

PUBLIC ART

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PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS

Importance and Potential. Public art can delight and engage those who encounter it, and should play a vital role in making Downtown a local and regional center for culture and community life. Art will help promote Downtown as a unique place and appealing destination, and stimulate economic development through cultural tourism.

Art has the potential of expressing the community's values and aspirations for the Downtown. It can draw attention to Downtown's history, its architecture, and its function as a center of commerce, education, and the arts. It can reinforce Berkeley's commitment to environmental sustainability in a variety of ways such as referring to the natural systems to which Downtown is connected, reusing cast off materials, or incorporating "green" features. Context-sensitive installations would also help harmonize and give consistency while still offering variety and providing artistic freedom.

Art, if mindfully conceived and positioned, can be used to accentuate public plazas, focal points, and other key locations. Locations that are or will become visually prominent are ideal locations for major and permanent installations. While several works of art are anticipated, the commissioning one major and singularly-exceptional work of art could embody aspirations for Downtown's rebirth.

Facing Page. Art & Placemaking. *Public art engages people and can play an important role in making Downtown a unique destination.*

Public art need not be limited to large sculptures but can also be incorporated into features found throughout the Downtown. Utility boxes, bike racks, benches, transit shelters, and banners are examples of more commonplace opportunities for functional art that add whimsy, provoking interest, and making Downtown Berkeley more special.

Temporary installations can make Downtown dynamic with an ever-evolving canvas. Temporary installations could convert a parking space into an outdoor room, or turn a blank wall into a light show. Temporary installations can also be the subject of special events, attractions, or festivals.

Temporary installations can explore ideas without demanding a long-term commitment. Such works can allow artists to experiment with challenging themes or media. Temporary art can provide an opportunity for fund raising when the art is sold.

Through an inclusive process, art can embody Berkeley's collaborative spirit. Merchants, theatres, museum, and historic preservationists are among the many Downtown stakeholders who could work with artists so that the resulting art will be broadly enjoyed and sensitive to its context. Community members can also participated directly to create large mosaic sculptures and murals.

Citywide Policy Context. In 1985, the City of Berkeley passed a Visual Art Ordinance that established the process for the selection of Public Art in the city. In 1991 an Ordinance was passed that gave the Civic Arts Commission the power to choose the artist and the site. In 1999 the "1.5% for Art" Resolution was passed that set the process for city funding for

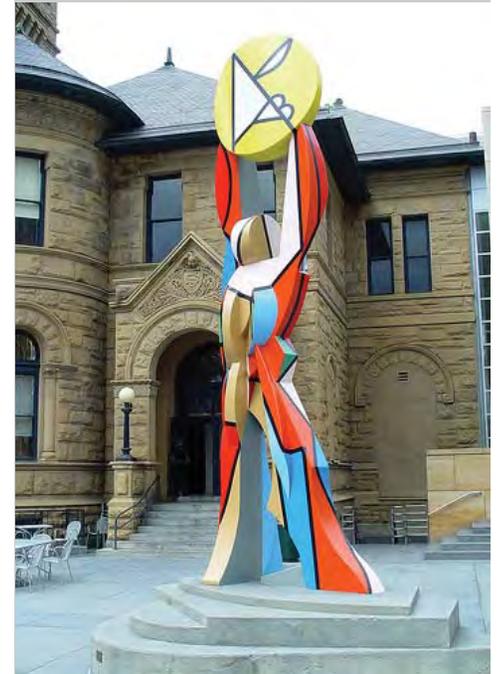


Figure j.1. Major Works of Art. *Italo Scanga's permanent installation, "Figure Holding the Sun" located on the plaza of the San Jose Museum of Art (SJMA).*



Figure j.2. Temporary Art. *Charles Gadeken's "El Corazon" created for San Francisco's temporary "Hearts for the Arts" installation.*



Figure j.3. Functional Art. Musician David Byrne's functional art bicycle rack design "The Ladies' Mile."



Figure j.4. Transit Canopies. Transit cover on San Francisco MUNI above-ground station features functional art.



Figure j.5. Banners. Banner in San Francisco's Lower Haight District.

public art only on City property. This public art money comes as a portion of the capital construction budget for public improvements and must be written into public bond measures that pertain. 1.5% for Art money can only be spent on permanent installations (fine art or functional art) and cannot be spent on temporary installations.

In 2001 the "Guidelines for Public Art" process was published that clarifies specifics on carrying out all the above. A complete "Guide to the Public Art Process in Berkeley" publication can be seen on line at: http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/City_Manager/Level_3_-_Civic_Arts/Public%20Art%20Process%20Guide.pdf.

The Downtown Measure S projects were the first phase of the Public Art Program. These projects were funded by a voter bond issue passed for Downtown improvements. These

projects include the sidewalk poetry walk and artworks on Addison Street, the hand carved Library Gates in the Central Public Library, and the two large downtown sculptures.

At the time of this writing, the Civic Arts Commission has formed a committee to look into the establishment of a Private Percent for Art program that would require private developers to contribute 1.5% of their capital budget for public art. Private Percent for Art would follow the same practices as the 1.5% for Art program that applies to public improvements (as outlined above).

The Civic Arts Commission and staff have researched new directions in public art from the City of Santa Monica, the County of Los Angeles, and other jurisdictions that use funding from private developers to fund permanent and temporary installations, including produc-



Figure j.6. Addison Street Arts District. Addison Street Art and Poetry Walk.



Figure j.7. Sidewalk Poetry. Sidewalk inlay by local poetry artist featured on Addison Street Art and Poetry Walk.

tions by film and video and arts nonprofits. Consideration for similar funding opportunities is included below.

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policy 7.1. Aspirations & Opportunities. Use art to embody Berkeley’s aspirations for a vibrant Downtown. Take advantage of abundant opportunities for public art throughout Downtown.

- a. Continue to promote major permanent installations through Berkeley’s “1.5% for Art” program, which dedicates one percent of budget of capital projects to develop and install permanent art, and an additional half percent to cover associated administrative costs. Seek additional funding of public art from major businesses and institutions, and developers active in Downtown.
- b. As a near-term priority, install one major and aspirational work of art at a prominent location Downtown. Develop a process and funding to commission a world-renowned artist. Use this process as a way to bring stakeholders together and bring attention to Downtown art and revitalization.
- c. Promote functional art, such as street furnishings, bicycle racks, kiosks, manhole covers, and newsracks. Give special consideration to “play art” to engage children and bring more families Downtown. Explore opportunities for incorporating public art within BART and AC Transit improvements. Develop concepts for functional art in cooperation with interested agencies and the Civic Arts Commission.

- d. Take advantage of commonplace or “ubiquitous” opportunities for art, such as utility boxes and banners, especially for providing art in the near-term. Seek sponsorship by nearby merchants and cultural stakeholders, who might play a special role in their design.
- e. Consider ways to encourage temporary installations including but not limited to: freestanding pieces, temporary furnishings, sidewalk renderings, and light shows. Consider ways to associate temporary installations with special and seasonal events. Look into how funding would occur, since temporary installations cannot be funded using existing programs.
- f. Encourage the participation of Downtown’s cultural and educational stakeholders, such as Berkeley City College’s media programs, the Berkeley Art Museum and



Figure j.9. Community Building. In San Francisco’s 24th Street Mini Park, the mosaic dragon, “Quetzalcoatl,” was implemented by community members under the direction of an artist.



Figure j.8. Parklets. Temporary “parklet” furnishing designed by Rebar Group along San Francisco’s 22nd Street.



Figure j.10. Pedestrian Barriers. Art can keep pedestrians from jaywalking.



Figures j.11 (above) & j.12 (at right). *Art from Recycled Materials.* Dan Das Mann and Karen Cusolito's temporary sculpture, "Ecstasy" in San Francisco's "Patricia's Green". This work of art can be enjoyed at a distance but also up close, where individual pieces of recycled metal can be appreciated.

Pacific Film Archive, and Downtown's live theaters and cinemas.

- g. Where railings or planter boxes will be used within street rights-of-ways, encourage restaurateurs and merchants to use appropriate and artful motifs
- h. Consider ways for Berkeleyans to participate directly in creating art, such as Venice California's "graffiti wall" and San Francisco 24th Street's mosaic dragon.

Policy 7.2, Placement. Art should be a pedestrian amenity and engage visitors to Downtown.

- a. Recognize locations with visual prominence and give them special consideration for major and permanent installations.



Prominent locations include public plazas, "vistas" and other focal points along frequently traveled paths (see Figure j.16).

- b. Public art should be accessible to people on foot and in wheelchairs. Avoid locations that are not along pedestrian routes, such as in medians.
- c. Design development for street & open space projects should define suitable locations for art and explore ways to create synergies between art and programmatic elements. The Civic Arts Commission should be consulted as part of this design development process.
- d. District-wide installations should be considered. Take advantage of the way people typically move through Downtown through the coordinated and rhythmic use of banners or other expressions.
- e. Public art should be considered as a way to help visitors navigate Downtown. (See also "Signage & Wayfinding") Linear installations can mark paths to points of interest, and might include distinctive light features, or sidewalks imprinted or with metal inlays.
- f. Public art should not conflict with wheelchair access, swinging car doors, transit stops, or access to fire hydrants. Baricades may be required for detection by persons with visual impairments.
- g. The Department of Public Works shall be consulted as the location of art is decided, so that Department concerns are addressed, such as its proximity to utilities and sight lines for traffic.

Policy 7.3, Context-Sensitive Art. Public art should be appropriate to Downtown. While varied and creative expressions are encouraged, permanent art installations should support surrounding uses, reinforce Downtown themes (described below), complement sub-districts of special character, and harmonize with Downtown’s visual character. Temporary installations need not give context-sensitive considerations as much emphasis, so that it can be more experimental.

- a. All art should be reviewed, selected and installed consistent with the Ordinance on “Visual Art in Public Places.” In the Downtown Area, selection panels (or one selection panel) should be comprised of three consultants (as required) but also at least one representative of: the Civic Arts Commission, Design Review Committee, Landmarks Preservation Commission, and Downtown Berkeley Association.
- b. Merchants and cultural stakeholders in the vicinity of the proposed installation should be consulted during the review process and before the panel makes its final recommendation to the Civic Arts Commission.
- c. Encourage compatibility within Downtown’s unique setting by spelling out the following provisions in Berkeley’s “Guidelines for Public Art.”
 - Projects should relate to a site’s “existing or future architectural features, ... historic geographical and social/cultural context, ...[and] surrounding neighborhood.”
 - Proposals should be evaluated as the “potential impact of the public art project on residents, [and] businesses,” and projects should be modified to reduce these impacts.

- d. Establish guidelines for commonplace/ubiquitous opportunities, to encourage visual consistency with Downtown and each other -- but still provide ample opportunities for creative expression. For example, art on utility boxes might always be accompanied by a similar border or “frame.” Exercise discretion when considering ubiquitous and functional art so that it is not tacky or cliché.
- e. Artists should be encouraged to consider principle Downtown themes, which represent broadly-held community values.
 - History. Consider making references to Downtown’s history to promote awareness and enrich the experience of walking through Downtown. Make the “Downtown Survey & Contexts” (Architectural Resources Group, 2007) available.



Figure j.13. Downtown Choreography. Seattle’s “Broadway Steps” (by Jack Mackie) engages passersby.

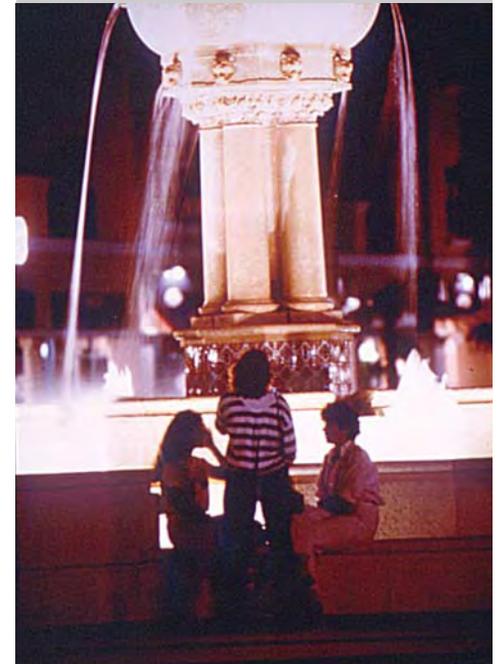


Figure j.14. Downtown as Destination. Art can play an important role in strengthening places as a destination.



Figure j.15. Transit Infrastructure. Transit canopies and platforms present opportunities for art. In Barcelona, subway entrances are distinctly designed.

able to selection committee members and potential artists. Avoid art that distracts from historic buildings in subdistricts where they are concentrated.

- **Environmental Sustainability.** Consider ways to make reference to the city’s commitment to environmental sustainability, such as by making reference to Downtown’s watershed or Mediterranean climate. Green technologies might be incorporated. Consider ways to reuse materials.
- **Education.** Consider ways to acknowledge Berkeley as a city of learning with a world-class university, award-winning high school, dynamic community college, cherished library, and thriving jazz

school. Cutting-edge innovations, especially media-related innovations, could be added to Downtown’s art portfolio.

- **Transportation.** Downtown developed as the convergence point for trains and other modes. This remains the case. Art could reference this in installations near BART.
 - **Diversity and Collaboration.** Berkeley’s racial, ethnic, and political diversity – and its tradition of inclusive democratic decision-making -- could find expression in the art but also in the process by which it is created.
- f. Consider sidewalk inlays or other installations that highlight Berkeley’s visionary personalities, such as Mario Savio, Allen Ginsberg, and others.

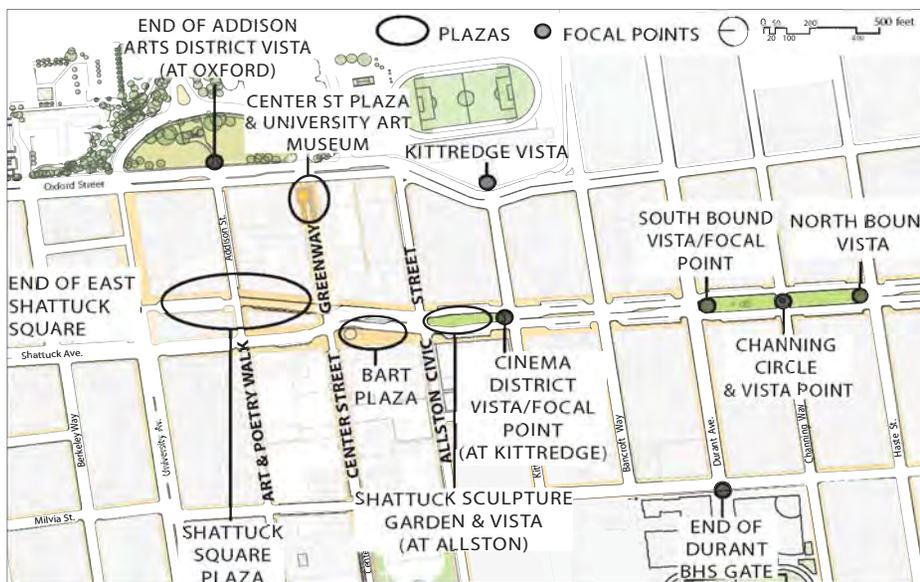


Figure j.16. Major Permanent Art Opportunities. Downtown’s street pattern creates focused views that will make public art especially prominent in some locations. Public art can be also integrated as an important component in Major Projects.

- g. Consider strategies so that art work may be moved or removed when Downtown improvements are made.

Policy 7.4, Maintenance & Repair. Provide for the ongoing maintenance and repair of art within an urban setting.

- a. Project proposals should encourage art work that is structurally sound, durable, and is resistant to theft, graffiti, and other forms of vandalism.
- b. The City should communicate clearly regulations and rights over art in the Downtown, such as through agreements and announcements.
- c. The Department of Public Works shall be consulted where proposed projects are associated with utilities, such with the use of utility boxes, so that Department concerns can be addressed. The City shall not be liable for art that is damaged when taking care of safety emergencies.
- d. Maintenance and repair costs should be factored into the SOSIP Financing Program (see “Financing Plan”). Seek to augment these costs through the direct participation of nearby merchants and stakeholders in monitoring condition and cleaning art projects.
- e. Where appropriate, use methods that allow art to be replicated and replaced, such as through the use of digital archives.
- f. The condition of Downtown art work should be surveyed at least every three years, so that needed repairs can be identified and prioritized.



Figure j.17. Fundraising & Art. *Cows on Parade.*



Figure j.18. Participatory Art. *Graffiti Wall, Venice Beach.*

PUBLIC ART CASE STUDIES

Chicago’s “Cows on Parade” had artists apply art to over 300 fiberglass cows. While the “canvas” was consistent, artistic expressions were diverse as were their placement on sidewalks, in parks, and on top of buildings. Local businesses covered upfront costs. The program increased tourist spending by an estimated \$100 million. Ultimately, the cows were sold with proceeds going to local charities.

Toronto used art to transform the character of ordinary – often unattractive – benches. Invited artists submitted proposals that followed criteria that emphasized durability and complemented each surrounding setting.

San Diego activated its waterfront promenade with “Urban Trees.” Each sculptural piece has a canopy that gives scale and offers shade, while also adding color, form, and interest.

Los Angeles funded temporary art, art events, and youth education. For example, Venice Beach’s “Graffiti Walls” allowed youth to express themselves in the public realm, and now serves as a major tourist attraction. Los Angeles also promoted art and bicycling with its “Bike Stops Here” program, which created original bicycle rack sculptures designed and built by local university students.