

City of Berkeley ARTS & CULTURE PLAN UPDATE 2017



Public Art Policy Working Group Meeting Summary May 2017

Introduction

On April 27, 2017, a small collection of local leaders in the arts community convened for the Public Art Policy Working Group as part of the outreach process for the City of Berkeley's [Arts and Culture Plan Update](#). The purpose of the Policy Working Group is to assist the City in identifying policy improvements and action steps for the Public Art Program.

Jamillah Jordan, MIG, Inc, and Ted Russell facilitated the working group meeting. Ten participants attended the meeting including Civic Arts Commissioners, City staff and other stakeholders with public art expertise. The Policy Working Group focused their discussion on three key questions:

- How can **current policies** be improved to increase the visibility, quality and funding for public art in Berkeley?
- What **criteria** are key for the City to use in allocating public funds for public art?
- What **elements** are important to include within Berkeley's Public Art Plan?

This document summarizes the ideas, comments and recommendations that emerged from the Policy Working Group's discussion.

Participants

Organization Name	Name
Another Bullwinkel Show; UC Chancellor Community Partnership	Lisa Bullwinkel
City of Berkeley	Jessica Moreno
City of Berkeley	Jordan Klein
City of Berkeley	Mary Ann Merker

Civic Arts Commission	Jen Lowvorn
Civic Arts Commission	Kim Anno
Downtown Berkeley Association	John Caner
Local Resident; Former Civic Arts Commissioner	David Snippen
MIG, Inc	Beth Martin
MIG, Inc	Jamillah Jordan
Shotgun Players; Berkeley Cultural Trust	Patrick Dooley
Ted Russell Consulting	Ted Russell Consulting
Telegraph Business Improvement District	Stuart Baker

Regional and National Trends in Public Art

Ted Russell presented best practices and trends in public art around the country. Mr. Russell highlighted a recent Americans for the Arts (AFTA) study titled “Americans Speak Out about the Arts,” which examines perceptions and attitudes about the arts in the United States. A key finding of the report is that the public is enjoying art beyond traditional arts at remarkable levels. Mr. Russell mentioned San Jose’s and San Diego’s Public Art Plans that explore topics such as branding for cultural tourism and placing art in high-traffic locations. Please see **Appendix A** for Mr. Russell’s presentation.

Current Public Art Policies

The City’s current guide to the public art process, developed in 2004, the following aspirational mission statement:

The City of Berkeley Public Art Program will enliven and beautify the City’s environment. The program will encourage and promote awareness of the City’s rich ethnic, social, and cultural diversity as expressed through visual and design arts. The Public Art Program will enhance the visual environment for the citizens of Berkeley, integrate the design work of artists into the development of City public works projects, and promote tourism and economic vitality of the City through the enhancement of public spaces.

Current public art policies, programs and related plans in the City of Berkeley include:

- One-Percent for Public Art in Private Development Ordinance
- General Public Art Plan

- Telegraph District Public Art Plan
- Assessment of the City's Public Art Collection
- Neighborhood planning efforts (e.g., Adeline Corridor Plan)

The Policy Working Group discussed the following topics:

- **Public Art by Public Works versus City of Berkeley** – The group was interested in knowing how many pieces of public art were completed in partnership of Public Works in contrast to the City of Berkeley. They would like to see the number of public art pieces placed in the last five years. One participant would like a staff member from Public Works to be more involved in the Plan Update.
- **Codify Process for Festival Grants** – A few of the participants were interested in codifying a process for how the City gives funding for arts-related festivals. There is currently a large discrepancy in how festivals are funded. An audit of funding given to past festivals can be paired with a discussion of how to create signature art festivals in Berkeley.
- **Public Art by Local Artists** – One participant was interested in why the City does not have a “local preference” clause for its public art. Others responded that because of issues of affordability, there are few local artists that live in Berkeley.
- **Percent for Public Art** – Participants expressed concern that the current discount for developers to provide money in lieu of building public art is not low enough to encourage developers to use it. One participant mentioned that it may be worth considering how the in-lieu funds can be dedicated for public art in the vicinity of the development, which would incentivize developers to do in-lieu funding. Business improvement districts (BIDs) may be able to help coordinate this planning.
- **City-wide Department Coordination** – Jordan Klein, acting Director of Economic Development at City of Berkeley, is working to coordinate communication for the Plan Update across the city departments.
- **Community Created Art** – Participants discussed the role that community-created art should play in future public art pieces. Lisa Bullwinkel indicated that it can be done, referencing her work on the art mosaic tiles that the community designed at the bollards on Ashby Avenue.

Criteria for Allocating Funds for Public Art

Jamillah Jordan facilitated the next discussion which focused on identifying key criteria for the City to use in allocating public funds for public art. The Policy Working Group generated the following list of criteria:

- **Equity** – Participants would like to see public art funds distributed equitably, and participants acknowledged that this would include a deeper discussion of the meaning of equity in funding.
- **Quality** – Overall, public art should be measured by the standard of being high quality, world-class art.
- **Place-making** – Public art should interactive, place-making elements (e.g., Instagram moment) that have a distinctive, “wow” factor to attract tourists and residents.
- **Participatory Art** – Participants would like to see more public art that is more experiential and participatory in nature.
- **Access and Visibility** – Public art should be evaluated based on who has access to the art. In addition, how can the number of impressions or viewings for artwork be measured? For example, there are pieces of artwork in City Hall that are obscured behind infrastructure.
- **Multi-generational Experience** – Public art should speak to and engage many generations of residents and visitors in Berkeley.
- **Cultural Themes** – A participant suggested that public art should reflect cultural themes relevant to the Berkeley’s context and civic identity.
- **Economic Development** – Participants thought that public art should be evaluated by how it can promote tourism and other forms of economic development.
- **Site Assessment** – A few participants suggested that a site assessment of existing and new public art sites be conducted by the City.
- **Community Engagement** – Through the 2017 Arts and Culture Plan Update process, the City has an opportunity to engage the public to “groundtruth” and validate ideas on location and types of public art.
- **Permanent Public Art** – While there was not unanimous agreement on this, some Policy Working Group members suggested that funding should prioritize permanent (durable and lasting) public art pieces versus temporary public art.
- **Maintenance** – A commitment to maintaining and caring for Berkeley’s public art collection is essential.
- **Public and Private Realms** – A few participants recommended a balance between public art in both private and public realms.
- **Curatorial vs. Crowdsourcing** – Participants suggested that the City’s public art collection should include both art pieces curated by the Civic Arts Commission as well as crowdsourced art, that allows for greater interaction between artists and the public.
- **Partnerships** – Funding for public art should look at partnerships with other private and public entities to leverage resources. Other partners mentioned

included: Telegraph Business Improvement District, South Berkeley Legacy Project, Lorin District, Berkeley Partners for Parks, Commissions, Department of Public Works, local artists, Visitors Bureau, and Kala Art Institute.

Berkeley Public Art Plan

The Policy Working Group members also discussed important elements to include in the City's Public Art Plan, which is currently being developed by MIG, Inc. Overall, participants agreed that the Telegraph Avenue Public Art Plan served as a good model to follow, both in the process of development and final content. In addition, the following elements were discussed:

- **Performing Art Component** – Participants would like the Public Art Plan to include performing arts as a type of public art. One participant noted the success of “symphony in the park.”
- **Arts in Parks** – The Policy Working Group would like to see the Public Art Plan address public art in Berkeley's park system. There is a potential for public safety funds to be used for public art in parks.
- **Regional Approach** – Participants would like the Public Art Plan to look regionally at how the greater East Bay can become an arts destination, and how Berkeley fits within that concept.
- **Artist Census** – One participant thought that the artist census done in West Berkeley was important to highlight the number of artists living and working in Berkeley. How can this be done for the entire city?
- **Key Locations** – The Plan should identify areas that would be prime candidates for public art in the future.
- **Art in Transit Center** – Participants would like to see public art included at transit centers.
- **Showcase Existing Collection** – Participants discussed the there are some public art pieces owned by the City that are not prominently displayed. The Plan can address how to move or highlight existing public art that residents and visitors may not know about.

Next Steps

The Planning Team will incorporate the recommendations and ideas from the Policy Working Group into a set of draft policy improvements and action steps. Building on the input generated from the Policy Working Group, the Planning Team will also develop a high-level Public Art Plan to guide the activities and priorities for public art over the five to ten years in the City.