



City of Charleston

Public Art Program Recommendations

Morehead-Cain Scholars

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I. Summary

This document serves as a compilation of research and consequent recommendations concerning the matter of passing a public art policy and cultivating a strong and navigable Public Art Program. The recommendations made in this document are informed by extensive research on the best practices of other U.S. cities with robust Public Art Programs including Asheville, NC; Atlanta, GA; Chattanooga, TN; Greenville, SC; Los Angeles, CA; Raleigh, NC; Richmond, VA; Seattle, WA; Norfolk, VA; and Memphis, TN. Meetings with over 20 different experts in the field of public art -- artists, local government officials, employees concerned with the Public Art Programs of the aforementioned cities, and participants of a focus group for Charleston-based artists -- also informed these recommendations. The goal of this document is to consolidate this research into meaningful observations and recommendations that will be of use to the working group in determining the next steps in the process of developing a Public Art Program for Charleston.

II. Vision

- A. The working group under the Commission on Arts will utilize these recommendations as guidelines for procedures moving forward.
- B. The working group will work in conjunction with the City in order to establish a Public Art Peer Review Panel, hire a paid Public Art Manager, and pass the proposed public art policy.
- C. Once a policy is passed, the Public Art Peer Review Panel, along with relevant governing bodies, will work to establish a strong Public Art Program and enforce the streamlined process for developing public art in Charleston.

III. Mission

- A. Objectives for Charleston's Public Art Program:
 1. Express Charleston's identity through the built environment.
 2. Elevate the role the artist and the creative process play in connecting people and place.

3. Provide equitable access to a diverse range of artists and artistic experiences.
4. Provide equitable access to public art for all communities of Charleston by carefully considering the implications of the site of a work of art.
5. Encourage multi-disciplinary collaboration in the public and private sectors to create vibrant public spaces.
6. Celebrate the cultural assets of the various communities in Charleston by highlighting the unique character of our neighborhoods, honoring their histories, and preserving the quality of place.

B. Action Plan

Charleston Public Art Action Plan Overview

Short Term Objectives (2019 - 2020)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Propose a public art policy to be passed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider hiring a professional public art consultant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish the Public Art Peer Review Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue media outreach and lobbying process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a Budget Proposal for the Public Art Program 	

Mid Term Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a public art project to serve as a launch point for Charleston’s Public Art Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a list of potential sites for public art within the City of Charleston’s jurisdiction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a web page containing resources for artists 	

Long Term Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Establish funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Work with developers to integrate public art into city-led projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Work with the City to hold workshops for artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create an ordinance with guidelines for city-commissioned public art projects

IV. Recommendations and Tasks

This section will outline goals for the working group to accomplish as well as the specific tasks that should be completed in order to reach these goals. These goals and consequent tasks will be organized into short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals.

Short Term: (2019-2020)

- 1) Propose a public art policy to be passed.

Currently, the City of Charleston does not have specific guidelines for how artists should go about the process of creating public art. The creation of a public art policy will clearly establish what constitutes public art, outline the structure of a Public Art Peer Review Panel, state how the Public Art Program should be funded, and provide criteria for the selection and/or acquisition of public art. The policy will also answer logistical questions concerning siting, contracts, maintenance, and the deaccession or deinstallation of an artwork. Using the current policy draft, the working group should revise the policy draft as they see fit until a satisfactory policy is able to be passed into law. The current draft includes the ideal guidelines for a public art program that the working group should strive to pass. For sections of the policy draft that may need to be negotiated, reference the “Policy Cheat Sheet” document (located in the Archive) for realistic alternatives for specific sections.

- a) What we’ve done:

- Drafted a policy to be proposed;

- Received feedback from the working group, artists, the city legal team, and other relevant groups on the policy draft and have revised accordingly;

-Extensive research on public art policies in other cities, as well as what makes a policy successful.

b) Relevant tasks:

-Continue to communicate with City Attorney Janie Borden to ensure that the draft is acceptable based on the Legal Office's requirements;

-Continue to collect letters of support from relevant persons (there is an outline for a letter of support to send to possible supporters located in the Archive);

-Keep the Mayor's office in the loop: Mayor Tecklenburg and his senior advisor, Rick Jerue, are both strong advocates for this project. It may be valuable to show their team the policy before presenting it to City Council to get additional support as it moves forward;

-Continue to cultivate a strong relationship with interested City Councilmembers;

[Councilwoman Carol Jackson](#): (meeting notes located in Archive);

-Supports this program; sees its potential to serve as a catalyst to addressing Charleston's many histories;

-Does not think there would be strong pushback from other members of City Council, so long as the initial proposal does not include an unrealistic funding request;

-Continue to cultivate a strong relationship with members of the Design Review Committee, Design Review Board, and the Special Events Committee.

-Leaders of other public art programs throughout the country emphasize the importance of cultivating strong relationships with members of departments from which they consistently seek recommendations, permitting, and approval. (See Meeting Notes with Jason Kronsberg (DRC) and Niki Ohlandt (SEC))

2) Establish a Public Art Peer Review Panel.

In conjunction with a public art policy, a City of Charleston staff member should call to order the Public Art Peer Review Panel. The Public Art Peer Review Panel is a crucial piece of the current policy draft, as this is the body which will oversee the majority of the application process; they will also play a significant role in selecting which public art proposals will receive approval. The current policy draft outlines a possible structure and recommended function for the Public Art Peer Review Panel. The city's head attorney, Janie Borden, is available to convert the working group's proposition for the purpose and function of the Review Panel into the correct legal format.

a) What we've done:

- Outlined a possible structure for the panel.

b) Relevant tasks:

- Outline how much power the Peer Review Panel should hold
→ consider whether or not the Panel should eventually be in charge of overseeing a Public Art Fund;

- Outline the administration and logistics of the Peer Review Panel, including:

 - Term length;

 - Appointment of panelists / criteria for appointment (See "Policy With Alternatives" Section VI.2. and corresponding footnote #5);

 - Panel meeting frequency;

 - Panelist involvement in the process after an artistic recommendation has been issued;

- Finalize application and scorecard / criteria for scoring proposals.

3) Develop a budget proposal.

It is likely that the process of passing a Percent for Art program in Charleston will take several years. After consulting with other U.S. cities with successful public art programs, 2-4 years seems to be a realistic timeline to pass a Percent for Art program. While the working group should continue to consider and advocate for a strong Percent for Art program, it is recommended that the group begin by advocating for the funding of a Public Art Program Manager position (See "Recommendation for Public Art Program Manager" document in the Archive for details about wage and salary options based on other cities). Based on meetings with City Council members, it seems most realistic that

a public art policy will be passed if there is little to no initial funding requested from the City. Due to this, it is recommended that the working group consider alternative funding options for the early stages of the Public Art Program, such as private foundation funds and / or funding from other city projects, festivals, and celebrations, such as CARTA development and the city's 350th Anniversary Celebration. (See Midterm #1).

a) What we've done:

- Extensive research on successful and unique Percent for Art programs;
- Created several funding related document containing valuable research (all in Archive);

b) Relevant tasks:

- Incorporate the wage for a Program Manager position into the city budget proposal;
- Consider the necessary funding amount for a launch project(s).

4) Consider hiring a professional public art consultant.

Many U.S. cities with successful public art programs chose to hire a public art consultant during the early stages of developing their respective programs. These consultants were able to develop professional public art master plans, assist in developing program launch projects, and create realistic plans for funding. Since all members of the working group already have other full-time commitments, it is recommended that a consultant with ample experience in public art program development be hired to assist in truly spurring the creation of a program in Charleston. In speaking with other cities, it seems that hiring a consultant and having a professional opinion is what most grabs the city's attention and makes the development of a program with a strong foundation seem realistic. This consultant would hopefully be funded by private foundations that support this program in Charleston, and would be responsible for helping to guide this project in the months / years to come.

a) What we've done:

- Contacted private foundations with possible interest in funding a consultant;
- Spoken to officials in other cities about which consultants worked with their program.

b) Relevant tasks:

- Consider the feasibility of hiring a consultant, as well as the funding/salary options for this person;
- Look into different candidates for the position (See Contacts and Stakeholders document for more information):
 - Gretchen Freeman and [Gail Goldman](#) have worked to develop Richmond's Public Art Program over the past 5+ years;
 - [Meridith Mckinley](#) worked with Nashville;
 - [Todd Bressi](#) has led the planning of several Public Art Programs throughout the US;
 - [Jennifer Murphy](#) is a retired public art consultant with extensive experience in developing commission projects for cities and airports in the US. She is not interested in taking on any position in Charleston's project, but is happy to provide advice. See "Jennifer Murphy ..." meeting notes for more information;
 - [Katelyn Kirnie](#) has extensive experience working in the public art administration realm and currently works with Public Art Chattanooga. She has expressed interest in being a consultant for this project.
- If a consultant is hired, the team of Morehead-Cain students would be more than willing to speak with them to explain their process, their research, and the work that they left behind for the working group.

5) Continue media outreach and lobbying.

It is pertinent that the city and the citizens of Charleston stay connected with this program as it develops. As a result, it is recommended that the working group works to maintain relationships with local media contacts, leaders of neighborhood organizations, and other community members in order to keep the public updated concerning the status of the project, preserve transparency, and ensure that the project continues to receive the attention it deserves.

a) What we've done:

-Spoken to officials in other cities about which consultants worked with their program

-Connected with leaders of neighborhood organizations

-Spoken to artists about their interest and motivation for moving the program forward

b) Relevant tasks:

-Consider journalists, bloggers, and other media influencers who are important to keep in the loop;

-Consider sending monthly or quarterly email updates to local organizations, artists who attended the focus group, and any other interested parties:

-Members of the working group could also incorporate such updates and notices into newsletters of their respective organizations.

Mid Term:

1) Develop a project to serve as a launching point for Charleston's Public Art Program.

All public art programs have to start somewhere. Many cities that now have successful and robust public art programs began with an initial launch project in order to lay the foundation for their evolving program. Some successful launch projects include partnerships with local development projects -- Memphis and the central public library, San Francisco and its bus stop renovation project -- while others are based off of citywide celebrations or festivals. Regardless of the specifics of the project, in order for Charleston's Public Art Program to get the attention it deserves, it is recommended that the working group and others involved in the program work to commission or integrate an initial public art project into the City of Charleston that shows citizens the potential for this program. Leaders of programs from other cities have emphasized the importance of an initial, manageable launch project as the best way to get support from citizens, funders, and stakeholders within the city government, as it shows the city the impact that public art is able to have.

a) What we've done:

-Spoken with Jonathan Green about integrating a launch project into the 350th celebration (meeting notes in Archive);

-Spoken with Harrison Wedgeworth (see below and meeting notes in Archive) about his project concerning incorporating public art into public transportation;

-Spoken with Engaging Creative Minds about creating public art in schools (meeting notes in Archive);

-Spoken with Memphis' Urban Arts Commission to understand their process for an initial project. See "Kristi Jernigan/Lauren Kennedy - Memphis Urban Arts Commission - (7/7)" in Meeting Notes folder for very valuable information (Memphis used private funds for their initial project to show the value, feasibility, and affordability of this work to the public).

b) Relevant tasks:

-Consider creating / supporting project(s) affiliated with Charleston's 350th Anniversary in October 2020:

-Using public art as a way to honor and tell Charleston's many complex histories during this unique celebration could be a great way to launch the city's public art program;

-This project could include a partnership between Charleston's artists and public schools in order to engage communities in the city that are often overlooked. (See Jonathan Green Meeting Notes in Archive);

-Possible contacts / partners:

-[Engaging Creative Minds](#) is a Charleston-based non-profit that does STEAM-based education in city public schools and is experienced in connecting artists and public schools to develop comprehensive and custom education plans. They are open to helping with this kind of project. (See Engaging Creative Minds 7/3 Meeting Notes in Archive);

-Councilman [Peter Shahid](#) is the chair of the 350th Anniversary committee; he would be a valuable person to connect with early on if the working group decides this project is the direction they want to go in;

- Jonathan Green is enthusiastic about this idea and is on the 350th committee; he is open to providing guidance;
- Councilwoman Jackson thinks that using the 350th as a launch project would be a great way to keep the program on the “city council’s front burner” in terms of a future attempt to get city funding;
- [YoArt](#) works to bring technology driven art to schools.

-Partner with the construction, opening, and celebration of the International African American Museum to showcase the Public Art Program to Charleston

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-Consider a partnership with CARTA to incorporate public art into bus stops, bus signs, and the exterior of busses themselves:

-Keith Benjamin (Director of Traffic and Transportation and member of DRC) and Jeff Burns (Interim Executive Director of CARTA) are both open and interested in incorporating public art into the CARTA public transportation system, especially as the system grows over the next several years. They see public art as a way to enforce traffic calming procedures and as a way to beautify and individualize the transportation System;

-Harrison Wedgeworth, an intern for Keith Benjamin this summer, (information provided in “Contacts and Stakeholders” document in Archive), and the Morehead-Cain students have worked together to pitch this idea to Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Burns:

-Both directors endorse the idea of this project so long as there is collaboration and funding support from other entities and organizations as well;

-This could be a good starting point for the city’s public art program because it too takes advantage of projects that are already in the works in Charleston;

-CARTA is a partner with [Lowcountry Bus Rapid Transit](#) (LBRT) to develop a project that is expected to be finished by 2025 and which includes the addition of 18 bus stations and 16 new vehicles. The project extends out of the City of Charleston’s jurisdictional limits, which could lead to complications. The vast size of the overall project could also lead to more complications. As a result, a partnership with LBRT could be more or a long-term project option.

- Consider a partnership with the Lowcountry Lowline
 - Though there is no certain timeline for the [Lowcountry Lowline](#) development project, it could be a great avenue for public art projects in the future. It is recommended that the Peer Review Panel have some form of input as that project develops, as there is a lot of potential to integrate the city's public art program into the Lowcountry Lowline as both develop and evolve together. The Panel could look to Harry Lesesne for advice on how to use the West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway as a potential model for such a project.

2) Create a web page containing resources for artists.

In order to make the application process as accessible as possible, it is recommended that the working group or Public Art Review Panel (whichever is working on the issue at this time) create a web page of resources for artists, such as a link to the application for creating public art, points of contact, and possible grant sources.

a) What we've done:

- Created a Public Art Road Map;
- Created a Public Art Catalog;
- Created an Interactive Public Art Map;
- Created an application for artists (Public Art Proposal Application).

b) Relevant tasks:

- Finalize the application: consider adding a mission and/or equity statement at the top of the application document that highlights the program's goals, in an attempt to show applicants what to consider during their own processes;
- Finalize and add to "Local Grants Opportunities" document in Archive -- include grant-writing guides and any people within the City that can assist applicants;

- Update the “Public Art Roadmap” document in Archive to align with the policy updates;

- Provide contacts of nonprofits, schools, businesses, and other people that may be interested in partnerships or of any other form of assistance to applicants;

- Upload the Interactive Public Art Map onto the web page.

3) Create a list of potential sites for public art within the City of Charleston’s jurisdiction.

To make sure that this program is accessible to the artists and community members that it is intended to support, it is recommended that the working group or Peer Review Panel develop a list of potential sites that applicants can use during the application process. The list could be incorporated onto the artists resources webpage, as well as the Interactive Public Art Map.

a) What we’ve done:

- Catalogged pre-existing works of public art and their location;

- Created an Interactive Public Art Map that can be added to.

b) Relevant tasks:

- Suggested site types to include:

- Open areas in public parks;

- Open outdoor walls on businesses, stores, public libraries, schools etc.

- Once potential sites are identified, determine site agencies involved (city, state, dept of transportation, etc.) and appropriate types of public art for the site;

- Consider presenting these optional sites to the DRC and DRB before they are finalized. Getting their input can streamline the process: once this program reaches the point where artists are proposing projects, if they choose a pre-approved site, there could be a greater chance that it will receive recommendations from the city’s permitting and recommendation entities;

-Consider adding this catalog of potential sites onto the Interactive Public Art Map (which currently includes all public art sites). We have included instructions for how to add new sites onto the map in the Archive.

Long Term:

1) Establish funding sources.

Passing a Percent for Art Program in Charleston:

After extensive research on best practices from other U.S. cities, establishing a Percent for Art program seems to be the most effective way to ensure consistent funding for public art. A Percent for Art program would entail taking a small percentage (usually 1%) of funding for capital improvement projects to be placed into an arts fund. Percent for Art programs are designed specifically for the city of interest; for Charleston, this percentage could come directly from capital improvement projects, from the Accommodations Tax, or from certain projects deemed appropriate. A Percent for Art program would not only provide significant funding for public art itself, but may also encourage the support of private donors by showing that the City has a stake in the issue and spur fund-matching partnerships.

Gathering Private Funds:

Many cities in the US make use of a combination of private and public funding in order to fuel their public art programs. It is likely that the City will be more willing to commit its funds to a public art program if private funders have pledged their own support, and vice versa. As a result, it is recommended that the working group or other involved personnel work to secure private funding from foundations and business conglomerations.

a) What we've done:

-Spoken with the Coastal Community Foundation (See "Melissa Levesque CCF" in Meeting Notes). The CCF would be willing to manage a fund for public art in Charleston with money from private donors and foundations, but they do not have any current donors that would want to contribute;

-Met with the Donnelly Foundation. In addition to being a consistent source of valuable insight and guidance, the Donnelly could be a potential donor moving forward;

-Created a “Funding Options” guide (in Archive) that outlines different potential public and private funding sources, shows different options for a Percent for Art program for Charleston, and provides access to existing grant and funding programs;

-Made a “Percent for Art in Charleston” one-pager (in Archive) that explains potential Percent for Art options that draw from different existing taxes in the city;

-Crafted a “Benefits of Public Art” presentation and one-pager that will be useful during efforts to advocate for funding from the city government.

b) Relevant tasks:

-Work to get the support of a bipartisan group of city councilmembers, in addition to that of the mayor, before bringing the plan to an official City Council meeting. Mayor Tecklenburg and his advisor, Rick Jerue, have already voiced their support for a funding mechanism, such as percent for art, for this program; yet, it is unclear if they want that funding to come out of current allocations for the Office of Cultural Affairs budget or from other funds;

-Speak to members of the [Budget Office](#) to understand the feasibility of drawing funds from the Hospitality and/or Municipal Accommodations tax for a Percent for Art fund. Both taxes directly fund many city projects, so it will be very important to do this. Janie Borden from the city’s legal team suggested going to [Matt Froelich](#) and [Debby Barton](#) as a starting point;

-Just as it is recommended that the working group manage a running list of letters of support, it may be valuable to collect a list of letters of support from foundations, individual donors, businesses etc., as the program’s funding plan develops;

2) Work with the City to hold workshops for artists.

With the enactment of a new policy and, consequently, a new process for artists to propose public art projects, it is recommended that workshops be held to educate artists on the new process. These workshops may also be geared toward more specific skills such as grant-writing and completing a strong application. It is also recommended that these workshops be used as a connective tool between more and

less experienced artists, creating a mentoring program. Collectively, these workshops should empower all artists to successfully propose their projects and perpetuate a sense of equity in the city's program as it evolves.

a) What we've done:

- Researched the workshops that other cities in the US hold for their artists and community members. See "Additional Resources Dropbox Notes" for notes on these options;

- Received supportive feedback for this idea from local artists during the focus group for artists. See "Consolidated Focus Group Notes" in the Archive.

b) Relevant tasks:

- Connect with cities that have experience organizing these events to get advice on what methods to use, how to organize it, etc:

 - Seattle's Office of Arts and Culture has a professional development program with a roster of different artist-coaches that lead two-hour programs;

 - University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and the Artist Neighborhood Partnership Initiative host cohort-based networking events for old and new artists in which ANPI staff share updates to the program and application process and then hear from artists about their priorities. This serves as a simplified form of professional development and preserves transparency.

- Estimate the general cost for such events;

- Consider which artists, city officials, and community leaders should be responsible and would be best suited to take the helm on such projects.

3) Work with developers to integrate public art into city-led projects.

Along with the ideas of a launch project and a Percent for Art program comes the need to work with developers and the city on Capital Improvement Projects. After speaking with officials from other cities, working with city development to incorporate public art into these projects as they are being completed seems to be an effective way to not

only spur the creation of public art, but to increase city-involvement and funding in the process of creating public art.

Many cities have utilized partnerships with real estate developers, separate from partnerships with city-funded projects, as a way to jumpstart their public art programs. Given the reality of commercial and residential real estate growth in Charleston currently, this could be an avenue worth exploring.

a) Relevant tasks:

-Reach out to developers to gauge interest in including public art in their projects, keeping in mind the difference between private and public development:

-If reaching out to private developers, consider reaching out to those which have including public art in their projects in the past in other cities;

-If trying to get public art incorporated into a public development, speak with relevant city staff.

4) Create an ordinance with guidelines for city-commissioned projects.

While it does not seem realistic at this time that the city will choose to commission projects, there should be an ordinance written for when this need arrives. After studying other cities, it appears that once a public art program is given a chance to develop and gain footing, the city becomes more likely to commission work. Commissioning projects obviously requires a larger staff, more resources, and more planning; yet, many of the most prominent public art destinations in the country see commissioning programs as a way to make the public art process more efficient, equitable, and sustainable. Often times it allows for projects to be more catered to the interests of a city and its different communities, as city staff can work with local artists and community members to curate different project themes and then facilitate a call for artists based on those themes. It should be made clear that it is *not* advised that the city get rid of artist-initiated projects after the addition of commissioned projects to Charleston's program.

a) What we've done:

-Created an artist-initiated process, meaning public art can be proposed and made without the city having to commission it;

-Researched the practices that other cities that commission public art projects use and rely on. See “Public Art Cities” in the Archive for research on these commissioning practices;

-Received feedback from other cities on their commissioning process. See “Kristi Jernigan/Lauren Kennedy - Memphis Urban Arts Commission - (7/7)” and “Ruri Yampolsky - Seattle (6/6),” and “Caroline Vincent - Nashville (6/28)” for ideas.

b) Relevant tasks:

-Create guidelines for how the city should go about commissioning public art, if it so chooses. In order to do this, utilize the policies and plans from other cities (in Dropbox). The city legal team (specifically Janie Borden, the city attorney) has offered to assist in transforming any written draft into the format of an official ordinance;

-Reach out to Jennifer Murphy (See “Jennifer Murphy - Public Art Consultant - (6/21)” in Meeting Notes) for advice on how to initiate and carry out the commissioning process;

-Consider adding paid staff members to assist with this additional element to Charleston’s program.