initial proposal, including diagrams or a maquette, and conducts a preliminary cost estimate and schedule.

## Conservation

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

## Curator

A fine arts professional who assists in the development of a public art project, primarily by locating an artist suitable for a project, assisting the artist in developing a concept and assisting in the implementation of the project.

## Donation

An artwork that is given to the City as a gift, following the City's public art donation policy.

## Final Design

An artist's finished design for a public art project, submitted after all design investigation and community engagement is complete. It includes renderings, drawings and certifications necessary for approval for fabrication and installation.



## **Limited Competition**

A call to artists in which a small number of artists are specifically invited to respond through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Artists should be invited based on their past work and demonstrated ability to successfully respond to the conditions of the particular project.

## **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.).

## **Mural**

A two-dimensional artwork attached to an interior or exterior wall and created in a variety of permanent or semi-permanent media, such as paint, tile, mosaic or applied vinyl. A mural reflects the artistic intent of the artist, and does not include imagery, text, colors, logos or other features directly related to a specific business.

## **Organizational Partner**

An organization that works with the City to produce a public art project.

## **Project Coordinator**

The person directly responsible for managing a public art project.

## **Project Plan**

A document that guides the planning and execution of a specific public art project. It sets out the basic framework of the project, such as goals and location; budget and funding; timeline; the artist selection process and community engagement process; a marketing plan; a list of internal and external stakeholders; and protocols for collaboration with other entities. A Project Plan is developed by the project's Task Force and is approved by the Public Art Board.

## **Public Art**

An original site-specific artwork in any media, existing in a single copy or in a limited edition, produced by an artist or by a team of artists, and planned and executed with the intention of being staged in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all.

## **Public Art Board**

A Board authorized by City Council to advise on the implementation of the Public Art Master Plan, with roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Public Art Master Plan and subsequent Council resolutions.

## **Request for Proposals (RFP)**

A call to artists that asks for the submission of both an artist's credentials and a conceptual proposal for an artwork, both of which are the basis for selecting an artist.

## **Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**

A call to artists that asks for the submission of an artist's credentials, which is the basis of selecting an artist.

## **Task Force**

A group appointed by the Public Art Board to handle a specific task related to the administration of the City's public art initiative, such as providing guidance to a specific public art project or selecting an artist. Task Forces include both Board members and others with expertise specific to the task at hand. Task Forces are appointed with fixed responsibilities and, usually, for a fixed amount of time.

## **Temporary Public Art**

Works of art that are created to be in a public place for a limited period of time, as defined by the Project Plan.



# Resources

This is a partial list of arts organizations and place-based organizations in Cuyahoga Falls or broader Summit County. Most have contributed to the master plan process and all could be resources to the City for future public art projects.

## **Art Bomb Brigade**

Art Bomb Brigade is a local community mural arts and education program run by the Myers School of Art at the University of Akron, under faculty Elisa Gargarella and Marisa McClellan. Some projects are undertaken by UA students and faculty, others by lead artists and UA alumni.  
<https://akronartbomb.com/>

## **ArtsNow**

Arts Now is the designated arts organization for Summit County. Its mission is to connect arts, culture and the broader community. It convenes and connects creative professionals, advocates for arts policy and funding, and provides an information clearinghouse about the arts for the general public.  
<https://artsnow.org/>

## **Curated Storefront**

The Curated Storefront is a series of ongoing exhibitions that activates unused storefronts with multimedia art installations in downtown Akron. The organization curates and produces exhibitions, managing relationships with artists and property owners.  
<http://www.curatedstorefront.org/>

## **Collide: Cuyahoga Falls**

COLLIDE: Cuyahoga Falls is an organization dedicated to bringing awareness to the unique art and cultural scene of Cuyahoga Falls to, for, and with the community. Through collaboration with like-minded organizations, other artists and supporters of the arts, our goal is to help create a vibrant Cuyahoga Falls.  
<https://www.facebook.com/CollideCF/>

## **Cuyahoga Valley Art Center**

The Cuyahoga Valley Art Center advocates for a greater understanding of the visual arts. It provides a variety of art-making courses offered to the general public and taught by regional artists, maintains a gallery with year-round exhibitions, and promotes community engagement.  
<https://www.cvartcenter.org/>

## **Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition**

The Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition works to develop the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and National Heritage Area in Summit, Stark and Tuscarawas Counties. It provides educational programs, events, and publications about the Canalway, while developing strong working relationships with partners to preserve and interpret the natural, historical and recreational resources throughout the area. It has sponsored several public art projects along the Towpath Trail in Akron.  
<http://www.ohioericanal.org/>



### **Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park**

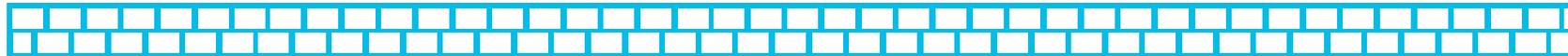
The Conservancy’s mission is to inspire use, appreciation and support of Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and to ensure its preservation. The Conservancy provides environmental education, environmental remediation projects and visitor services. It maintains a rich cultural arts program through music, art, adult education and more.  
<https://www.conservancyforcvnp.org/>

### **LAND studio**

LAND Studio is a Cleveland-based non-profit consulting firm that works in the areas of public art, sustainable building and design, collaborative planning, and dynamic programming. It manages Cleveland’s public art program under contract to the city, developed the public art master plan for Kent, Ohio, and routinely facilitated community-engaged public art commissions and design processes.  
<https://www.land-studio.org/>

### **Cuyahoga Falls High School Woodridge High School**

Cuyahoga Falls two public high schools each offer advanced art classes for upper-level students. Both schools include components of public art in their art curricula. The Cuyahoga Falls High School art program organizes the Art Walk in downtown Cuyahoga Falls each spring.



# Acknowledgments

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City of Cuyahoga Falls, Development Dept.

**Arthur Croyle**, Artist

**Danielle Dietrich**,  
Cuyahoga Valley Art Center

**Ann Durr**, Portage Community Bank

**Tim Gorbach**, City of Cuyahoga Falls,  
At-Large Council Member

**Fred Guerra**,  
City of Cuyahoga Falls, Development Dept.

**Molly Hartong**,  
Molly Hartong Design, Collide

**Sara Kline**, City of Cuyahoga Falls,  
Parks and Recreation

**Rick Krochka**, Triad

**Sara Leedham**,  
City of Cuyahoga Falls, Development Dept.

**Edward Monaco**,  
City of Cuyahoga Falls,  
Planning Commission

**Amy Mothersbaugh**, Studio 2091

**Nicole Mullet**, ArtsNow

**Adam Paul**,  
City of Cuyahoga Falls, Development Dept.

**Abby Poeske**, Downtown Cuyahoga Falls  
Partnership

**Dan Rice**, Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition

**Drew Reilly**, City of Cuyahoga Falls,  
Ward 1 City Council Member

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Cuyahoga Falls High School

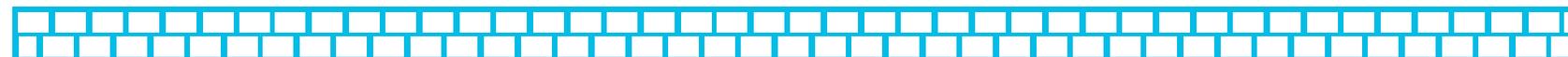
**Carrie Snyder**, City of Cuyahoga Falls,  
Neighborhood Excellence, Communications  
and Community Outreach

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City of Cuyahoga Falls, Development Dept.

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The River of creativity runs  
through Cuyahoga  
Falls!

This panel was created by students in Grades 2-5 at Silver Lake Elementary School. It was created through an ongoing collaboration between Collide, Cuyahoga Falls City Schools, and the Woodridge School District, and funded by Western Reserve Hospital.

Photo: Todd W. Bressi  
Used by permission of Cuyahoga Falls City Schools.

-alyssa  
Schwartz  
grade 5