

Prepared for  
City of Reno Arts and  
Culture “Big Arts, Little City”

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CITY OF  
**RENO**



# Reno Public Art Master Plan Update

March 2025

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# 1 | Introduction



## Purpose of This Plan

This plan updates Reno's Public Art Master Plan, which was adopted in 2002. That original plan established a framework for the City to manage a Public Art Program that residents have come to value and enjoy.

The Program has been operating under that framework with only modest changes since then. This plan provides a comprehensive review of the Program and recommendations for moving forward – a statement of how the Program should impact the city, an outline of the work it should focus on, and proposals for adapting the administration and funding of the Program.

# Background

The City of Reno has had a public art program for more than 20 years. It has achieved success in a variety of endeavors, adding sculpture and murals downtown (often in partnership with arts and community non-profits), major installations along gateway corridors, and dozens of painted signal boxes — more than 185 permanent pieces overall.

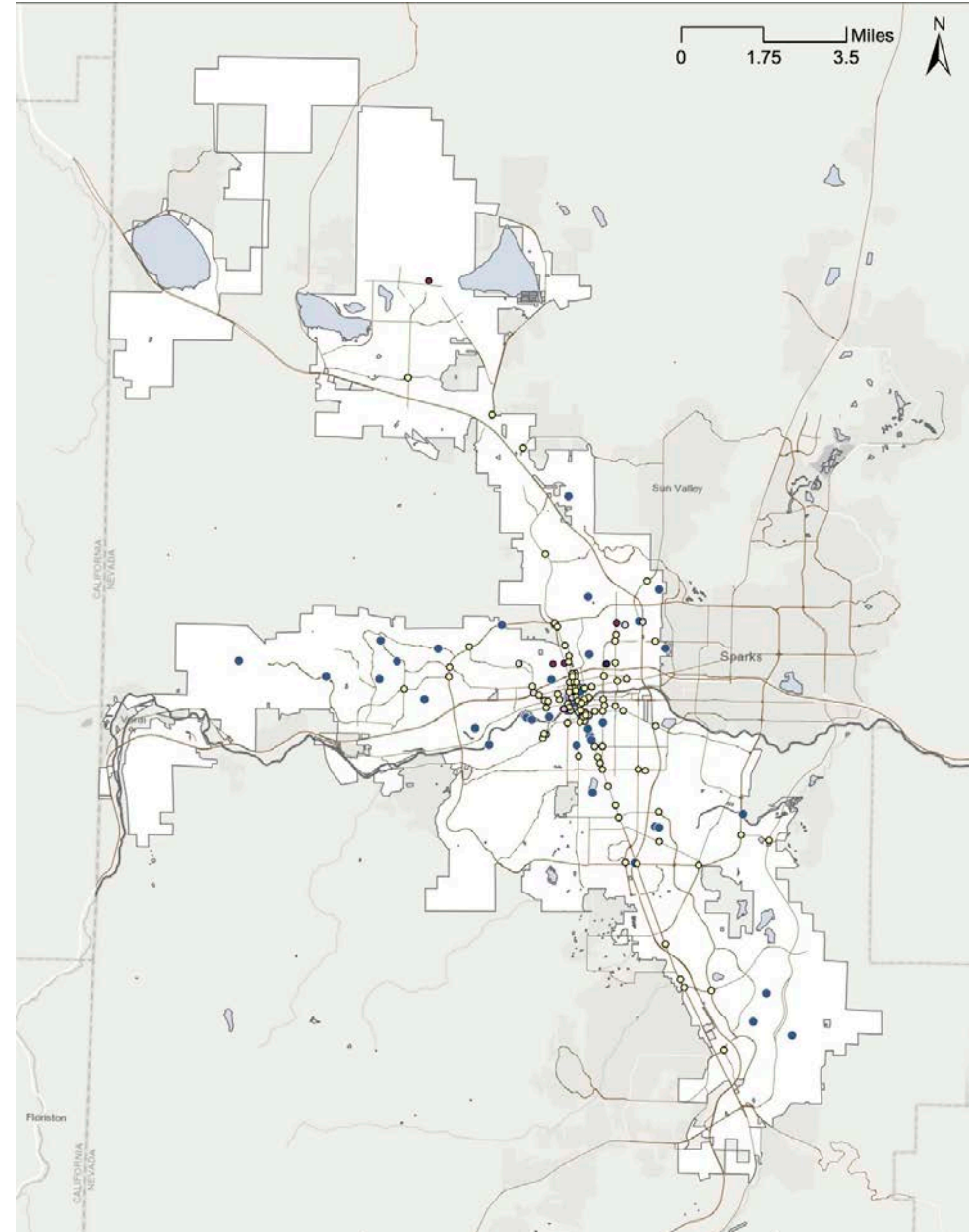
PREVIOUS PAGE  
Matt Schultz, Android Jones,  
*Space Whale*.  
Courtesy City of Reno

The City of Reno's Public Art Program is housed in the City Manager's Office, Division of Arts & Culture. The Reno Arts & Culture Commission (RACC) and its Public Art Committee (PAC) provide oversight of the Program.

Reno's Public Art Program still operates largely under the framework that was established 20 years ago, which was set out in a Public Art Master Plan adopted in 2002 and updated modestly since then. The City sought to update its master plan and the operations of its Public Art Program to reflect changes in the city and changes in the field since then. Specifically, the City was seeking a plan that would:

- » Create a well-defined, unified vision and goals for public art, taking into account changes in City priorities and public art practices, as well as broader issues, such as equity, that have emerged in recent years
- » Identify opportunities for public art, taking into account project types that are a priority for stakeholders and residents, and considering the potential for temporary works
- » Clarify processes and procedures, including annual planning and project planning, as well as guidelines for artist selection, collection management, maintenance and donations, with a focus on clarifying staff, RACC and PAC roles
- » Recommend updates to the existing ordinance and guidelines

MAP  
Locations of the artworks  
in the City's Public Art Collection.



# Process

This plan was developed in 2024 and 2025 by a consulting team led by Todd W. Bressi, in association with Amina Cooper and Jessica Cusick. The planning process involved extensive research, public engagement and analysis of the Public Art Program's operations.

To gather public input, the planning team organized a public survey, asking people who live and/or work in Reno to share their thoughts about public art in the city and in general, and received nearly 600 responses. The team circulated focused questionnaires to members of the Reno Arts and Culture Commission and its Public Art Committee, artists who have worked with the Program, and organizations that have developed work with the Program.

The team also reached out directly to Reno artists for input. During the course of the planning process, the team consulted with artists four times, in April, June, September and December through open, public workshops, some of which were virtual and some of which were in person. In each workshop the planning team explored a different topic related to public art practice, and also sought artist input into the plan at that stage of the development.

The team also conducted interviews with City officials, arts, community and civic leaders, toured a number of the arts facilities in the city, and conducted a focus group with an art class at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The research phase involved review of City plans, Public Art Program budgets, RFQs and RFPs, and underlying ordinances and guidelines. The team also contacted ten public art programs elsewhere in Nevada and the Mountain West to explore their approaches to program funding and governance, project development, collection management, community-initiated projects and artist rosters.

Throughout the process, the team worked with a group of internal stakeholders from the City departments that the Program works most closely with, and external stakeholders from other public agencies, non-profits and communities. Those groups reviewed the plan's progress at the stage of research findings, the plan framework and recommendations, and a draft plan.



The intersection of I-580 and E. 2nd Street, located within the Reno Sparks Indian Colony, features numerous public art and landscape features that represent the community's stories and traditions.  
Courtesy Todd W. Bressi

# Highlights: Findings and Recommendations

In general, the consulting team found:

- » Reno residents enjoy public art in the city and would like to see more, particularly aspirational or iconic projects.
- » The Public Art Program is generally respected by its collaborators, both within City government and the arts community, for the work that it does.
- » While Reno has a lively art scene, artists don't always see clear opportunities to connect with the Public Art Program.
- » While Reno's Program was founded on a "percent for art" philosophy, the flow of eligible capital projects has not been robust and as a result, City funding is modest. The Program has pivoted to community-oriented projects (such as Bicentennial Sculpture Park, Art Signals, and University Way and Lake Street Windows, a video installation and banners downtown) with external funding to support major projects.
- » Reno's public art ordinance is overly detailed and should be streamlined; its public art guidelines should be adapted to give the Program flexibility to work more fluidly with different City agencies on a variety of project approaches.

The task of this plan is to convey a vision and chart a path for a dynamic, multifaceted and aspirational program. These are the general themes reflected in the plan's recommendations:

## Think big

Launch a signature project or initiative with a strong curatorial focus that will capture the imagination of the entire city.

Develop focused creative and project management strategies for collaborating with key City partners – Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Works Development Services and the Regional Transportation Commission – that align with agency goals, priorities and opportunities. Explore new partnerships with agencies such as the Reno Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority and Reno Resilience.

## Build a more robust public art ecosystem

Encourage robust production of public art by independent artists, non-profits and the private sector, and support the broad network of artists and organizations that want to grow their capacity to create public art.

## Update and streamline governance processes accordingly

Eliminate unnecessary steps in decision-making processes; use pre-qualified artist lists (rosters) when appropriate to simplify artist selection processes.

Update the public art ordinance and guidelines in order to provide flexibility to move towards these goals.

Charly Malpass, *Bluebirds Among Sage*.  
Courtesy City of Reno



# How this Plan is Structured

This plan has six basic sections.



The **Introduction** section sets the stage for the plan, outlining its goals, process, major findings and major recommendations.



Following that, **Who is Reno and What Inspires Us?** provides a context for thinking about public priorities and projects that are specific to this place and respond to what the community hopes to see in its public art.



A **Vision** section describes why public art is important to Reno and the overall direction and goals for the City's Public Art Program.



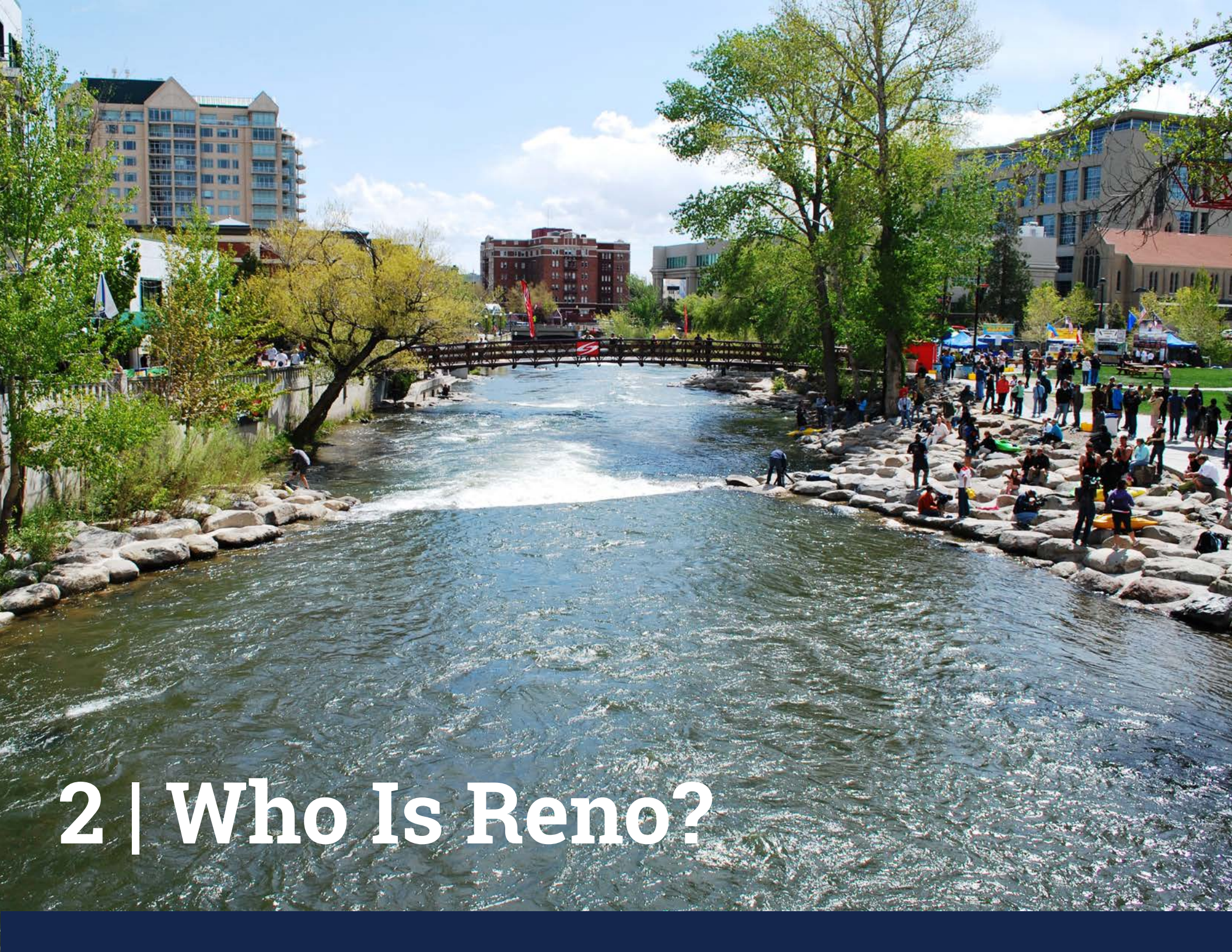
The **Where We Are Going** section describes the work that Reno's Public Art Program should focus on, covering three topics - aspirational projects, collaborations with City agencies, and ongoing programs.



The **How We Will Get There** section outlines an updated structure for governance, staffing, funding, annual plans and project implementation. It also describes how the Program can also work to build the capacity of Reno's broader network of artists and organizations interested in public art.



Finally, a proposed set of updated **Public Art Guidelines and Policies** are included as an appendix. These would need to be adopted by Council resolution to become effective.



## 2 | Who Is Reno?

# Reno's Spirit

Public art lives at the intersection of contemporary art, community art and the uniqueness of the place where it is located. It is important for public art to reflect the community's voices, spirit and culture, as well as to engage people with broader ideas about the world and with ideas about how artists explore the world. Therefore, a public art plan begins with an understanding of the place, the community where the art is located and the city's artistic life.

## A River Oasis

There is no one way to characterize a city, but a good place to start is with the city's relationship with the surrounding landscape. Reno owes its existence to its geography and natural environment, which have also shaped its history and still inform its current identity.

The mountains that encircle Reno, the river that cuts through it and the vast arid lands that surround the river valley set the stage for the city. For native people, these lands are redolent with memories of their traditional lifeways and their ancestors, and are present reminders of their sacred beliefs.

The mountains provide a backdrop for Reno's skyline and also frame the sky, accentuating its presence day and night. Today the mountains and desert are sought out because of the opportunities they offer for recreation and for immersing oneself in and contemplating the powerful forces of nature.

The Truckee River passes through Reno, halfway on its route from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake; Reno is isolated in the Great Basin, from which water does not escape.

WHO IS RENO?

For thousands of years the Truckee River and its valley (called the Truckee Meadows) was stewarded by local indigenous peoples, including the Numu (Northern Paiute), the Washeshu (Washoe), the Newe (Western Shoshone), and the Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute), who have used it for food, water and medicine, and also believe it to have cultural and spiritual value. Since the 1800s, the Truckee Meadows has become not only a place of sustenance but also one of passage, a critical part of a transcontinental passage; by wagon, train and interstate highways.

Today, the river runs right through downtown and is used for some of the same purposes as in the past (drinking water, irrigation), but also in new ways (recreation, electricity generation). West of downtown, it passes through residential neighborhoods and is lined by parks; east of downtown, it passes through industrial areas, isolated from the city fabric, not as well traveled.

The the desert lands surrounding the valley sustained migrant people who would move from elevation to elevation during the course of the year, based on the seasonal availability of resources. In the nineteenth century, explorers discovered valuable mineral deposits throughout the Great Basin, establishing extractive industries that have become a powerful force in Nevada's economy. Today, the desert lands are also enjoyed for the year-round recreation activities they offer; the annual Burning Man festival, for which Reno is the gateway, is held northeast of the city.

PREVIOUS PAGE

Truckee River in downtown Reno.  
Courtesy Visit Reno Tahoe

TOP AND BOTTOM

Views of the Truckee River and the riverwalk in the spring and fall. Courtesy Visit Reno Tahoe



## City on the Edge

After the landscape, the characteristic that shapes Reno the most is its remoteness. Though by car it is only two hours to Sacramento, four hours to San Francisco, seven hours to Las Vegas and eight hours to Salt Lake City, those trips can be daunting, traversing high and volatile mountain passes and long expanses of desert.

Reno's remoteness contributes to one of its important characteristics, its independent, resilient and somewhat rambunctious nature. For much of its history Nevada, isolated and with few resources, has hoped to attract economic growth by becoming a place for activities that weren't openly tolerated elsewhere. The state legalized gambling in 1869 (for many decades it was the only state to do so) and Reno became one of the primary destinations for people who enjoy gaming. During the Great Depression, Nevada legalized casinos and also relaxed its divorce and marriage laws in hopes of attracting even more visitors; divorce petitioners were required to take up residence for several weeks, spurring an industry of accommodations in guest houses, auto parks and ranches in Reno.<sup>1</sup>

To support these visitors, a host of entertainment activities and services evolved, leading the city to describe itself as "The Biggest Little City," a slogan coined a century ago to promote the wide range of amenities that were available in a city of such a relatively small size. To people in Reno today, this moniker speaks partly to its outsized history and partly to its sense of independence and resilience – the ideas that because of its remoteness, people and the region need to rely on themselves, and that despite its size and remoteness, Reno offers its residents a surprising variety of resources

TOP

Peavine Mountain.  
Courtesy Visit Reno Tahoe

BOTTOM

Downtown gateway.  
Courtesy City of Reno



1 For a brief time, prostitution was legal in Reno.

## Art Town Rising

Reno's evolving economy is impacting the shape of the city and helping to define its future. A city that owes its existence to its natural resources and its unique niche in tourism is now building a new base in manufacturing, distribution and the creative economy.

Art and creative endeavors have become an increasingly vital part of the city's life as well. Reno can count on important anchors such as the University of Nevada and the Nevada Museum of Art, collaboratives and co-ops such as the Generator and the Potentialist Workshop, non-profits such as Sierra Arts Foundation, as well as the creative networks that have evolved to support the annual Burning Man festival. And even though Reno is isolated, it is accessible enough from the Bay Area that those creative influences, particularly music and events, can be felt.

Notably, the Reno Tahoe Airport Authority has launched its own public art program with rotating exhibitions as well as new artworks being commissioned with airport upgrades and expansions.

Reno residents enjoy a variety of arts and music festivals during the year, most notably Artown, a month of events, performances and installations every July.

Over the last few decades the Reno-Sparks metropolitan area has emerged as a distribution and manufacturing hub because of its location as the northern urban enter in Nevada, its proximity to California, and advantageous state tax laws. Federal Express, United Parcel Service and Amazon were among the first companies to set up distribution

centers. More recently, Apple, Panasonic and Tesla have set up production facilities. These companies have built large facilities which have become a prominent visual presence near the airport and on the periphery of the city.

RIGHT

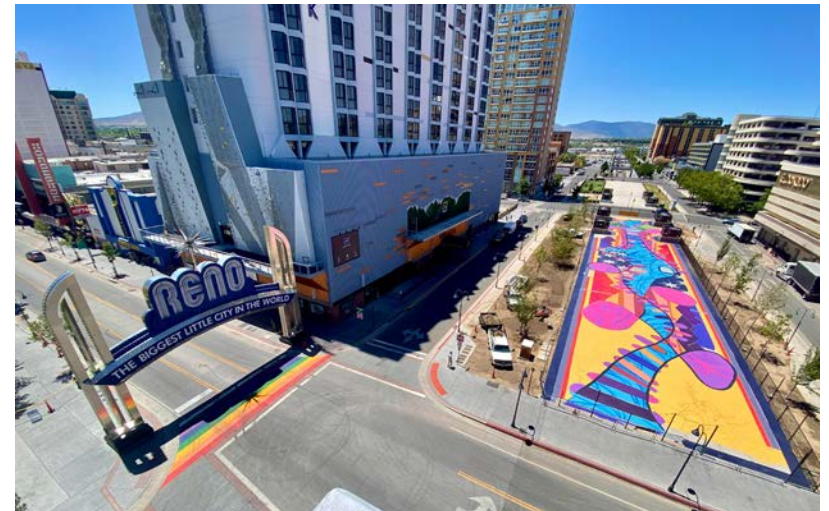
River music festival.  
Courtesy Visit Reno Tahoe

BOTTOM LEFT

Studio space in The Generator  
Community Maker Space.  
Courtesy Todd W. Bressi

BOTTOM RIGHT

Brad Carney, *Locomotion*.  
Courtesy City of Reno



# What Inspires Us

In the community engagement phase of the project, the consulting team asked people what types of public art would interest them the most. These are the types of artworks people said they would like to see, according to a survey.

## Sculpture and Sculpture Gardens

Asked what types of art they would like to see in Reno, people mentioned sculptural works most frequently, with specific references to “sculpture,” “sculpture gardens and parks” and “Burning Man,” which is largely associated with sculptures, some of which are now on view throughout Reno.

People often mentioned individual sculptural works in other cities that they thought could inspire ideas for Reno (including iconic works discussed below). They also mentioned wanting to see sculpture parks or gardens, mentioning examples such as New Orleans City Park, Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle..

*“We have a lot of amazing sculpture here that would be great to have in a park.”*

*“It’s important to have places where family and visitors can come and take fun photos with the art. I also love seeing gardens incorporate art sculptures.”*

## Light and Other Tech-Based Art

Light art, light and sound, projections and similar technology- or media-based artworks were mentioned frequently. Survey-takers specifically mentioned light-related projects in Portland, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Richmond, Napa and Chicago. Some respondents mentioned enjoying Reno’s Dragon Lights Festival and Winter Light Festival, and were hoping to see something bigger and bolder. Though the visual qualities of Reno’s natural light and sky are impressive, survey-takers did not refer to projects that rely on natural light.

*“Any art that will bring back the Pizzazz to downtown . . . something like the light tunnel in Las Vegas on Fremont Street.”*

*“Installation experiences like the dragon lights are so fun, but make sure that these incorporate local artists and community.”*

*“Seeing many different public art forms is something that definitely attracts me to cities. When I am traveling I always seek out public sculpture gardens . . . also important to have because it helps tell tales of our city.”*

## Iconic Artworks

Iconic artworks, or those that are highly recognizable and become associated with a city’s identity, were also mentioned frequently. Some just said that Reno should have such an artwork generally, and others mentioned specific projects such as *Cloud Gate* and *Crown Fountain* in Chicago, *Rocky and Love* in Philadelphia, and *Cupid’s Span* (San Francisco), *I See What You Mean* (Denver), *Urban Light* (Los Angeles), *Unconditional Surrender* (San Diego), *Fremont Troll* (Seattle) and *Seven Magic Mountains* (Clark County).

*“I feel like the money should go toward ONE grandiose thing that visitors HAVE to see that is even more iconic than the whale etc. Something really recognizable, iconic, and new and fresh.”*

*“Cincinnati’s Blink festival is a city-wide light projection and mural festival that brought in one million people to explore. It’s completely changed the fabric of the city by adding over 50 new murals.”*

## Murals

Survey-takers expressed strong interest in, excitement about and connection to murals. They described murals as dynamic, because the public can watch the process of them being painted, and when murals are installed as part of a festival, many can go up at once, creating a dramatic sense of fresh art in the city. They also described the content of murals as accessible and could imagine how murals could capture the sense of the city and/or contribute to storytelling.

*"All the new warehouses are so unsightly, why not have murals on the buildings. Giant warehouses right on the highways especially."*

*"PAINT THE WHOLE TOWN! Every box! Every flat wall! Everywhere that art can bring some life to the cement world we live in. Pay the artists handsomely to do so, create high quality incentive for the best artists to shine."*

## Interactive, Playful Artworks

Respondents described a variety of interactive artworks they would enjoy seeing in Reno – using light, sound and water as media; potentially involving community participation; and potentially located in parks and urban spaces.

*"There is so much of the art world that you can't touch, but when you are giving a whole space or public art pieces that are meant to be played with, touched, and explored, it brings a whole new meaning to art and community. Our city needs spaces and interactive arts like this!"*

*"Can we look at the history of downtown, in site-specific places? There was a Chinatown here. Another topic is the Lincoln Highway. ... "*

*"If there is an opportunity for a sculpture, do you do one big thing, or do you organize three opportunities for artists to do smaller works?"*

*"The signal boxes cheer me up and remind me that this city has a 'soul.'"*

## Artworks that Tell the Story of the City

A strong theme that emerged is that people enjoy artworks that convey to them a sense of connection to the city. For example, Burning Man-inspired artworks were highly popular, whether at City Plaza or elsewhere in the city, because they convey Reno's uniqueness. Artworks that are quirky and edgy in a playful way are also seen as capturing the spirit of the city. Native-American and Western-themed work, though mentioned less frequently, are also seen as having resonance with the place.

*"Prioritize the design of site-specific, human-scale art that is meant to be experienced in person not just serve as backdrops for Instagram."*

*"... it would be great when you're in the heart of the city to really invoke feeling, emotion, and character that tells a story about Reno and our growing diversity."*

# 3 | A Vision for Public Art in Reno



# Why is Public Art Important to Reno?

Public art aligns with the City of Reno's vision and goals in the following ways:

- » Public art makes Reno feel like home – for long-time residents as well as people newly arrived in the city.
- » Public art tells Reno's stories, bringing its many narratives into view in public space and promoting cultural continuity and connection.
- » Public art gives Reno a fresh and inspiring look, lifting up the spirit of the city.
- » Public art supports Reno's economic vitality by offering new aspects of the city for residents and visitors to enjoy.

## PREVIOUS PAGE

Ugo Rondinone, *Seven Magic Mountains*, commissioned by the Nevada Museum of Art



TOP LEFT  
David Boyer, *Kinetic Banners*.  
Courtesy City of Reno

TOP RIGHT  
Public art installation,  
Reno Sparks Indian Colony.  
Courtesy Todd W. Bressi

BOTTOM LEFT  
Julia Flippo, *Dat So La Lee*.  
Courtesy City of Reno

BOTTOM RIGHT  
Miles Toland, *Teglia's Paradise*  
Park Activity Center Mural.  
Courtesy City of Reno

# The Goals We Strive For

Each public art project and ongoing program should address each of the following goals, as much as possible:

- » Deliver public art projects that offer a multifaceted narrative of who Reno is and that foster belonging and connection
- » Engage communities in the development of projects and strengthen people's overall understanding of and connection to Reno's public art
- » Strengthen Reno's public art ecosystem; build the capacity of artists, communities, organizations and City staff to participate in public art
- » Support the City's overall goals and priorities, especially for community and economic development



ABOVE  
Mike Burke, *Rising Together*.  
Courtesy City of Reno

TOP RIGHT  
Jeff Schomberg, Laura Kimpton,  
*Believe*. Courtesy City of Reno

BOTTOM RIGHT  
Announcement for community  
engagement event, Evelyn Mount  
Community Center mural





# 4 | Where We Are Headed

# The Big Ideas / Artistic Ambitions

When Reno calls itself the “biggest little city,” that means it’s interested in big things – from the sky above and the landscape around it, to the river that runs through it, to pride that derives from how the city has been able to thrive in its remote location.

Reno’s Public Art Program should set its sights on delivering a signature project that speaks to the entire city, much as the Reno arch over Virginia Street is an icon for the city today.

This type of initiative will require planning, curatorial leadership, partnership building and more funds than could be devoted from one year’s budget. The Program’s goal should be to achieve at least one of these projects within a horizon of three to five years.

## Light and Sky

Focus on a signature project, exhibition or recurring project that explores Reno’s relationship to light.

Light is one of Reno’s quintessential resources and inspirations.

By day it is the light of the sky, framed dramatically by the bowl of the surrounding mountains, captured in the Truckee Meadows band reflecting

in countless shades on the surface of the Truckee River. By night it is the artificial light of the city, highlighted by the casinos and the great Reno arch, that echo the city’s neon heyday.

Reno’s ever-present light, day and night, can inspire signature artworks that challenge artists to explore the influence of light and connect people to light in newly exciting and profound ways.

PREVIOUS PAGE

Camilo Prieto, Sean Martin,  
*Native Baskets Mural*.  
Courtesy City of Reno

James Turrell, *Twilight Epiphany  
Skyspace* (2012), Suzanne Deal  
Booth Centennial Pavilion at Rice  
University. Photo: Florian  
Holzherr. Courtesy the Moody  
Center for the Arts.



## A River Runs Through It

Lead a multi-year approach to creating artworks along the Truckee River.

The Truckee River, the source of life for the Truckee Meadows region, plays many roles in the life of the city.

The Public Art Program should focus on this resource as an inspiration for a robust program of art projects, running from city boundary to city boundary, that explore the ecological, cultural, historic, psychological and economic value of the river. These artworks can welcome people to the river, especially segments that aren't as active or popular, ask them to reflect and find something new in a place they might think they already know.

Consider a wide variety of artworks, permanent and temporary, including performative and interactive pieces, as well as work that explores ecological context and environmental issues. Engage a wide variety of stakeholders to understand their connections to the River, culturally and in everyday life.

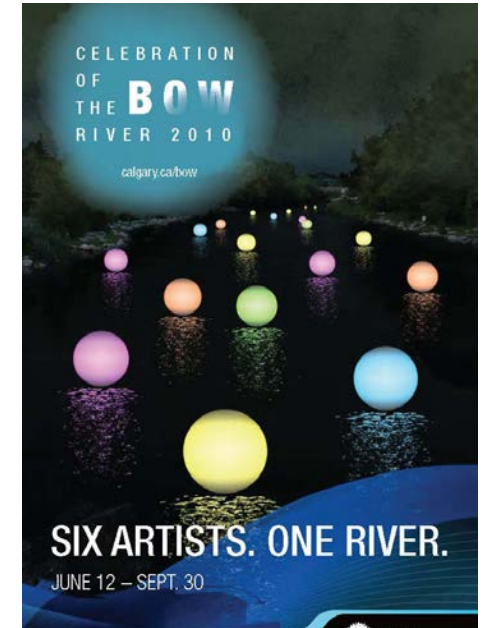
TOP LEFT  
Public art tours, LA River Public Art Project

TOP RIGHT  
Donald Lipski, *Fish*, San Antonio  
Courtesy Public Art San Antonio

BOTTOM LEFT  
Clockshop, *everreachmore*,  
performance presented by the  
LA Project

BOTTOM RIGHT  
Temporary public art exhibition  
celebrating the Bow River, Calgary

WHERE WE ARE HEADED



## A Mural of Giant Size

Cultivate a partnership for a super-large mural on a distribution center.

Warehousing, distribution and large industrial production buildings have risen on Reno's landscape as the city's economy expands into these sectors. These long, low, large buildings usually occupy a highly visible yet relatively undistinguished position in the cityscape. These buildings, however, are strong candidates for signature murals that can be landmarks in and of themselves, as Google has shown with its Data Center Mural Project. Such projects would likely be privately funded; the City's Development Services and Economic Development Departments could play a role in identifying potential collaborators and making the case for the benefits of such a project.



TOP  
Jenny Odell, Google Data Center  
Project, Mayes County, IA



BOTTOM  
Douglas Hoekzema, *PaintGarden*,  
Gothenberg, Sweden

## Tell the Story of the City

Curate projects that cumulatively tell the many stories of Reno – of its land, its history, its people.

Cities embody an infinite number of stories, and it is the telling and the discovery of those stories that contributes profoundly to people's sense of place and sense of belonging.

Telling Reno's stories could be an overarching curatorial strategy for public art in Reno – that is pursued through all the work that Reno's Public Art Program does; a theme explored through an ongoing group of projects.

The Program could enlist people such as artists, ethnographers and storytellers to collect stories, which could be used to inspire a specially curated series of projects, such as Art Signals or a multi-disciplinary public art initiative along the Truckee River.



Margarita Cabrera, *Arbol de la vida memorias y voces de la tierra*. This community-based work creates conversation between cultural memory and a community gathering place. Courtesy Public Art San Antonio

## In the Long Run: Land Art

### Commission an urban artwork in the land art tradition.

Land art is an important contemporary art tradition in the American West. Though often associated with epic-scale projects in remote locations, land art has also inspired numerous significant urban artworks, such as Nancy Holt's *Dark Star Park* in Arlington, Va., Jody Pinto's *Papago Park / City Boundary* at the meeting of Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe, Az., and Stacy Levy's *River Return* in San Antonio (pictured here).

The Program should explore how to create an urban artwork that is influenced by the philosophy and precedents of land art, to make this exciting subgenre accessible to more people, and as a means of better connecting people to the natural environment while they are in the city. This could be a potential partnership with the Nevada Museum of Art, Center for Art and Environment.

Stacy Levy, *River Return*,  
San Antonio. Courtesy artist



# Key Departmental Partnerships

A core component of the Public Art Program's work is to collaborate with other City agencies (and other public entities as appropriate) on projects that advance both the Program's and City agency missions.

The Program works most closely with several key City departments and external agencies: Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Development Services. Collaboration with the Regional Transportation Commission, another important partner, would involve Public Works. Potential expanded or new collaborations could involve the City's Reno Resilience program, Visit Reno-Tahoe, and the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority.

The Program can build fruitful relationships by recognizing how public art intersects uniquely with each collaborating entity's mission, recognizing that each entity has a unique planning and funding context. This could include establishing tailored processes with each department for identifying, planning and developing projects, within the broader framework of this plan and the public art guidelines.

## Overall Considerations

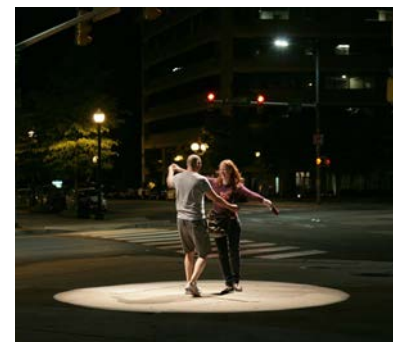
- » Collaboration requires ongoing communication between Program and departmental leadership about their respective priorities, plans and projects. Public Art Program and departmental leadership should meet several times a year to discuss ongoing departmental projects and priorities. These conversations should inform recommendations for projects that are considered each year in the annual Work Plan process, or as amendments to the Work Plan.
- » Funding will come from a variety of sources. Some projects will be implemented directly through two percent funds (such as the Moana Springs Aquatic Center project, underway as this plan was being written), some through the use of pooled two percent funds, and some through external funding. When Program and departmental leadership identify a project opportunity, they should also consider the availability of two percent funds or other funds.
- » Program leadership should identify priorities for using flexible two percent funds. These could be specific areas of the city or types of places or infrastructure that recur throughout the city. These could be important because of their intrinsic importance to the city, because they have been identified as priorities by the community, or because they represent partnerships that help the city and the region achieve its goals. This master plan update provides a framework for what those priorities should be.
- » Program leadership should be attentive to creating processes for developing public art projects (such as creating and selecting artists from a roster) that may make it easier for partner departments to collaborate.

## Districts (Economic Development, Redevelopment)

Reno’s Economic Development Department encourages “place-based” public improvements and private investment in downtown Reno as well as several other corridors and districts in the city. Ongoing focal areas are the Virginia Street Corridor (Virginia Street Streetscape Plan), Truckee River Corridor (Truckee River Vision Plan), and outlying districts (Midtown, East 4th St. / Brewery District, Wells Avenue and Dickerson Road). The department also manages the City’s Redevelopment Agency activities, including the reinvestment of tax-increment financing funds, which come under the umbrella of the City’s public art ordinance when they are invested in public improvements.

The department’s leadership is committed to the idea that public art and creative placemaking can be a valuable tool in helping achieve the city’s goals for economic vibrancy. There are several areas where deeper collaboration could be explored:

- » Collaborate with Economic Development on strategies for art projects in areas of the city where it is making catalytic investments, especially along the Truckee River and downtown:
  - » Coordinate on identifying opportunities and setting priorities for projects along the Truckee River Corridor
  - » Expand “City Windows” to encompass more storefronts and facades through a “Small Walls” initiative
- » Explore ideas for small-scale artworks in downtown alleys, potentially through the “Small Walls” program recommended elsewhere in this plan, as well as through temporary placemaking projects
- » Collaborate with Economic Development on the “placemaking plans” that it is considering for several economic development areas and corridors
  - » Involve artists on planning teams and in community engagement processes
  - » Participate in developing recommendations for public art strategies
- » Develop processes (artist recruitment, artist selection, concept approval) that can connect artists to placemaking projects effectively when public art funding is involved
  - » Create a definition of “placemaking” projects upon which two-percent funds could be expended
  - » Create a roster of pre-qualified artists who can be called on to undertake “placemaking” efforts, such as displays in vacant windows
  - » Consider creating a standing “Task Force” for placemaking projects that can quickly address artist selection and concept approvals; delegate artist selection authority from RACC to this Task Force for small-scale projects.



TOP  
Mural promoting Midtown.  
Courtesy Visit Reno Tahoe

MIDDLE  
Butch Anthony, *Bicycle Kiosk*,  
Arlington, Va. Courtesy Arlington  
Public Art

BOTTOM  
Sans Facon, *Limelight*,  
Arlington, Va. Courtesy Arlington  
Public Art

## Capital Projects: Corridors and Gateways (Public Works and RTC)

Public Art Program and Public Works department leadership collaborate regularly. Among the projects they collaborate on are preliminary planning for projects being constructed by RTC, installations on existing City infrastructure, and commissions integrated into new capital projects that fall under the City's public art ordinance.

### Capital Projects

Though there aren't many capital projects that fall under the public art ordinance, those that do are significant. The Program is currently collaborating with Public Works on three "generational" projects – the Moana Springs aquatic center, the new public safety facility and the new fire department headquarters.

### Transportation Projects

The Regional Transportation Commission is responsible for building most of the city's transportation infrastructure (arterial roads, bus rapid transit corridors, bridges), as well as similar infrastructure in Sparks and Washoe County. The RTC and the City look ahead 30 years and five years in their planning for transportation projects, and enter into multi-year inter-local cooperative agreements to undertake specific projects. These are some of the most visible public construction projects in the city.

For both capital projects and transportation projects, the key issues are:

- » Early identification of projects
- » Early identification of opportunities within those projects

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

- » Ease of coordinating art processes and infrastructure processes at the design, construction and installation phases

Program leadership can strengthen its partnerships with Public Works and the RTC through the following strategies:

- » Examine the outcomes of various projects already completed in transportation corridors and gateway locations
- » Establish quarterly coordination meetings with Public Works and with RTC in regard to planning future projects
- » Collaborate with Public Works and RTC to focus on including public art in future bridge, gateway and roundabout projects
  - » Develop a mutual understanding of desired artistic outcomes and a mutually agreeable strategy for prioritizing opportunities, so that design and funding can anticipate public art opportunities early on
  - » Develop standard criteria, elements or approaches for incorporating art into future bridge, gateway and roundabout projects, to provide predictability for engineering and budgeting
  - » Seek RTC commitment for providing locations where art can be installed
  - » Seek special supplemental appropriations from Council if the Program's two percent funds are not adequate to provide funding for the artworks incorporated into bridge, gateway and roundabout projects

- » Share planning and design documents as early as the concept phase (10%) and no later than the schematic phase (30%) so that public art opportunities can be evaluated in time to incorporate them into project engineering and scheduling.

TOP

Mark Fornes / The Everymany, Marquise, El Paso. Courtesy El Paso Public Art

BOTTOM

Diana Kersey, *Life Cycle of the Gulf Coast Toad*, San Antonio. Courtesy Public Art San Antonio



## Parks Everywhere (Parks and Recreation)

Reno's Parks and Recreation system encompasses more than 80 parks and related facilities, such as recreation facilities, water features and natural areas. However, aside from downtown plazas and riverfront spaces, few include public art.

Most new parks construction is funded through the Residential Construction Tax and a very small amount of capital funds are allocated each year for capital maintenance. Fortunately, recent bond-funded upgrades to the Moana Springs aquatic center are spurring several public art projects that can rekindle the collaboration between public art and parks.

As an overarching goal, the Public Art Program and Parks and Recreation should collaborate on adding public art to neighborhood parks as a key strategy for dispersing art more widely throughout the city.

In the near term the Program should focus on the following opportunities:

- » Commission six new functional artworks, such as shade structures, in each Council ward over the next ten years; seek special funding allocations for each project
- » Incorporate public art recommendations in the design plans for the future Pembroke flat fields; even if funding for public art is not clear, understanding how public art could fit in the park will be valuable for future budgeting

Depending on the availability of pooled public art capital funds or external sources consider this opportunity:

- » Explore ideas for small-scale murals on park walls as graffiti prevention measures, potentially through the "small walls" program recommended elsewhere in this plan



RIGHT

May and Watkins Design, Oasis, Memphis, Tenn.

BOTTOM LEFT

Buster Simpson, Barbara Grygutis, Kevin Berry, Flaming Arroyo Trailhead, Clark County, Nev.

BOTTOM RIGHT

David Dahlquist / RDG, Aguas Onuladas, San Antonio. Courtesy Public Art San Antonio



## Private Development (Development Services)

Reno does not have a formal program that requires developers to include public art in their projects, a policy common in cities in other states. However, Reno's land development code does require streetscape amenities in certain districts, and public art is identified as an amenity that can fulfill those requirements.<sup>2</sup>

The Program and Development Services can strengthen efforts to encourage developers to include public art in their projects through these strategies:

- » Update the Reno Annexation and Land Development Code to include and properly cross-reference a definition for public art<sup>3</sup>
- » Involve Program leadership in the staff-level review of applications for land development in zoning districts that mention public art as a possible amenity for streetscape amenities or other design features, so that public art staff might advise on the potential for incorporating public art into the project
- » Consider, on a case-by-case basis, where public art can be considered as an "alternative equivalent" to design requirements such as screening for parking garages
- » Develop a visual guidebook to demonstrate to applicants how they can incorporate public art into their projects, either to help fulfill amenities and design requirements, or as a general amenity for their project

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix

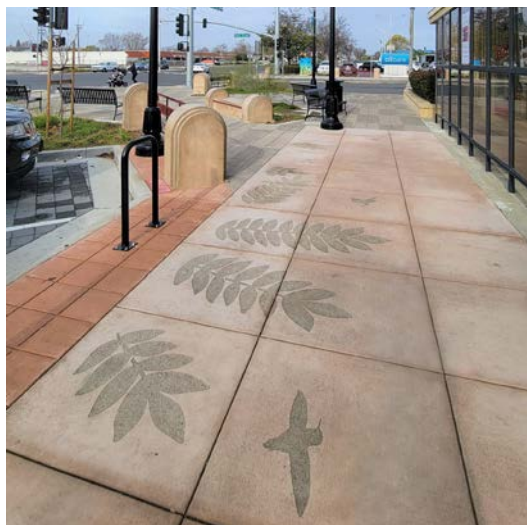
<sup>3</sup> Currently there is no specific definition for public art in the code, but it is recommended that one be added.

» Provide developers who are interested in incorporating public art in their projects with resources such as:

- » Pre-qualified artist roster
- » Best practices for commissioning artists
- » Best practices for maintaining public art

In addition, as Reno expands its distribution, manufacturing and warehousing economy, more and more low, long buildings are built. These often have blank walls and are visible from main traffic arteries.

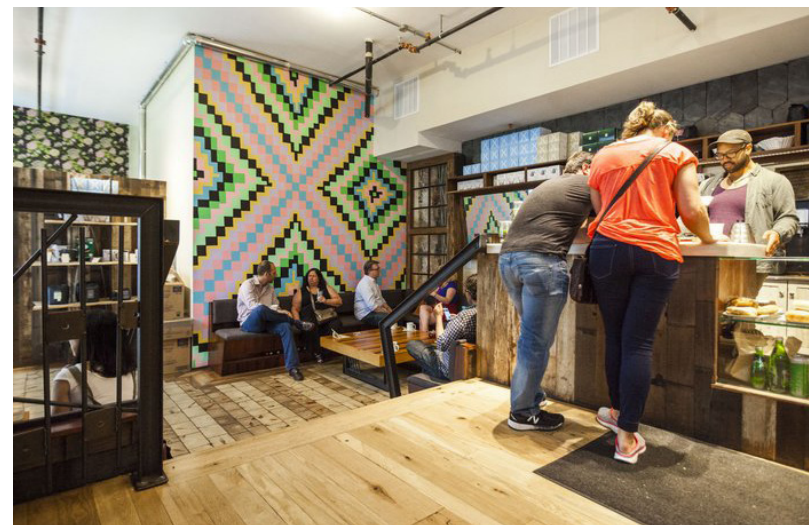
» Collaborate with Development Services to identify owners or developers of large-scale industrial buildings who would consider commissioning murals as demonstration projects, such as a "mural of giant size."



LEFT  
Vanessa March, Hesperian  
Boulevard Corridor Improvement  
Project, Alameda County, Calif.

TOP  
Rolando Briseno, *Cuerpos  
Celestiales*, Frisco, Tx.

BOTTOM  
Andrew Jeffrey Wright, mural  
at Elixr coffee house Philadelphia.  
This is an ongoing series of murals  
by emerging artists commissioned  
by the shop owner.



# Ongoing Programs

Reno's Public Art Program should proactively organize its own initiatives that address specific needs and opportunities.

## Art Signals

Art Signals is a public art initiative, started in 2008, that uses the City's "signal boxes" (where the equipment that runs traffic signals is stored) as canvases for original artworks. Currently there are 83 signal boxes throughout the city that have been painted by local artists, residents, students and community members of all ages. The projects are direct painted with latex or spray paint.

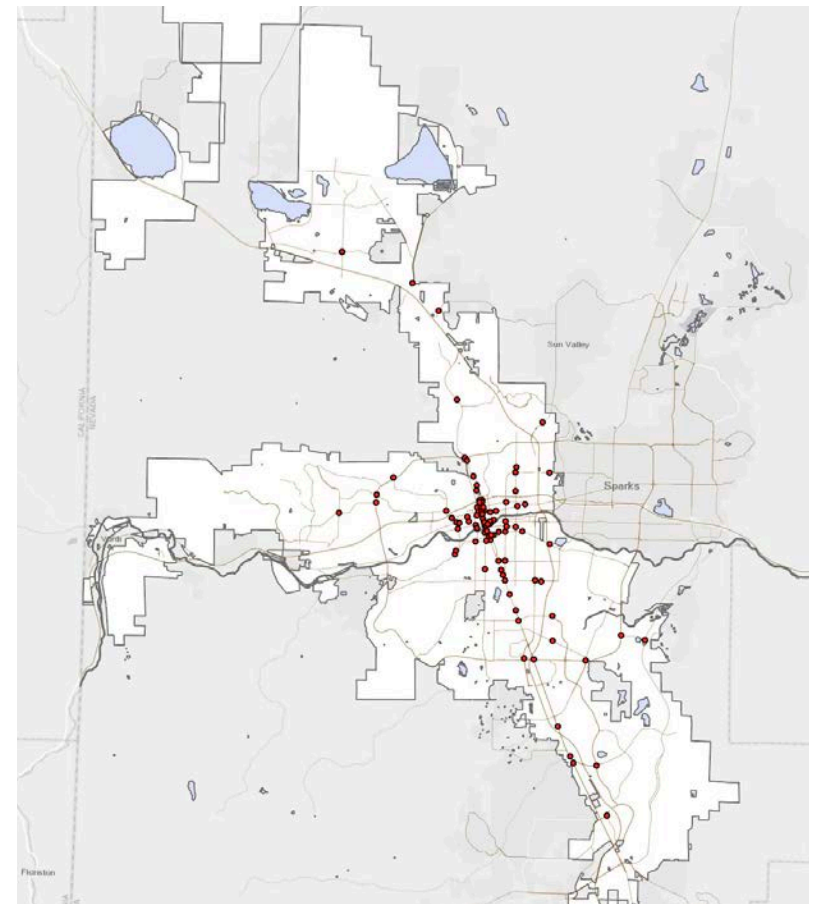
Art Signals receives high marks from both artists and the public, as a way for less experienced artists to become involved in public art, and as a way of brightening up the streetscape.

The Art Signals initiative should be continued, with some modifications that strengthen its impact and make it more accessible to artists:

- » Create a process for more community engagement in developing Art Signals projects, particularly in the nomination of signal boxes to be considered
- » Curate the artists concepts so that, as a collection, they tell the story of the city
- » Provide more interpretation of Art Signals projects.
  - » For example, collect artist statements and make them accessible on digital platforms.
  - » Create a separate map of Art Signals projects that is accessible outside of the Public Art Archive inventory, such as an easily downloadable and printable .pdf
  - » Create curriculum kit for Art Signals that are near schools and accessible to children

- » Award small payments to artists who submit strong proposals but are not selected for commissions
- » Allow artists to paint their tags on the murals, or develop a simple format for credits that identifies the signal box as a city project, and identifies the artist

Map of Art Signals locations



## Art Belongs Here Grants

Art Belongs Here is a grant program in which place-based organizations can apply for funding to collaborate with artists on public art and placemaking projects in their communities. Art Belongs Here encourages collaboration among artists, community groups and businesses to create projects that transform spaces, nurture community identity, promote vibrant neighborhoods and demonstrate cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

Community organizations and artists who have worked on Art Belongs Here projects are generally positive about the experience. Artists, organizations and Program staff noted that City staff have given Arts Belong Here projects ongoing project management support, which has been critical in helping them navigate public art processes.

The Art Belongs Here initiative should be continued, but reconfigured in the following ways:

- » Organize Art Belongs Here as a cohort-style program, in which the artists and community organizations receive more training and support from Program staff during project development (to participate, artists and communities would submit a collaborative proposal)
- » Organize Art Belongs Here projects in bi-annual cycles to allow more time for project planning, community engagement, project development, evaluation and staff support
- » Provide the organizations that are selected with a stipend of 20 percent of the grant amount the support indirect costs



TOP LEFT  
Hansy Better Barraza, *Big Hammock*, The Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston.

BOTTOM LEFT  
Susan Wallace, *Cardinal Points*, is one of several neighborhood markers along E. 7th St. in Austin. Courtesy Austin Art in Public Places

TOP RIGHT  
Natalie Blake, *Rose Circle*, Chabot College, Oakland, Ca. Courtesy Natalie Blake.

BOTTOM RIGHT  
Playable sculpture, Abernathy Greenway Park, Alpharetta, Ga.



## Small Walls (Lake Street and University Way Window Galleries)

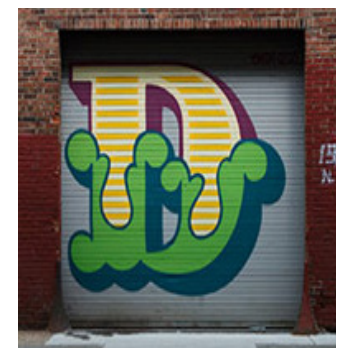
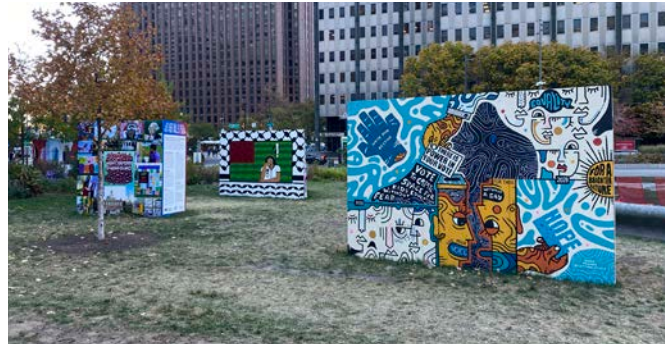
The Public Art Program maintains twenty windows on the exterior walls of the Reno Events Center and the Reno Ballroom, and programs them with two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork created by local university students. Exhibitions in these spaces are updated annually each fall.

The Program should expand this concept into a broader strategy that consists of creating a larger inventory of “small walls” that could be used as galleries for rotating artworks, primarily two-dimensional. This strategy would allow for partnerships to enliven other areas of the city, particularly downtown, and provide a stepping stone for artists who are developing their skills in mural-making (perhaps after having completed an Art Signals project).

In this approach, the Program would secure permissions from wall owners for temporary murals (perhaps one-year permissions renewable on an annual basis) and then select artists to paint them from a roster; one standing Task Force should oversee all “Small Walls” projects. Painting could be concentrated in a particular time of year to create a festival atmosphere.

A “Small Walls” initiative could include partnerships with Economic Development, which is looking for strategies to enliven downtown alleys, and Parks and Recreation, which is looking for mural projects that will dissuade graffiti.

Ultimately, the Program could contract with an independent curator, a non-profit arts organization or a seasoned muralist to manage the Small Walls initiative.



### TOP

The Short North arts and shopping district in Columbus, Oh, includes small murals on buildings facing cross streets.

### CENTER ROW

*To the Polls* and *Front Street Walls* are ongoing projects that provide artists with opportunities to get experience by painting small walls. Curated by Conrad Benner. Courtesy Todd W. Bressi (left), Mural Arts Philadelphia (right)

### BOTTOM ROW

Ben Eine, *Philly from A to Z*, involved a mural series spray painted on roll-down gates. Courtesy Mural Arts Philadelphia

## Temporary Sculpture Exhibition

In past years, from time to time, temporary sculpture exhibitions have been organized in Reno. Between 2016 and 2019, the Public Art Program organized three cycles of the “Playa Arts Project,” which featured up to ten sculptures from that year’s Burning Man event. Prior to the Covid pandemic, the Reno Sculpture Fest hosted a weekend festival with dozens of temporary sculpture and music installations, organized independently of the Public Art Program and the Arts Commission.

The Program should provide leadership for reinvigorating a temporary sculpture exhibition in Reno each year. The exhibition could provide a focus for showing sculpture created by Reno artists, provide a foundational step in the ladder of opportunities for artists who are seeking to create public sculpture, and draw attention to the area where it is located. The curatorial emphasis, programmatic structure and location for an exhibition would require further exploration.

Ultimately, a temporary sculpture exhibition could be launched through partnerships for curating, promotion, funding, and with a contract project manager. The exhibition could be seeded by the Arts Commission with the hope that it could operate independently under the leadership of an independent curator or non-profit arts organization.



LEFT

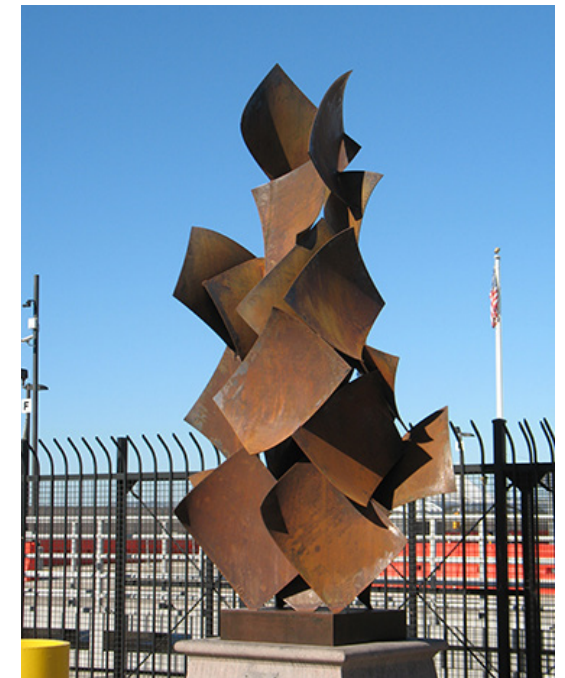
Phil Proctor, *The Herd*. Displayed during a temporary “Sculptour” exhibition and subsequently acquired. Courtesy City of Suwanee, Ga.

BOTTOM LEFT

Jack Howard Potter, *Winged Glory*. Courtesy City of Suwanee, Ga.

BOTTOM RIGHT

Ed Devine, *Autumn*, Urban Trees 2009, San Diego Embarcadero. Courtesy Unified Port of San Diego





# 5 | How We Will Get There

# Staffing

Reno's Public Art Program is led by the City's Arts and Culture Manager, who is supported by a Public Art Program Assistant and two Public Art Technicians. Because the Arts & Culture Manager has many duties, the Manager is not always able to give full attention to the Program, and the Program Assistant does not have managerial authority.

The Program would benefit from having a full-time Program Coordinator who could play a leadership role in interfacing with the RACC; developing Annual Work Plans and Project Plans; facilitating artist selections, contracts and concept approvals; overseeing community engagement and other aspects of project oversight; and supervising the Public Art Technicians.

After the Program has begun to adopt the projects and processes recommended in this plan, the Program should assess whether it has the proper amount of project management capacity. Options to consider are consolidating the two technician positions into one position at the Public Art Program Assistant level or seeking support for consulting project management.

- » Optimize available resources for Program staff by creating program coordinator and project manager job descriptions
- » Lay groundwork for additional funding for personnel / contract project management



## PREVIOUS PAGE

Erik Burke, *Floral Bouquet Mural*.  
Courtesy Mike Lucido

## ABOVE

Repairing Cork Marcheschi's  
*You Should Have Been Here*.  
Courtesy City of Reno

# Governance

Reno's Public Art Program falls under the ongoing oversight of the Reno Arts and Culture Commission (RACC) and its Public Art Committee (PAC). For most projects, ad hoc artist selection panels are created to make recommendations to the PAC. In addition, City Council must approve the Annual Work Plan and contracts for projects with a cost of more than \$25,000.

As a result, some public art decisions require four stages of approval – a process that is time consuming for staff and volunteers and frustrating for project partners, and does not always add value to the outcome relative to the amount of resources that are invested.

The recommendations here would both streamline that process and also provide a more flexible way of involving community stakeholders in public art processes, which was a key goal of the 2009 revisions to the public art guidelines.

## City Council

Reno's City Council plays several key roles in public art processes:

- » Sets aside funds for public art from the City's annual capital construction budget, determining which capital projects should include public art and which capital funds can be pooled for other projects
- » Approves the annual Public Art Work Plan
- » Approves contracts for the development of works of art that are in amounts greater than \$25,000
- » Approves, by resolution, amendments to public art guidelines

While Council's oversight of City expenditures is critical, the threshold for Council approval of public art expenditures is low, compared to the City's general contract signing authority. To expedite smaller public art projects, the threshold should be raised to \$60,000, with contracts of lesser amounts approved by staff.

At the same time, Council members should be drawn into discussions about projects in their wards early on. After the adoption of an annual plan, the Program should offer a courtesy briefing to any Council member in whose ward a major project will be located, early in the project planning stages.

## RACC, PAC

Reno can take a significant step towards streamlining its public art approval processes by dissolving the Public Art Committee and assigning some of its duties to the RACC and some to ad hoc "Task Forces" (expanded selection committees) that are established for each public art project or program.

In this approach, the function of the RACC would generally be strengthened and expanded. The RACC duties would include recommending Annual Work Plans, recommending the appointment of members of Task Forces, recommending the approval of Project Plans, and recommending artist selections and concept approvals. In certain circumstances, RACC could delegate its authority to Task Forces, as described below.

## Task Forces

Reno's Public Art Program should adopt a "Task Force" approach to involving stakeholders in decision-making about public art. In this approach, a Task Force plays the role of a traditional selection committee, but its role is expanded and strengthened. Task Forces would provide a mechanism for involving community members more deeply in the development of public art projects, but with more flexibility than the process set out in the 2009 amendment to the public art guidelines.

Task Forces would provide guidance on a wider range of project decision-making, such as the community engagement process, and would provide opportunities for broader and deeper community involvement. Task Forces would be appointed by the RACC, and would include a handful of RACC members as well as broad stakeholder representation and community representation, including NAB representation when appropriate.

The scope for each Task Force, as well as the number of meetings that it holds and the duration of its existence, would vary depending on the project, but a Task Force would be expected to be a time-limited entity. This arrangement will help bring more stakeholder knowledge to decision-making, and over time it will create a much larger "alumni pool" of public art advocates who can support the Program.

In certain circumstances, the RACC could delegate to a Task Force its role in making recommendations about artist selection and artist concept approval. This would be desirable for projects that are small-scale and repeated, such as Art Signals or Small Walls, or for projects that are drawing from a pre-qualified roster and require rapid decision-making (placemaking projects). Reno's Public Art Program should adopt a "Task Force" approach to involve stakeholders in decision-making about public art, as an option to artist selection committees when circumstances merit.

- » Task Forces could be established for specific projects, ongoing programs (Art Signals, Small Walls, Art Belongs Here) or special initiatives (public art along the Truckee River).
- » Task Forces would include RACC members, stakeholders and arts and design professionals. Community members could apply to be considered for participation on a Task Force.
- » Task Force duties would include helping to create Project Plans and to support community engagement.



Recruitment advertisement for RACC

# Roles and Responsibilities

Reno's Public Art Program is led by City staff. The Reno Arts and Culture Commission (RACC), established by ordinance, and Task Forces play an advisory role. Staff collaborates broadly with other City and regional agencies. City Council approves key milestones, such as approving the Public Art Master Plan and guidelines, and approves annual funding and certain contracts.

## Public Art Program Staff

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- » Manages the day-to-day operations of the Public Art Program
- » Prepares Annual Work Plans, Project Plans, Budgets, RFPs/ RFQs for the RACC's review and recommendation
- » Presents Annual Work Plans to Council
- » Assembles and facilitates Task Forces
- » Presents Artist Selections and Concepts to Council (for projects over \$60,000)
- » Develops Artist contracts
- » Facilitates RACC meetings

## Reno Arts and Culture Commission (RACC)

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- » Provides recommendations about projects, policies and overall Program oversight to staff and Council
- » Recommends guidelines, policies and procedures for acquiring and commissioning public art and managing the Public Art Collection
- » Reviews and recommends the Annual Work Plan to City Council
- » Reviews and recommends Projects Plans to staff
- » Reviews and recommends appointment of Selection Panel / Task Force members to staff
- » Reviews and recommends Selection Panel / Task Force recommendations regarding artist selections and artist concepts to staff or City Council
- » Reviews and recommends proposed donations of public art to the City, as well as long-term loans and exhibitions of public art on City-owned property
- » Reviews and recommends accessioning and deaccessioning of artworks from the Public Art Collection
- » Supports community outreach and citizen participation in the Public Art Program

## Task Force

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- » Serves as an ad-hoc panel formed for a limited period of time focused on one project or a group of projects
- » Reviews and recommends Project Plans to RACC
- » Reviews and comments on RFQs / RFPs
- » Reviews artist applications and recommends artist selections to the RACC
- » Reviews artist concepts and recommends approval to the RACC
- » Supports a project in any other way indicated in a Project Plan, including community engagement

## City Agencies

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- » Collaborate with Program staff to determine which capital projects are eligible for including public art, the funding available for public art, and whether the project is appropriate for a design collaboration
- » Collaborate with staff to identify other opportunities for public art
- » Designate a departmental representative to the Selection Panel / Task Force
- » Include public art staff on architectural or engineering services selection panels, when appropriate
- » Include scope and funding for public art coordination in architecture and engineering contracts, when appropriate
- » Designate a project manager as the agency's liaison for coordination issues related to public art
- » Review and comment on artist documentation for design, fabrication, installation and maintenance
- » Review and comment on maintenance surveys for Artworks in the Public Art Collection in locations that the agency manages

## City Council

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- » Appropriates public art funds for eligible capital improvement projects
- » Approves recommendations for which eligible projects should include public art
- » Approves the Annual Public Art Work Plan
- » Approves contracts for commissioning or acquiring artworks that are in amounts greater than \$60,000
- » Approves the Public Art Master Plan and public art guidelines

## Public Works Department

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- » Collaborates with Program staff on the identification of public art projects
- » Coordinates with Program staff on all issues related to the implementation of public art projects, including budget, timeline, code requirements, construction coordination, etc.
- » Provides the Program staff with the appropriate documentation necessary for project coordination
- » Serves as primary liaison with Regional Transportation Commission in identifying and coordinating opportunities for public art in RTD-constructed projects

# Funding

## Funding Sources

Reno's Public Art Program currently receives funding from several City sources:

- » An annual allocation of “two-percent” funds from capital projects that are not large enough to incorporate public art on their own; these funds can be pooled and used for projects elsewhere in the city. In practice these funds have been allocated from the Room Tax Fund.
- » An annual allocation for maintenance and conservation of the Collection.
- » An occasional allocation of “two percent” funds from capital projects that are large enough to incorporate public art on their own. This includes projects funded through the Residential Construction Tax. In practice, however, the City has had very few capital projects that have been large enough to incorporate public art on their own (in 2024, projects at Moana Springs Aquatic Center, the new public safety headquarters and the new fire department headquarters were exceptions).
- » Special project allocations from time to time, most recently for murals along California Avenue.

The Program has also been successful in securing funding from the National Endowment for the Arts for its major projects.

## Funding Challenges

The Program faces the following ongoing funding challenges:

- » Because the funding levels from different City sources vary from year to year, it has been difficult for the Program to establish stability in its work flow and to accumulate funds for larger projects.
- » The City's public art ordinance mandates certain percentages of capital funding be reserved for administration, community education, interpretation, curatorial services, and conservation and maintenance.

While it is important that capital funds can be expended for these purposes, managing budgets within the constraints of these fixed percentages can be challenging. The Program can mitigate these issues by taking this approach to its budgeting:

- » Establish a baseline annual budget that can support annual cycles of Art Signals and Small Walls, and a bi-annual cycle of Art Belongs Here projects
- » Establish a minimum target for each year's conservation and maintenance budget; set the target each year, taking into account the amount of capital funding that is being received and the expected cost of implementing the Conservation and Maintenance Work Plan in that year
- » Transfer some of the remaining funds to a reserve fund that carries over and can be used to support baseline projects in low-funding years
- » Transfer some of the remaining funds to a major projects fund that carries over and can

be accumulated for major new projects and for major conservation projects

- » Make additional contributions to the conservation and maintenance account to anticipate future expenses
- » Ensure each of the above accounts can roll over unspent balances from year to year

In addition, the Program should identify additional funds for ongoing and major projects:

- » Continue to seek federal, regional and state grants funding to implement major projects
- » Seek internal and external partnerships, and external sponsorships, for both ongoing projects as well as major projects

The funding provisions of the City's public art ordinance should be revised to provide the Program with more flexibility:

- » Affirm that administration, community education, interpretation and curatorial services are eligible uses of public art capital funds, when the underlying funding source allows. Do not establish fixed percentage allocations in the ordinance, but require these expenditure areas to be explicitly listed in the annual Public Art Work Plans that Council reviews and approves.
- » Affirm that conservation and maintenance are eligible uses of public art capital funds, when the underlying funding source allows. As Council also provides an allocation for those purposes, do not establish fixed percentage allocations in the ordinance, but require these expenditure areas to be explicitly listed in the annual Public Art Work Plans that Council reviews and approves.

# Planning and Project Development Processes

Clear, focused and consistent planning and project development processes are key tools for the efficient and effective administration of a public art program.

This section includes recommendations for four key components of public art administration in Reno: developing an Annual Work Plan, creating specific plans for each project or program that is undertaken, selecting artists, and accepting unsolicited proposals.

## Annual Work Plan

Each year the Public Art Program develops an Annual Work Plan in consultation with the Public Art Committee, the Arts and Culture Commission and collaborating City departments. Generally, the plan outlines proposed projects and other activities for the coming year, along with budgets and conceptual approaches.

Looking forward, the Program should consider its Annual Work Plans as a more robust tool, serving not only as an annual budgeting tool but also as a multi-year strategic road map. This can be accomplished by revamping the Work Plan process in a number of ways.

- » The process should involve more upfront consultation with partner agencies and evaluation of past performance of programs. Elsewhere, this plan details how public art leadership and the leadership of partner agencies can develop strong working relationships.
- » The Work Plan should include more robust descriptions of projects, including not only a budget but also a brief description of the project, especially describing any goals or partnerships that are identified. Potential RACC member assignments to Task Forces can also be proposed.

- » The Work Plan should include tasks and budget allocations for administrative activities, such as community education, interpretation, curatorial services, conservation and maintenance.
- » The Work Plan should include projections for two years in the future (in total, a three-year lookahead). This will enable the Program to anticipate what funding and project management resources it will need in the coming years, take a better look at the range of types and locations of projects it is doing, and ensure that it is planning for the distribution and variety of projects it would like to achieve.

At the end of each year, when developing a new Work Plan, Program staff and the RACC should informally evaluate progress to date and use those learnings to inform projects and priorities in the next three-year Work Plan.

## Project Planning

Reno's Public Art Program generally receives high marks for its process of developing projects. There are some concerns, particularly related to community engagement and consistency in artist selection processes, that could be addressed with modest changes in the guidelines and practices.

The Program should adopt a key tool, the "Project Plan," for each of its projects and programs. A Project Plan is a foundational document that guides the planning and execution of a project.

A Project Plan sets out the basic framework of a project – its goals, location, timeline and budget; the artist selection and community engagement processes; and a list of internal and external stakeholders. The goal is to provide a clear basis for managing the project and for accountability and evaluation, without constraining or bureaucratizing the management of the project.

Each Project Plan may be more or less comprehensive, depending on the nature of the project. Most Project Plans could follow a standard template and for some projects, the Project Plan might be a simple-check list.

Program staff would collaborate with the project Task Force to draft the Project Plan and would have the lead responsibility for administering it. The RACC must approve the Project Plan before the project begins.

## Artist Selection

The Public Art Program has a variety of artist selection processes available to it, and artists who have participated in calls to artists generally have reported that the process works well. The following recommendations can help the Program lead selection processes that are more efficient and more rigorous.

### Artist Roster

An artist roster consists of a list of artists who are pre-qualified for consideration for a certain type of project.

In a roster process, the Program distributes an RFQ for a general type of project, such as small two-dimensional works. Artists submit their qualifications, a panel reviews the submissions and adds any artist who meets the stated qualifications to the roster. Once the roster is in place, it serves as a tool that future Task Forces can draw on to identify artists to consider for a project, rather than issuing a new RFQ. The Task Force selects a small pool of finalists from the roster, then interviews the artists or requests concepts before making a recommendation.

One advantage of a roster is that artists only apply once but can be considered for multiple opportunities. Another advantage is that Program staff can accelerate artist selection processes because they do not have to organize an open call, which can add six weeks to a timeline. Finally, a roster helps the Program identify an interested pool of artists on whom professional development opportunities can be focused.

A roster works best in situations where the Program must be able to tap into a large number of artists for common, recurring projects. It can also be useful in situations where conducting fast artist selection processes is important.

### Creating and Using a Roster

Currently the Program's guidelines recommend that the Program can rely on an artist roster for "small, community-based projects where a separate artist selection panel may not be warranted." This should be expanded so that the Program can consider creating a roster for a broader range of opportunities, including:

- » Create a combined roster for the Small Walls and Signal Box projects
- » Create a roster for small placemaking projects, such as those that might be commissioned in collaboration with the Economic Development department

Artists sometimes express a concern that they are excluded from opportunities if they did not apply for the roster when it was open; for example, they may not have lived in Reno at that time. In order to provide maximum opportunities for artists, the Program should re-open a roster time periodically, perhaps once a year, to solicit new applicants. Alternatively, the Program can take a hybrid approach to artist recruitment, both issuing an RFQ for a project while also considering artists who have already been added to a roster that is appropriate for that project.

The Program would continue to issue individual RFQs, either open call or invited, for other types of projects.

## Artist Selection Criteria

An important concern in artist selection processes is to ensure that artists understand the criteria against which they are evaluated. The Program can address this concern by:

- » Developing unique qualifications criteria for each call to artists, specific to the nature of the project
- » Ensuring that artists are evaluated and/or ranked according to the selection panel's views of how well the artists meet those criteria
- » Ensuring, in interview processes, that artists are asked questions that are designed to elicit a deeper understanding of how well an artist meets the criteria, in addition to other questions that a panel may have

## Unsolicited Proposals

Reno's Public Art Program currently maintains a portal for artists to submit unsolicited proposals for projects. The portal has largely been accessed by artists from outside Reno, and no proposal has ever been funded.

Many public art programs create pathways for artists and/or community organizations to submit unsolicited proposals for public art projects. They do so in the spirit of wanting to provide wider access to public art resources and to support artists and/or communities that have been bypassed by typical public art processes. Several peer programs reported success with this process.

For a small public art program like Reno's, however, facilitating such proposals can divert limited staff and financial resources from other priorities. In addition, support for unsolicited proposals does not necessarily improve the learning or capacity of artists or communities at large, which is a key goal for the Program.

Rather than accepting unsolicited proposals, the Program should thoughtfully pursue other strategies that achieve the goals of bringing more artists and more communities into public art processes and supporting general learning about and experience with public art. Those recommendations are outlined here and explored more fully elsewhere in this plan:

- » Discontinue the portal for unsolicited proposals
- » Expand resources for Art Belongs Here and help artists find communities with whom they can collaborate on proposals
- » Expand the current art windows project into a "Small Walls" initiative that provides opportunities for muralists, particularly those who have completed a Signal Box and are seeking a next-level challenge
- » Launch a temporary sculpture exhibition that would be an outlet for artists who would like to display their sculptures in public

# Capacity Building

One of the key goals for the Public Art Program is to help Reno's public art ecosystem – the people and organizations who create, produce, fabricate, fund and promote public art – flourish.

By activating and supporting this network to take leadership on broader public art initiatives, the Program can focus its resources on its core work, collaborating with City agencies.

Every program and project that the Program takes on should be viewed through a capacity-building lens, considering the following strategies: **Opening the Door, Expanding the Public Art Ecosystem and Creating Ladders of Opportunity.**

## Opening the Door

Reno has a robust arts community, but the arts community is not well-connected to the Program, or public art in general. Therefore, the first goal should be to bring more people and organizations into the public art ecosystem.

- » Consider community engagement activities around projects and programs as a first step in sparking interest in working in public art
- » Continue supporting professional development workshops that help artists learn about the different aspects of public art practice
- » Ensure that the Program is always organizing projects that provide entry-level opportunities
- » Provide modest honoraria to artists who submit proposals for Art Signals projects even if they are not selected for commissions

## Networking and Expanding the Ecosystem

Capacity-building work should be approached as a collaborative effort, involving City, educational and non-profit resources.

- » The Program should convene an occasional, informal roundtable among existing organizations to discuss how they can coordinate efforts to network and expand the public art ecosystem. This roundtable should include the City, the Reno-Tahoe Airport public art program, academic resources at the University of Nevada and Truckee Meadows Community College, tourism resources like the Reno Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, and visual arts organizations like the Nevada Museum of Art, the Sierra Arts Foundation, and the Generator Art Collective.

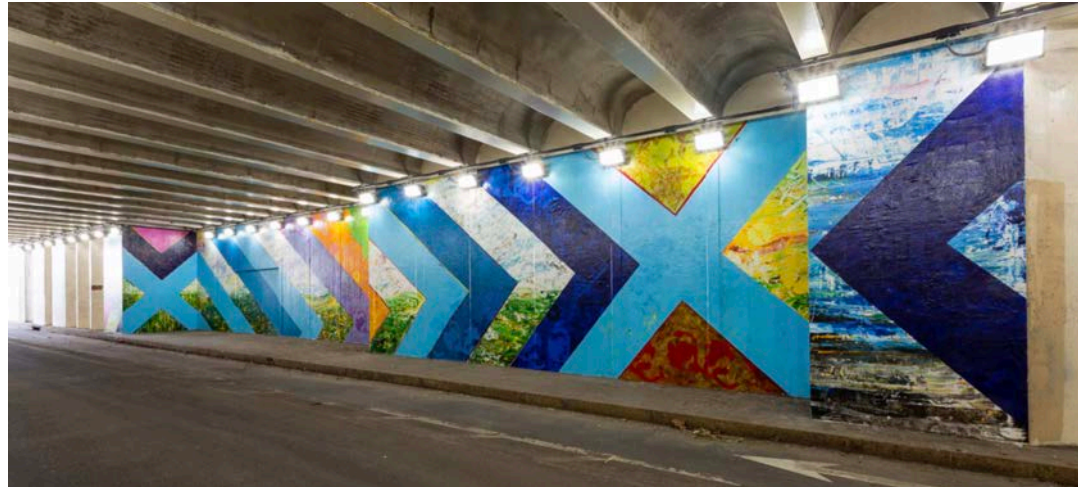
Specifically, the Program could use its resources to network and expand in the following ways:

- » *Art Belongs Here!* Consider evolving the Program so that it operates more as a cohort experience for artists and communities, providing more support and focusing on the most strategic investments.
- » *City Windows.* Consider evolving the Program so that it includes walls, so artists have a chance to scale up from signal boxes.
- » *Artist Mentorship.* Consider strategies for teaming younger or less experienced artists with more seasoned artists with projects with larger budgets.
- » *Non-Profit Organizations, Curators, Artist/Producers.* Consider partnerships to support project or program implementation and broader community outreach.

## Creating Ladders of Opportunity

Public art opportunities should be available for artists in all phases of career development.

- » In each Annual Work Plan, ensure that there are commissions available for emerging artists, mid-career artists and late career artists.
- » Since Reno's Public Art Program will not be able to offer many mid-career and late career opportunities itself, explore collaborative arrangements with public art programs in nearby areas (northern California, southern Nevada, Salt Lake City region) to help artists learn about and compete for projects in those areas. These could include collaborative artist development programs and specific cross listing of commission opportunities.



Three projects by Philadelphia artist Mat Tomezsko demonstrate how an artists' public art career can evolve through a series of projects of increasing scale and complexity.

TOP

Mat Tomezsko, *Flowering Axes*.  
Courtesy Mat Tomezsko

BOTTOM LEFT

Mat Tomezsko, *Look Long and Look Good*. Courtesy Todd W. Bressi

BOTTOM RIGHT

Mat Tomezsko, *Garden Painting*.  
Bennet Community Farm.  
Courtesy Mat Tomezsko



# Community / Audience Engagement

Reno's public art is a resource for everyone in Reno, and the Public Art Program can serve this broad constituency through a variety of community / audience engagement practices.

The Program should carefully integrate community engagement into all phases of its work; building its long-range plan, identifying projects, developing projects and interpreting the Collection.

More broadly, the Program should organize ongoing educational and promotional activities, which can help cultivate and instill a sense of community ownership in public art, as well as recognition of the role of public art in reflecting the community's culture.

Following is an outline of community engagement approaches that the Program should consider at each phase of a project. The specific approaches should be tailored to the circumstances of each project.

## Key Milestones for Community Engagement

### Identify Key Stakeholders

The community engagement strategy for each project begins with identifying key stakeholders – people who will have an interest in or who will be affected by the project. Stakeholders can include:

- » Neighborhood Advisory Boards
- » Nearby property owners, residents and business owners
- » Other people who customarily use the place where the artwork will be located or who interact with the department / public agency with which the artwork is being created, including staff
- » 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

In identifying stakeholders, it is important to consider whose voice is being overlooked in any situation and to make sure people have a path to involvement that is accessible and comfortable for them.

### 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, such as the role they hope an

artwork can play, and the impact they would like it to have in their community

- » Further identifying potential stakeholders and participants
- » In addition, Selection Panels or Task Forces should include community representatives, such as Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB) members, representatives of stakeholder groups and other community members.

### Artist Selection Phase

The artist's sensitivity to and connection with the community can be one consideration in selecting an artist. Therefore, community representatives should be invited to serve on Task Forces to ensure that community sensibilities are considered in decision-making processes.

In addition, the broader community can play a role in selecting the artist, depending on the artist selection process:

- » 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,

consider:

- » 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, consider:
  - » Arranging an opportunity for the artist to meet stakeholders in formal and informal types of situations

Community members can provide reactions to the potential artists through surveys, comment cards or open-ended conversations. It is not advisable to allow community members to vote on artists or proposals because that empowers only the people who are able to vote, and because the artist selection decisions will require a deliberative process that involves a Selection Panel or Task Force, which will include community representatives.

## Research and Design Phase

Artists who are commissioned to create Artworks in Reno will be encouraged to engage the community directly in the process of developing their artistic concepts. The Artist's 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 research 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 many people are involved, and make sure to include people who will be impacted by the artworks.

A community meeting can be a forum for introducing people to the project, collecting information about the community's needs, and discussing 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 contributes to the ideas the artist includes in the artwork.

## Community Involvement in Design

- » 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. In this situation, it is important to set the expectation that the artist is ultimate arbiter of the design.
- » Sometimes, the design of an Artwork is reviewed by the community. It is best to conduct the review with the involvement of the Selection Committee or Task Force that selected the artist. Designs can be presented through various means, such as community meetings or online or on-site postings. Community comments can be encouraged through various processes, such as comment cards; community voting or decision-making is discouraged.

## Community Involvement

## 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 common with murals, for example. Interactive artworks can allow for ongoing community input into the operation of the Artwork.

## Celebration Phase

When the Artwork is complete, it is a good idea to plan a celebration for the stakeholders. There can be a short ceremony to dedicate the Artwork, at which people who played a key role in the project can speak, as well as performances and other activities that inform about and interpret the Artwork.

## General

The Program should provide background about the project, and regular updates about the project's progress. It can use platforms such as the City's Arts and Culture web site, as well as Reno connect, and other media as appropriate.

## Promoting the Program

For many people, their first engagement with public art is when they become involved with a project in their community. When community members participate in discussions about a specific project, the Program should take these opportunities to introduce community members to public art, and the City's Collection, overall.

# Collection Management, Conservation, Maintenance

The acquisition and commissioning of Artwork carries with it the responsibility for and commitment to maintaining the condition in which it was meant to be enjoyed by the public. Public Art Program staff recently completed a conservation assessment and the Program is using that assessment to undertake scheduled maintenance and to prioritize maintenance and conservation projects in the coming years.

The Program should continue or initiate the following collection management conservation and maintenance protocols, which are outlined in more detail in the attached guidelines:

- » Maintain a comprehensive set of collection records and inventory
- » Periodically, but preferably at least every five years, undertake an assessment of the Collection that considers both the breadth of the Collection and its condition
- » Adopt an ongoing Maintenance and Conservation Work Plan, based on the recently completed conservation assessment, that includes routine maintenance, scheduled maintenance, major conservation and emergency maintenance.
- » Consider maintenance issues during the process of acquiring, commissioning or accepting donations of Artworks
- » Establish an expected lifespan for any Artwork that is acquired, commissioned or accepted through a Donation
- » Clarify the responsibilities of artists, collaborating City agencies, and the Program in the ongoing stewardship of the Collection



Reno public art technicians maintaining Carolyn Guerra's *Rhinoman*. Courtesy City of Reno

# Donations, Loans, Commemorative Works, Memorials

Donations of Artworks, Loans, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials can be a useful way of serving the community needs for cultural and historical expression – if they are in keeping with the City’s overall goals and expectations, if they are placed in appropriate locations and integrated appropriately with their sites, and if there is proper advance planning.

The Program must act with the broad public interest in mind when considering proposals for Donations, Loans, Commemorative Artworks and memorials, particularly in regard to their fiscal impact, the general public’s use and enjoyment of public space, the aesthetics of the City, and consideration of whose and which narratives are prioritized in public space.

In order to facilitate a fair and consistent assessment of proposals, the Arts & Culture Manager should coordinate the review of all aspects related to the acceptance of such proposals, consulting with other City agencies as appropriate and conducting appropriate community engagement.

To accomplish this, the Program should initiate the following protocols, which are outlined in more detail in the attached guidelines.

- » Initiate a standard process for reviewing proposals for Artworks, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials
- » Follow standard criteria for technical and aesthetic review of proposals for donations and loans
- » Follow standard criteria for technical review, aesthetic review and assessment of the suitability of proposals for Commemorative Artworks and Memorials
- » Establish priorities and follow equity considerations in reviewing these proposals

## Donations

The Program and the RACC shall also consider the following additional criteria in reviewing Commemorative Artworks and Memorials that are proposed for City property or are seeking City funding:

- » Proposals 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 Reno’s history.
- » Proposals 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 the city, rather than the state or the nation.
- » Proposals that recognize individuals should not be considered until at least ten years after the death of the individual. Proposals that commemorate an historical event 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.
- » Proposals that recognize organizations in general, or specific topics including but not limited to historical events, disasters or health-related themes, should only be considered if it can be demonstrated that there are circumstances particular to Reno.

- » Proposals must not duplicate the themes or subject matter of an existing Commemorative Artwork or Memorial elsewhere in the city.
- » Proposals shall not in any circumstances depict subjects that are trademarked or commercially licensed, nor shall they include logos or other commercial graphics, except as part of an acknowledgement plaque.

## Priorities

In assessing proposals for Donations, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials, the RACC and Program staff will also consider the following priorities:

- » The ease of public access to the location of the Artwork, particularly for underserved communities
- » Improving the distribution of public art throughout the city, particularly to underserved communities
- » The inclusion of public art that reflects the artistic traditions and practices of Reno's diverse communities
- » In assessing proposals for commemorative artworks and memorials, the RACC and City staff will also consider the following priorities:
  - » Projects that explore the histories and narratives of communities that are underrepresented in the city's existing commemorative artworks or memorials

## Equity Considerations

In assessing proposals for Commemorative Artworks and Memorials, the City acknowledges that the considerations above may make it difficult for traditionally underrepresented communities and for communities who have more recently arrived in the city to have their histories and voices recognized. Recognizing this, the Program will pursue the following strategies to ensure the histories and voices of these communities have a presence in the city's Public Art Collection:

- » Initiate conversations with community members, City staff and elected officials about the ways that a community's voices, histories and traditions can be recognized in public spaces. Consider the goals that a community may have for doing so (for example, making its presence visible, sustaining its stories and traditions) and artistic approaches for doing so.
- » Consider artworks that focus on a community, its ideals, its traditions and its recent experiences, as opposed to historic events and individuals.
- » Create processes for allowing spontaneous and otherwise unsanctioned artworks that are created in response to current events.
- » Consider alternative means of collecting and telling histories that have been missing from the dominant culture, by a range of people whose experiences have contributed, or are currently contributing, to the community.

# Relocating, Removing and Deaccessioning Public Art

The City retains the right to relocate, remove or deaccession any Artwork in the Public Art Collection, acknowledging that such actions should be taken only in rare or unusual circumstances.

In order to facilitate a fair and consistent assessment of proposals, the Arts & Culture Manager should coordinate the review of all aspects related to the acceptance of such proposals, consulting with other City agencies as appropriate and conducting appropriate community engagement.

To accomplish this, the Program should initiate the following protocols, which are outlined in more detail in the attached guidelines.

- » Criteria for relocating, removing or deaccessioning an Artwork
- » Procedures for relocating, removing or deaccessioning an Artwork
- » Protocol for the disposition of deaccessioned Artworks
- » Policy for compliance with Visual Artists Rights Act
- » Recordkeeping for relocated or deaccessioned Artworks

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Peter Hazel, *Dragonfly*  
Courtesy City of Reno



# 6 | Appendices

# Appendix 1

## Public Art Program Policies

### Artist Policies

The Public Art Program is committed to fostering a climate in which artists will thrive and receive the economic benefits of and recognition for their work. For that reason, it is important that artists receive equitable compensation for their creative endeavors and retain reasonable control over the integrity of their Artworks. The Program advances this commitment through the following policies.

- » Recognizing that successful public art is generally inseparable from the site for which it is created, the Program will follow thorough procedures for evaluating the relocation, removal and deaccessioning of Artworks, as provided in the Program's guidelines.
- » Recognizing the importance of preserving the integrity of an Artwork, the Program shall seek to ensure that the agency where an Artwork is located does not intentionally alter, modify or destroy an Artwork. Nevertheless, if an Artwork is significantly altered, modified or destroyed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, the Artist shall have the right to disclaim authorship of the artwork. Should an Artist choose to exercise this disclaimer, the Program shall, upon request by the Artist, officially request that the City department remove any plaques, labels or other identifying materials that associate the work with the Artist.
- » Recognizing that the integrity of an Artwork depends upon regular conservation and maintenance, the

Program will follow a comprehensive conservation and maintenance protocol, as provided in the Program's guidelines.

- » The Program shall make its best effort to ensure that all maintenance and repairs to works of art are accomplished in accordance with any maintenance and repair instructions the Artist has provided to the Program at the time of accession, and that all such maintenance and repairs adhere to the highest professional standards of artwork conservation. The Program shall make reasonable efforts to notify the Artist before the City department or agency responsible for the site undertakes repairs or restorations to the Artwork during the lifetime of the Artist. Where practical, the Program shall seek to ensure that the Artist be consulted and given an opportunity to accomplish the repairs or restorations at a reasonable fee. The Program and the City department or agency responsible reserve the right to make emergency repairs without prior notification to the Artist.
- » The Artist shall retain all copyrights associated with works of Artworks commissioned or acquired by the City, and the Program will copy or reproduce the Artwork only to the extent its licenses or permissions exist. Artists will be asked to provide the City with a license to make photographs or other two-dimensional representations of Artworks for public, noncommercial purposes, such as catalogues, brochures and guides.

### Conflict of Interest Policies

The Program recognizes that RACC or Task Force members may, from time to time, have a real or perceived conflict of interest in matters related to the fulfillment of their duties. In general, a conflict of interest can arise when a RACC or Task Force member:

- » has a financial, familial or romantic relationship with a business person who would be impacted by a RACC or Task Force recommendation
- » possesses inside information about a matter, beyond the information presented to the Program, RACC or Task Force
- » has a role in a decision-making process about the matter that could influence the outcome of a public art process or project, or could create the perception that an objective decision would be difficult

Therefore, the Program follows these policies to govern service on the RACC and its Task Forces:

- » RACC Members
  - » Must disclose any real or potential conflict of interest, as described above, in any circumstance in which a real or potential conflict emerges
  - » Must withdraw from participating or voting on any matter for which they have a real or perceived conflict of interest, as described above

- » Are ineligible for any competition, commission or project managed by the Program during their tenure on the RACC, and for one year after they leave the RACC
- » Are ineligible for any competition, commission or project on which they voted during service on the RACC, regardless of the length of time that has elapsed following their service
- » Task Force Members
  - » Must disclose any real or potential conflict of interest, as described above, before agreeing to serve on a Task Force
  - » Must withdraw from participating or voting on any competition, commission or project for which they have a conflict of interest, as described above
  - » May not enter any competition, commission or project on which they are serving or previously served as a Task Force member

## Liability Insurance and Performance Bonds

The Program recognizes that the cost of insurance, particularly liability insurance and performance bonds, are expensive for professional visual artists. Inevitably, any insurance requirement to artists creating public artworks would mean that these costs would be passed on to the City in the form of increased fees for the Artwork or a smaller portion of the project budget allocated to the art. Therefore, the Program shall endeavor to seek alternatives to requiring artists to obtain liability insurance and performance bonds, to extent allowable by law and other City policies.

Notwithstanding, the Program also recognizes that public Artworks can pose a public hazard and liability risk if not designed, fabricated and installed properly. Therefore, the Program follows these policies:

- » Artists shall be liable, in every instance, for their own intentional and negligent acts or omissions.
- » Artists may be required to have their drawings, plans, specifications, fabrication techniques and installation methods reviewed by licensed Nevada engineers for structural and/or mechanical integrity.
- » The Program will, if warranted by a particular project, engage engineers to verify project designs and installations, before fabrication and/or installation is authorized.

## Non-discrimination

The Program recognizes the extraordinary diversity of citizens in Reno and seeks to be inclusive in all aspects of its work.

The Commission will not discriminate against any artist or other program participant based on race, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or disability status.

# Appendix 2

## Program Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish procedures for the implementation of the Public Art Program, as recommended by the Public Art Master Plan Update.

These guidelines supersede those included in 2002 Public Art Master Plan and guidelines, as well as subsequent revisions to the guidelines related to community engagement and to the deaccessioning of artworks.

These guidelines were approved by City Council resolution in March, 2025, concurrently with the approval of the updated Public Art Master Plan.

### Vision

The vision for Reno's Public Art Program is documented in the Public Art Master Plan Update and incorporated here for reference:

- » Public art aligns with the City of Reno's vision and goals in the following ways:
- » Public art makes Reno feel like home – for long-time residents as well as people newly arrived in the city.
- » Public art tells Reno's stories, bringing its many narratives into view in public space and promoting cultural continuity and connection.
- » Public art gives Reno a fresh and inspiring look, lifting up the spirit of the city.
- » Public art supports economic development, by offering new aspects of the city and its economic corridors for residents and visitors to enjoy

### Goals

The goals for Reno's Public Art Program are documented in the Public Art Master Plan update and incorporated here for reference:

Every public art project and ongoing program should address the following goals as much as possible:

- » Deliver public art that offers a multifaceted narrative of who Reno is, fostering belonging and connection
- » Engage communities in the development of projects and strengthen people's overall understanding of and connection to Reno's Public Art Collection
- » Support Reno's public art ecosystem; strengthening the capacity of artists, communities, organizations and City staff to participate in public art
- » Support the City's overall goals and priorities, especially for community and economic development

## Governance

The governance structure for Reno's Public Art Program is documented in the Public Art Master Plan Update.

- » Reno's Public Art Program is managed by City staff under the leadership of the Arts & Culture Manager.
- » The Reno Arts and Culture Commission (RACC), established by ordinance, and Task Forces play an advisory role. The RACC considers the Program's overall goals and processes, while Task Forces bring direct insight from community stakeholders.
- » Program staff collaborates broadly with other City and regional agencies.
- » City Council approves key milestones such as approving the Public Art Master Plan and guidelines, and approving annual funding and certain contracts.

## Funding

Reno's Public Art Program is funded through a combination of City funding, grants and donations. City funding includes both "percent for art funds," as outlined in the Public Art Ordinance, and other project and program allocations that City Council may make from time to time.

Processes for allocating City funds to the Program and for managing those funds are outlined in the City's Public Art Ordinance and in the annual Work Plan process described elsewhere in these guidelines.

In addition to those provisions, the following guidelines apply to public art funding.

### Uses of Funds

Permitted and non-permitted uses of public art funds are indicated in the City's public art ordinance. In general, the following uses of public art funds are allowed:

- » Commissioning or acquiring Artworks, including artist selection costs
- » Site preparation for installations, to the extent they are designed by the artist and/or integral to the Artwork design
- » Administration and community engagement
- » Collection management
- » Conservation and maintenance

In general, the following uses of public art funds are not allowed:

- » Objects that are mass-produced or are of standard design
- » Reproductions of Artworks, except limited editions
- » Architectural, landscape, graphic design and streetscape elements not designed by artists

## Eligible Artworks

The Public Art Program can commission or acquire Artworks created by professional artists, in a wide variety of styles, media and genres. These include:

- » Permanently installed works as well as temporary installations, if they are site-specific and original (or derivatives of another artwork)
- » Freestanding works as well as works integrated into the underlying architecture or landscape
- » Performative works, such as music, dance, spoken word and theatrical, if they are site-specific and original (or derivatives of another artwork)
- » Digital and new media artworks
- » Artist-designed functional elements, including street furniture (such as benches, bus stops, tree grates), transportation infrastructure (such as bridges, soundwalls) and utility structures. Public art projects are not intended to substitute for functional elements that would normally be a part of the architecture or the landscape of capital improvement projects.

## Conservation and Maintenance Account

The Program should fund maintenance and conservation work in the following way.

Each year, the Program should include in its budget a line item for conservation and maintenance that should be, at a minimum, the greater of the following two amounts:

- » The estimated cost of scheduled maintenance and major conservation work proposed for the coming year, as well as a provision for emergency maintenance, according to the Program's Maintenance and Conservation Work Plan
- » Ten percent of the capital funding allocated to the Program in that year

The Program may set aside more than this amount to anticipate future needs.

The funds shall be set aside in a separate account within the public art fund for conservation and maintenance. Funds in the maintenance and conservation account not expended at the close of any fiscal year shall be carried forward into the next year.

## Planning Processes

This section of the guidelines sets out the processes by which the Public Art Program's Annual Work Plan and Project Plans are developed.

### Annual Work Plan and Look-ahead

The Annual Work Plan is the tool that the Public Art Program uses to guide its future work. The Work Plan outlines the Program's planned activities for the next fiscal year, as mandated by ordinance, as well as its anticipated activities for the following two fiscal years.

This three-year look-ahead allows the Program to achieve several goals:

- » careful prioritization of near-term projects
- » anticipation of what funding and project management resources it will need in the coming years
- » consideration of the types and locations of projects it is working on
- » planning for the distribution and variety of projects it would like to achieve

The Annual Work Plan should include:

- » robust descriptions of projects that will be taken on in the coming year, including not only a budget but also a brief description of the project, especially describing any goals or partnerships, and potential RACC member assignments to Task Forces
- » tasks and budget allocations for program administration activities, such as community education, interpretation, curatorial services
- » tasks and budget allocations for conservation and maintenance projects,

based on the findings of the most recent conservation assessment and conservator reports

- » projections for two years in the future (in total, a three-year lookahead)
- » a report on the status of ongoing public art projects

### Developing the Annual Work Plan

The Annual Work Plan would be developed through the following process:

- » Throughout the year, Program staff consult with partner agencies to identify opportunities through capital projects and other departmental activities
- » Before the Work Plan process begins, the staff and RACC evaluate progress over the past year so that the learnings can inform future opportunities, priorities and projects
- » Program staff presents the RACC with an inventory of potential opportunities that have emerged and could be initiated in the next year
- » RACC recommends a prioritization of the potential opportunities
- » Program staff develops a draft Work Plan, based on the RACC recommendations
- » RACC recommends approval of the Work Plan
- » Program staff presents the recommended Work Plan to Council for approval

In developing the Work Plan, Program staff and the RACC should keep in mind the following goals:

- » The Work Plan should address the Program's overall goals, as expressed in the Public Art Master Plan Update.
- » The Collection should reflect a diversity of styles, scales, media and artists, including ethnicity and gender of artists selected.
- » The Collection should include for an equitable distribution of Artworks throughout the City.
- » The Collection should reflect a diversity of artistic practices, particularly those that have been specifically embraced by artists in Reno.
- » The Collection should reflect a balance of local, regional, national and international artists, recognizing the importance of supporting Reno's arts community as well as the importance of providing the community with access to artistic ideas explored by regional and national artists.

### Project Plans

A Project Plan is a foundational document that guides the planning and execution of a public art project.

The goal of the Project Plan is to provide a clear basis for managing the project, accountability and evaluation, without constraining or bureaucratizing the management of the project. Each Project Plan may be more or less comprehensive, depending on the nature of the project. Most Project Plans should follow a standard template; for smaller projects that might consist of a simple check list.

Each Project Plan sets out the basic framework of a project, including:

- » Project goals
- » Project goals, location, timeline and budget
- » Artist selection and community engagement processes
- » The optimal approach to public art that is suitable to the circumstances of the particular project;
- » Identification of internal and external stakeholders
- » Role of project Task Force
- » Other relevant background and references

The Project Plan would be developed as follows:

- » The annual Work Plan sets basic vision and parameters of the project.
- » Program staff consults informally with stakeholders.
- » Program staff creates a draft Project Plan and presents to the Task Force (to the RACC, if a Task Force has not been appointed yet) for discussion and recommendation. The Task Force may make a visit to the project site.
- » The Task Force recommendation is reviewed and approved by the RACC.
- » The Project Plan is forwarded to the Council Member in whose ward the project is located, for informational processes.
- » Public art staff are responsible for managing the project in accordance with the Project Plan.

## Project Management

This section of the guidelines sets out the processes by which the Program manages individual public art projects or initiatives.

### Artist Selection Processes

#### Goals

Selecting an appropriate artist – one whose experience, artistic style, commitment to collaboration, communication skills and community facilitations skills match the needs of the project – is critical to the success of any project. Specifically, the goals of the selection process are:

- » select an artist or artists whose existing public artworks or past collaborative efforts demonstrate a level of quality and integrity commensurate to the project
- » select an artist or artists who will best respond to the distinctive characteristics of the site and the community it serves
- » select an artist or artists who can work successfully as members of an overall project implementation team; and
- » ensure that the selection process represents and considers the interests of all stakeholders, including the general public, City departments and other project stakeholders

## Methods of Selecting Artists

The method of selecting artists for individual projects shall be determined by Program staff, in consultation with the RACC, in accordance with these guidelines. Any of the following methods may be used, depending upon the requirements of a particular project.

### Open Competition

An Open Competition is a call for artists for a specific project in which artists are asked to submit evidence of their past work. Any artist may submit credentials and/or proposals, subject to any limitations established by the Artist Selection Panel or the RACC. Calls for entries for open competitions will be sufficiently detailed to permit artists to determine whether their work is appropriate for the project under consideration.

### Limited or Invitational Competition

A Limited or Invitational Competition is a call for artists that is sent to directly to a limited number of artists who are identified by the Public Art Program staff, the RACC and the Task Force. In circumstances where a Roster exists, artists are selected from that Roster. In other circumstances, artists are invited, based on their past work and demonstrated ability to successfully respond to the conditions posed by the particular project or based on other non-aesthetic goals (i.e., artists who reside in a particular community or neighborhood where a project is occurring, local artists or regional artists, etc.).

### Direct Selection

At times, the Program may elect to make a Direct Selection in which an artist is directly contracted with, without a competitive process. Such an election may occur for any reason, but should only occur in extraordinary circumstances, such as when circumstances make an Open or Limited Competition unfeasible (i.e., project timeline, community or social considerations, client demand, etc.).

### Roster

The Program may, from time to time, use an artist selection panel to create a pool of pre-qualified artists that can be utilized by staff to select artists for defined projects without a separate artist selection.

To create a Roster, the Program would:

- » Issue a general call to artists who are interested in working with a specific genre of projects, such as Signal Boxes or small walls, three-dimensional sculptures for locations such as roundabouts, or placemaking projects. The call to artists would include a general set of selection criteria, and examples of projects that might be commissioned. The call to artists would make clear that being selected for a roster would allow artists to be considered for commissions, but would not guarantee a commission.
- » Create a Task Force / Selection Panel to review the roster responses, and determine which artists should be added to the roster. The Task Force / Selection Panel may also be asked to rank the artists who are added to the roster, at the staff's discretion.

- » A separate Task Force working on a project (such as a roundabout) or a group of projects (such as Small Walls) would then review the appropriate roster to recommend artists for further considerations.
- » Program staff would develop a brief prospectus for the project, which may seek additional information (such as a letter of interest or an interview) and ask the short-listed artists if they would like to apply. The staff would gather artist responses and/or arrange interviews.
- » Program staff would present the responses to the Task Force, which would make its final recommendation of which artists to select.

### Mixed Process

A mixed process may include any combination of the above approaches.

## Criteria for the Selection of Artists

Following are standard criteria that should be considered in every artist selection process. In addition, for each project, there should be criteria specific to that project. All criteria should be clearly stated in the call to artists and used by the Task Force to evaluate artist submissions.

- » *Experience:* Artists shall be selected on the basis of how well their past experience (such as previous public art commissions or other collaborative projects) matches the qualifications that are being sought.
- » *Appropriateness to Project:* Artists should have the ability to respond to the distinctive characteristics of the site and the community it serves;
- » *Collaboration and Communication:* Artists should have demonstrated ability to work successfully as members of an overall project implementation team, including communicating effectively with a variety of groups, including other design professionals, public officials and community members, should be taken into consideration.

To the extent appropriate for the project, artists whose artworks are representative of a variety of media and styles shall be considered, subject to any requirements set forth in the Project Plan and the call to artists.

## Criteria for the Selection of Artworks

Following are standard criteria that should be considered in evaluating artist concepts. In addition, for each project, there should be criteria specific to that project. All criteria should be clearly stated in the call to artists and used by the Task Force to evaluate artist concepts.

- » *Innovation:* Consideration shall be given to the uniqueness and innovation demonstrated by the proposed Concept, in the context of the other selection criteria.
- » *Appropriateness to Site:* Proposed Concepts shall be appropriate in scale, material, form and content to the immediate social and physical environments to which they relate.
- » *Durability and Safety:* Consideration shall be given to integrity of the proposed Concept in relation to the location and anticipated duration of the artwork, considering factors such as theft, vandalism, weathering, excessive maintenance and repair costs.
- » *Community Values:* While free artistic expression is encouraged, consideration must be given to the appropriateness of proposed Concepts in the context of local community and social values.
- » *Public Safety:* The proposed concept should consider the importance of ensuring public safety and avoiding public liability.

## Task Forces (Selection Panels)

In this approach, the role of the traditional selection committee is strengthened and expanded to provide guidance on a wider range of project decision-making than selection committees do now.

The composition of a Task Force would be identified by Program staff and recommended by the RACC. The composition should include representation from the RACC, as well as project stakeholders and the general community where the project is located. This arrangement will help bring more stakeholder knowledge to decision-making, and over time it will create a much larger “alumni pool” of public art advocates who can support the Program.

The scope for each Task Force, as well as the number of meetings that it holds and the duration of its existence, would vary depending on the project, but a Task Force would be expected to be a time-limited entity whose focus is solely on that project.

The RACC member/s of the Task Force would chair the Task Force and be responsible for reporting on the Task Force’s activities and bringing recommendations to the RACC.

In certain circumstances, the RACC could delegate to a Task Force its role in making recommendations to program staff about Artist selection and Artist concept approval. This would be desirable for projects that are small-scale and repeated, such as Art Signals or Small Walls, or for projects that are drawing from a pre-qualified roster and require rapid decision-making, such as placemaking projects.

## Equity and Access

At all stages of an artist recruitment and selection processes, the Public Art Program should implement efforts to reduce barriers to access for artists and to increase the diversity of artists who are encouraged to apply and who are selected. Depending on the nature of the project and the process, these efforts can include steps such as:

- » Directly recruiting artists from communities that are stakeholders for a project
- » Providing ample time for responses to RFQs / RFPs
- » Providing information sessions and individual consulting to support artists preparing their applications
- » Providing alternative opportunities for submissions other than Internet submissions
- » Providing alternative options for written components, such as video statements
- » Requesting biographies as an alternative to resumes
- » Requesting references that can speak to a person's abilities and their likelihood of completing a project, as an alternative to asking about their professional experience
- » Allowing for video interviews

In contracting with artists, the Public Art Program should implement efforts to reduce barriers to access for artists. These can include:

- » Making contract samples available to artists during the artist selection process, so artists can consider their ability to contract as a factor in applying
- » Considering payment schedules that are flexible enough to meet an artist's business models / needs
- » Reconsidering insurance and certification requirements that are arbitrary or unrelated to the core purpose of the contract at hand

## Collection Management

Reno's Public Art Program is the steward of nearly 200 artworks, in a wide variety of media, collected over the past 20 years and located throughout the City. This section of the guidelines sets out the processes by which the Program tracks the Public Art Collection, its composition and its condition.

### Collection Records

Public art project records should be centralized and standardized by Reno's Public Art Program, according to the protocol outlined below.

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
- » 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

There should also be a standardized inventory of all artworks that are added to the Collection as a commission, acquisition or donation. 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
- » Media
- » Dimensions
- » Budget/cost and source of funds
- » A unique number assigned to each artwork

## Periodic Collection Review

Periodically, but preferably at least once every five years, the Public Art Collection should be evaluated in order to assess its makeup and its condition.

## Collection Assessment

The purpose of evaluating the make-up of the Collection is to understand where the Collection has strengths and gaps, in terms of location, media, theme and artist diversity. This information can be used to inform future annual Work Plans and Project Plans, as well as priorities for accessioning artworks through donations and acquisitions, and priorities for deaccessioning.

# Maintenance, Conservation

## Condition Assessment

The purpose of a condition assessment is to document the physical condition of Artworks in the Collection and to inform priorities and budgets for conservation and maintenance.

Periodically, but preferably at least every five years, the program should undertake a condition assessment. The assessment can begin with a visual inspection that allows the program to triage the need for deeper evaluation of Artworks by a professional conservator and for planning future maintenance work.

## Ongoing Conservation and Maintenance

The Program should organize its conservation and maintenance activities as follows.

## Emergency Maintenance and Conservation

This occurs in situations that require immediate attention because of the risk posed to the public, the artwork or the public's enjoyment of the work. This can involve conditions created by vandalism, accidents and extreme weather. Reports of emergency situations should be reported to the Public Art Program and assessed by a conservator before action is taken, if possible. Whenever possible, the program should consult with the artist about the work that is to be done.

## Major Conservation

This occurs long into the life of an artwork when deterioration has set in and the program determines it would like to retain the artwork in its Collection. This requires the services of a professional art conservator or the artist and sometimes involves temporary removal of the artwork from its location. Whenever possible, the Program should consult with the artist about the work that is to be done.

## Scheduled Maintenance

All of the Artworks in the Collection should be placed into a cycle of preventative maintenance ("scheduled maintenance"). The actual protocol for each Artwork would depend on its nature, its materials, instructions that were provided when the Artwork was added to the Collection and the assessment of a conservator.

Examples of scheduled maintenance could include:

- » Regular inspection and cleaning cycle for artworks with painted, stone or metal surfaces or other durable materials.
- » Regular treatment cycle of biocide and water repellent for artworks made of wood or other organic materials.
- » Regular renewal of sacrificial coatings such as wax coatings on bronze, clear coating on murals, and biocides and water repellents on organic substrate.

Scheduled maintenance should be undertaken or overseen by conservators or similarly qualified arts professionals.

## Routine Maintenance

Routine maintenance means work that is undertaken on a routine and as-needed basis. This can include cleaning the artwork and upkeep of the site, such as mowing grass and cutting back vegetation.

## Maintenance and Conservation Work Plan

The Program will develop a maintenance and conservation work plan based on the findings of its periodic condition assessment. Each year, the Program will develop a budget for scheduled maintenance, major conservation and emergency maintenance, and include this budget in its Annual Public Art Work Plan. Conservation and maintenance shall be funded as outlined elsewhere in these guidelines.

## New Additions to the Collection

### Evaluating New Artworks

A good conservation and maintenance protocol also involves assessing new artworks while they are being commissioned, acquired or considered as donations.

- » 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.

When the project is completed, artists, fabricators and donors should provide:

- » Technical specifications of materials, fabrication and installation of all artworks. Include names of vendors and materials / product specifications where appropriate. Include shop drawings or permit drawings as appropriate
- » An estimate of the Artwork's life-span
- » Maintenance protocols for the Artwork

Professional conservators should be retained to review prospective Artwork acquisitions, Donations and maintenance reports from artists.

### Expected Lifespan of Artworks

Every Artwork, when commissioned or otherwise added to the Collection, should be assessed for what its expected lifespan would be. For example, murals, signal boxes and sculptural installations would each have a different expected lifespan. This is a factor of the quality and type of materials, the fabrication and installation methods, Reno's general climate, and any site-specific considerations.

Artworks should be commissioned or added to the Collection with the understanding that the Program makes no commitment to maintaining an Artwork after its expected lifespan. At that time, the Program should reassess whether the Artwork should be retained in the Collection.

### Responsibilities

The Artist shall:

- » guarantee and maintain the Artwork against all defects of material or workmanship for a period of at least one year after installation

is complete,

- » assign manufacturers' and fabricators' warranties to the City, and
- » provide the Program with drawings of the installation and with detailed instructions regarding routine maintenance of the Artwork.

The Program shall:

- » conduct Collection assessments as required by these guidelines,
- » be responsible for routine maintenance of the Artwork, except for site upkeep, and
- » give Artists the opportunity to comment on, and participate in, all repairs and restorations that are made during his or her lifetime.

The department or agency that is responsible for the site where the Artwork is located shall:

- » report any damage to an Artwork to Program staff,
- » consult with Program staff before repairing, modifying, relocating or removing an Artwork, and
- » properly maintain the site where the Artwork is located.

## Donations, Loans, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials

The City will consider accepting Donations, Loans, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials as a way of expanding people's access to public art and helping to meet community needs for cultural and historical expression.

### Review Process

In order to facilitate a fair and consistent assessment of proposals, all Donations, Loans, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials should be considered through a standard proposal process. The Manager should coordinate the review of all aspects related to the acceptance of such proposals, consulting with other City agencies as appropriate and conducting appropriate community engagement.

- » Proposals for Donations and Loans can be accepted from individuals and organizations, while proposals for Commemorative Artworks and Memorials can only be accepted from organizations.
- » Proposals for Loans must be approved by the Arts & Culture Manager and the department responsible for the site where the loan would be located, upon recommendation by the RACC.
- » Proposals for Donations, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials must be approved by City Council, upon recommendation by the RACC, the Arts & Culture Manager and the department responsible for the site.
- » Community input on any proposal can be gathered at a RACC meeting or through other forums.

### Preliminary Inquiry

A donor should begin the process by conferring with the Arts & Culture Manager about the requirements and process for the proposed Donation, Loan, Commemorative Artwork or Memorial to be located on City property. Any City department receiving such an inquiry or proposal should forward it to the Arts & Culture Manager.

### Application

The sponsor of the proposed project should submit an application that includes:

- » Name, address, phone number and email address of the project sponsor or their agent
- » The sponsor's motivation/intent
- » Artist's name, resume, birthplace and date, current address if known, gallery representation if any, and examples of the Artist's previous work
- » Artwork description, including medium, dimensions, weight (if applicable), date created, and description of signature/ inscriptions
- » Artwork title, including proof of absence of liens
- » Proposed site and installation plans
- » Estimated value of the Artwork, as determined by a professional art appraiser (if the Artwork is existing)
- » Photographs of proposed donation
- » Estimated cost and commitment to funding installation
- » Estimated cost and contribution for maintenance and conservation
- » Proof of insurance sufficient to meet

applicable City requirements

For donations:

- » Appraisal of the Artwork's value
- » Current location of the Artwork
- » Current condition of the Artwork, including conservation history or conservator's report
- » Maintenance recommendations prepared by a professional conservator, including an estimate of the annual cost of maintenance, susceptibility of the Artwork to damage and vandalism, any potential danger to the public and any special insurance requirements

### Review

The Arts & Culture Manager will facilitate an evaluation of the proposed donation to determine whether it is in keeping with the City's overall goals, policies and plans. The review will consist of the following steps:

- » City staff should review the application to ensure that it meets all technical requirements, such as how the Artwork is integrated into its site, and confirm what permits are required.
  - » City staff may return the proposal for additional information, without any further action required.
  - » The proposal should not proceed to RACC or community review until the City staff have confirmed that the proposal meets all technical requirements.
- » The RACC should review the application to ensure that it meets the City's definition and criteria for a Donation, Loan, Commemorative Artwork or Memorial.

- » The RACC can recommend approval or disapproval of the proposal, or return the proposal for additional information.
- » Community members in the area of the proposal location can provide input at the RACC meeting where the proposal is discussed. The Arts & Culture Manager can organize other means of collecting community input as they deem necessary.
- » RACC and staff recommendations should be forwarded to the Arts & Culture Manager and the department responsible for the site where the project would be located.

### Approval

- » Proposals for Loans must be approved by the Arts & Culture Manager and the department responsible for the site where the loan would be located, upon recommendation from the RACC.
- » Proposals for Donations, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials must be approved by City Council, upon recommendation by the RACC, the Arts & Culture Manager and the department responsible for the site.

### Review Criteria

Proposals for donations will be subject to the technical and aesthetic review criteria below. Proposals for commemorative artworks or memorials will also be subject to the additional considerations outlined below.

### Criteria for Technical Review

Technical review shall be undertaken by City

staff, including consultation with any personnel specifically responsible for the site or facility where the Artwork would be located. The review should consider the following factors:

- » *Donor Status:* Commemorative Artworks and Memorials can only be proposed by organizations, not by individuals.
- » *Ownership:* The Artwork can be legally given to the City.
- » *Financial Costs:* The financial costs associated with the Artwork have been adequately anticipated and the donor can provide funding to cover those costs. Costs include, but are not limited to, shipping, insurance, site preparation, installation, dedication, signage and lighting. Costs also include a contribution to an endowment for maintenance.
- » *Safety and Liability:* The Artwork and its installation are durable, meet applicable codes, and do not pose any safety or liability concerns.
- » *Durability, Maintenance and Conservation:* The Artwork demonstrates structural soundness, surface integrity and inherent resistance to theft, vandalism, weathering and excessive maintenance. Each Artwork should be assessed for its expected lifespan. There should be an assessment, including maintenance recommendations, from a professional public art conservator.
- » *Availability of Site:* The proposed site is available for the installation of Artwork. Any necessary electrical, plumbing or other utility requirements have been defined and are available.
- » *Appropriateness of Site:* The proposed siting respects existing officially adopted City plans as well as documented intentions

of the community, and is consistent with the current and anticipated use of the site.

- » *Permitting:* The donor has identified any other permits that are necessary for the Artwork's placement and installation.
- » *Signage:* Identification and interpretive information can be provided adequately to people of all abilities.

### Criteria for Aesthetic Review

Aesthetic review shall be undertaken by the RACC and shall consider the following criteria:

#### Artistic Merit

- » The Artwork must meet the definition of "public art," and the Artist must meet the definition of "artist," as included in the City's public art ordinance.
- » A Donation or a Commemorative Artwork should have an artistic intent, as determined by the Artist.
- » A Donation or a Commemorative Artwork should reflect the same standards of quality that would be applied to an Artwork if the City were commissioning it.
- » A Donation, Commemorative Artwork or Memorial should not include logos, text, names or colors reflective of or proprietary to any entity that commissions, funds or provides a location for the project (except on an identification plaque).

## Context

- » Artwork(s) must be compatible in scale, material, form and content with the proposed location, and compatible with existing approved community or area plans, especially public realm strategies. Consideration should also be given to the architectural, historical, geographical and social/cultural context of the site or community, as well as the way people may interact with the Artwork(s).

## Diversity

- » The Artwork will result in an improvement of the City's Public Art Collection as a whole, and improve the Collection's reflection of the artistic traditions and practices of the community, including its newest members and those whose cultural traditions are underrepresented in the Public Art Collection.

## Additional Considerations for Commemorative Artworks and Memorials

The Program and the RACC shall also consider the following additional criteria in reviewing Commemorative Artworks and Memorials that are proposed for City property or are seeking City funding:

- » Proposals 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 Reno's history.
- » Proposals 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 the city, rather than the state or the nation.

- » Proposals that recognize individuals should not be considered until at least ten years after the death of the individual. Proposals that commemorate an historical event 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.
- » Proposals that recognize organizations in general, or specific topics including but not limited to historical events, disasters or health-related themes, should only be considered if it can be demonstrated that there are circumstances particular to Reno.
- » Proposals must not duplicate the themes or subject matter of an existing commemorative artwork or memorial elsewhere in the city.
- » Proposals shall not in any circumstances depict subjects that are trademarked or commercially licensed.

## Priorities

When assessing proposals for Donations, Loans, Commemorative Artworks and Memorials, the Program and the RACC will also consider the following priorities:

- » The ease of public access to the location of the Artwork, particularly for underserved communities

- » Improving the distribution of public art throughout the city, particularly to underserved communities
- » The inclusion of public art that reflects the artistic traditions and practices of Reno's diverse communities

In addition, when assessing proposals for Commemorative Artworks and Memorials, the Program and the RACC will also consider the following priority:

- » Projects that explore the histories and narratives of communities that are underrepresented in the city's existing commemorative artworks or memorials

## Equity Considerations

In assessing proposals for commemorative artworks and memorials, the City acknowledges that the considerations above may make it difficult for traditionally underrepresented communities and for communities who have more recently arrived in the city to have their histories and voices recognized. Recognizing this, the Program will pursue the following strategies to ensure the histories and voices of these communities have a presence in the City's Public Art Collection:

- » Initiate conversations with community members, City staff and elected officials about the ways that a community's voices, histories and traditions can be recognized in public spaces. Consider the goals that a community may have for doing so (for example, making its presence visible, sustaining its stories and traditions) and artistic approaches for doing so.

- » Consider Artworks that focus on a community, its ideals, its traditions and its recent experiences, as opposed to historic events and individuals.
- » Create processes for allowing spontaneous and otherwise unsanctioned Artworks that are created in response to current events.
- » Consider alternative means of collecting and telling histories that have been missing from the dominant culture, by a range of people whose experiences have contributed, or are currently contributing, to the community.

### Exceptions to the Review Process for Gifts or Loans of Artworks

Gifts of state presented to the City by foreign governments or other political jurisdictions of the United States (municipal, state, national) that may be accepted by the Reno City Council on behalf of the City shall be reviewed as follows:

- » Permanent placement of Artworks of substantial scale, suitable and accessible for public display, shall be determined jointly by the City agency or department with jurisdiction over the site and the RACC.
- » Appropriate recognition and publicity shall be the responsibility of the City agency or department with jurisdiction over the site of permanent placement of the artwork, with advance notification to the Program and the RACC.
- » If not provided by the donor, maintenance of the Artwork shall be the responsibility of City agency or department with jurisdiction over the site, in consultation with the Program and the RACC.

## Acquisitions

### Acquisition of Artworks by the Public Art Program

From time to time the Public Art Program may wish to acquire an Artwork, rather than commission an original artwork.

An Acquisition can be considered in the following circumstances:

- » The Acquisition fills a gap in the makeup of the Collection, as identified in a previous collection report
- » The Acquisition addresses an opportunity or need identified in an adopted City plan created by another department or agency
- » The Acquisition fulfills a broader purpose as expressed in the Public Art Master Plan and an Annual Work Plan
- » There is a proposed site for the Acquisition and the City agency in control of the site is agreeable to the placement of Artwork

To ensure Artworks are acquired with full consideration and due diligence, the Program will follow its process for Donations in evaluating Acquisitions. Should the Acquisition be approved through this process, the Artwork would be added to the City's Public Art Collection.

### Acquisition of Artworks by City Agencies Outside the Public Art Program

From time to time, City agencies may be interested in acquiring an Artwork with their own funds, outside of the Public Art Program's commissioning process.

To ensure Artworks are acquired with full consideration and due diligence, agencies are encouraged to follow the Program's process for Donations. Should the acquisition be approved through this process, the Artwork would be added to the City's Public Art Collection. If the process is not followed, then the Artwork would be the full responsibility of the acquiring agency; the Artwork would not be added to the City's Public Art Collection and the Program would have no responsibility for the Artwork going forward.

### General Acquisition Review Standards

- » Acquisition of Artworks into the Public Art Collection implies a commitment to the ongoing preservation, protection, maintenance and display of the artworks for the public benefit;
- » Acquisition of Artworks, whatever the source of funding, should imply permanency within the Public Art Collection, so long as physical integrity, identity and authenticity are retained, and so long as the physical sites for the artworks remain intact; and
- » In general, Artworks should be acquired without legal or ethical restrictions as to future use and disposition, except with respect to copyrights and other clearly defined residual rights.

## Relocating, Removing and Deaccessioning Public Art

The City retains the right to relocate, remove or deaccession any Artwork in the Public Art Collection, acknowledging that such actions should be taken only in rare or unusual circumstances.

In order to facilitate a fair and consistent assessment of proposals, the Arts & Culture Manager should coordinate the review of all aspects related to the acceptance of such proposals, consulting with other City agencies as appropriate and conducting appropriate community engagement.

An Artwork may be relocated, removed or deaccessioned from the Collection only upon recommendation of the RACC and approval of the Arts & Culture Manager, who may at their discretion refer the decision to the City Manager or City Council. Before such a recommendation can be made, the following process must be followed and criteria must be considered.

This process for relocating, removing or deaccessioning an Artwork should operate independently from short-term public pressures and fluctuations in artistic or community taste. There should be a strong presumption against removing Artworks from display or deaccessioning them from the Collection.

Before such a recommendation can be made, the following process must be followed and criteria must be considered. During the review process, the Artwork shall remain accessible to the public in its original location.

### Criteria for Relocation, Removal or Deaccessioning

#### Conditions for Relocation

An Artwork can be recommended for relocation from its site only if reasonable cause has been established by one or more of the following conditions, and if there is an appropriate location to which the Artwork can be moved.

- » The site of the Artwork is no longer owned by the City
- » The site is to be altered in a manner in which the preservation of the Artwork is no longer feasible
- » The use or function of the site may have changed, the Artwork may have lost its contextual meaning, and/or the Artwork interferes with the operation of the site
- » The condition or security of the Artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed in its present location
- » The Artwork poses a public hazard at its present location
- » Relocation has been requested by the Artist or the agency displaying the Artwork

#### Conditions for Removal from Display

An Artwork can be recommended for removal from its site only if reasonable cause has been established by one or more conditions above, and if all of the conditions below are met:

- » One or more of the criteria for relocation above has been met
- » There is currently no alternative site for displaying the Artwork

- » The Artwork's condition would not allow it to be displayed elsewhere
- » The Artwork could not retain its artistic integrity even if it were displayed elsewhere
- » There is a no public interest in displaying the Artwork elsewhere
- » The Artist will not allow the Artwork to be displayed elsewhere

#### Conditions for Deaccessioning

An Artwork can be recommended for deaccessioning only if reasonable cause has been established by one or more conditions listed in "relocation," and if all any of the conditions below are met:

- » The Artwork, when commissioned, was agreed to have a limited time duration
- » The Artwork is so intrinsically related to the site that it cannot maintain its artistic integrity in another location
- » The Artwork has been damaged or has deteriorated to the point that it can no longer be represented to be the original Artwork
- » The Artwork has been damaged or has deteriorated, or has inherent faults of design or workmanship, such that repair or remedy is impractical or unfeasible
- » The Artwork has received documented and unabated adverse reaction from a measurably large number of citizens and/or organizations based within the community where the artwork is located over at least five years and modifications of the Artwork as per discussions with the artist are not possible

- » The Artwork is proved to be inauthentic or in violation of existing copyright laws
- » Deaccessioning is requested by the Artist

## Procedures for Relocating, Removing or Deaccessioning an Artwork

### Initiating the Process

Any request for relocating or deaccessioning an Artwork shall be submitted to the Arts & Culture Manager, who shall take the following steps to inform stakeholders of the request and develop a report and recommendation for the review and recommendation of the RACC.

### Informing Stakeholders

The Manager will ensure that all necessary stakeholders are aware of the process to relocate or deaccession an Artwork by:

- » consulting with the Artist about the Artist's intentions for the work and, in the case of a deaccessioning, the Artist's interest in reclaiming the Artwork,
- » consulting with the affected City agency/ agencies and other site stakeholders
- » consulting the donor of the Artwork, if it was a Donation, and
- » providing appropriate notification to the public at large.

The Manager shall collect and record feedback from the Artist, the stakeholders, the public at large and the donor (if any).

### Report and Recommendation

The Manager will prepare a report that includes a staff evaluation and recommendation along with the following information:

- » Background on the Artwork and the Artist, including the circumstances of how it was added to the Collection, the commission or acquisition price, and any written commentary about the Artwork
- » Analysis of the reasons for relocation, removal or deaccessioning
- » In cases where action is recommended due to deterioration, threat to public safety, ongoing controversy, or lack of artistic quality, the opinions of independent professionals qualified to comment on the concern prompting review (such as conservators, engineers, architects, critics, safety experts etc.)
- » Review of any restrictions that may apply to the disposition of the Artwork, based on contract review or the condition of the Artwork, and opinion of the City Attorney;
- » Appraised value of the Artwork, if obtainable;
- » Feedback from the Artist, the donor, stakeholders and the public at large

In the case of relocating or removing an Artwork:

- » a recommendation for the new location for the Artwork or for storing the Artwork

In the case of deaccessioning an Artwork:

- » a recommendation for the disposition of the Artwork.

### Approval

The Manager will send the report to the RACC for its review and recommendation. The RACC may recommend for or against the relocation, removal or deaccession proposal, or may request further information or public input.

The Manager can accept the RACC recommendation, reject the RACC recommendation, or send it to the City Manager or City Council for further consideration.

### Protocol for the Disposition of Deaccessioned Artworks

When an Artwork is going to be deaccessioned, the following procedure should be followed, in the order listed, to the extent that the condition and artistic integrity of the Artwork allow:

- » Offer the Artwork to a museum, to be held on loan
- » Offer the Artwork to other public facilities or schools, to be held on loan
- » Offer the Artwork to the Artist at price or for an exchange
- » If the Artwork is refused by museums, other public facilities and the artist, it should be sold or auctioned, and funds from the sale of Artworks should be deposited into the Public Art Fund
- » Destruction is considered a last resort, primarily when an Artwork is deteriorated or damaged beyond repair and/or loaning, donating or selling the Artwork is not possible

### Visual Artists Rights Act

All relocations and deaccessions 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.

### Recordkeeping

In the event of a relocation or deaccession, the City shall keep pertinent records about the Artwork, with information on the object and donor history, photographs, published articles, conservation/ restoration records, appraisals, and other relevant records. The City shall also document the process and outcome of the relocation, removal or deaccession, including full information about the disposition of the Artwork.

## Public Art in Private Development

Public art commissioned by a private entity on private property as part of a development that receives City assistance or that is commissioned in fulfillment of a code requirement, shall be administered under these guidelines. Alternatively, the developer can propose an alternative commissioning process, which must be approved by the Arts & Culture Manager upon recommendation of the RACC.

Private developers participating in the Program shall be given an opportunity to serve on the Task Forces developing a Project Plan, selecting the Artist and reviewing the Artist's concept.

The property owner shall hold title to the Artwork and shall be responsible for its ongoing maintenance and conservation. The City shall have no obligation to provide for the preservation and maintenance of Artworks placed on private property, and shall encourage the developer to retain up to ten percent of their public art funds to create a maintenance endowment.

Though the Artwork will not formally be part of the Collection, it can be relocated, removed or deaccessioned only through the process outlined in these guidelines.

### Other Private Development Projects

Public art that is commissioned with private funds on private property that receives no City assistance or is not fulfilling a code requirement shall not be required to adhere to these guidelines.

The property owner shall hold title to the Artwork and shall be responsible for its ongoing maintenance and conservation. The Program may support such projects by offering access to any of its rosters.

# Appendix 3

## Public Art in Zoning

As of the writing of this plan in February, 2025, the Reno Annexation and Land Development Code includes the following references to the terms “Artwork” and “Public Art.”

### Chapter 18.02 Zoning Districts

#### 18.02.603 Neighborhood Planning Area Overlay Districts

(g) Wells Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area (WANP) Overlay District

(8) Wells Avenue Mixed-Use (WA-MU)

k. Pedestrian Amenities

1. Pedestrian Amenities Required
2. Approved Pedestrian Amenities. Pedestrian amenities used to satisfy the above standards shall include three or more of the following:

[g] Public art (e.g., sculptures, murals, water elements, carvings, frescos, mosaics, and mobiles);

### Chapter 18.04 Development Standards

#### 18.04.1003 General Standards for Mixed-Use Districts

*Applies to a wide variety of downtown mixed-use, commercial, neighborhood center districts.*

(a) Site layout and development pattern

(6) Pedestrian amenities

- a. Pedestrian amenities including walkways (outside of and through buildings), plazas, artwork, fountains, seating, landscaping, and recreational facilities in any combination shall be provided in an amount equal to one percent of the entire project's costs, exclusive of land and financing for buildings

c. Building design

5. Parking structures

[c] Pedestrian-oriented design elements, such as, but not limited to the following, shall be incorporated into the ground-floor of parking structures to screen cars and provide visual interest:

3. Public art

#### 18.04.1004 Supplemental Standards for Downtown Districts

*Applies to a wide variety of downtown mixed-use, commercial, neighborhood center districts.*

(c) Mixed-Use Downtown Riverwalk (MD-RD) District

(6) Design Standards

b. Blank Walls Limitation

2. On other street frontages, at least 50 percent of the width of a new or reconstructed first-story building wall facing a street shall be devoted to pedestrian entrances, display windows or windows affording views into retail, office, restaurant, lobby space, public art, or other similar architectural features.

#### 18.04.1006 Supplemental Standards for Large Retail Establishments

*Applies to a wide variety of downtown mixed-use, commercial, neighborhood center districts.*

(h) Site Amenities

(2) Standards for Site Amenities

b. Allowed Site Amenities. Site amenities shall consist of at least two of the following:

7. Public Art

#### 18.04.1103 General Standards for Nonresidential Districts

*Applies to a small number of industrial, commercial, airport and employment districts.*

(c) Building design

(5) Parking Structures

c. Pedestrian-oriented design elements, such as, but not limited to the following, shall be incorporated into the ground-floor of parking structures to screen cars and provide visual interest:

3. Public Art

### Chapter 18.09 Rules of Construction

#### Hardscape

Decorative materials included within a landscape area such as large boulders, public art, decorative walkways, turf blocks, and plazas, excluding public sidewalks.

#### Sign / Architectural Graphic

A painted design, mural, relief, mosaic or similar feature of an artistic nature which is incorporated into the architectural design of a building and conveys no advertising message. *Note that the term “architectural graphic” does not appear elsewhere in the code*

#### Public Art

*Note that the term “public art” is not defined in the code*

## **Reno Public Art Master Plan Update**

### **Prepared for**

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City of Reno Arts and Culture Commission

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