Public Art Roadmap

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

Makeover Montgomery
May 11, 2018
Public Art Roadmap

Creating A Vibrant Public Art Ecosystem in Montgomery County

Montgomery County Public Arts Trust
Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County
December, 2016
Diagnosis

- Montgomery County’s public art approach, once a national leader, is lagging in terms of practices and the types of projects that it is producing.
Diagnosis

• The County’s public art collection is not widely known or appreciated.
Diagnosis

- The County’s “public art ecology” is not strongly developed or networked.
Diagnosis

- The County’s legislative goal for public art funding is a fraction of what peer municipalities provide, and the County funds public art at only about 30% of that level.
Five Campaigns
Roadmap: Five Campaigns for Public Art

Five Campaigns for Public Art
The AHCMC and Trust should organize its work in coming years around the idea of five campaigns for public art — systemic sets of strategies and tactics that will galvanize public energy, partnerships and resources around reinvigorating efforts for public art in Montgomery County.

1. Artistic Focus
   The Trust should focus its efforts cultivating on new types of artworks that create excitement and energy and get attention for public art again.

2. Key Partners
   The Trust should be strategic in the partnerships that it prioritizes, focusing on those that best help achieve the Roadmap goals.

3. M-NCPCC / Parks
   By collaborating with M-NCPCC, the Trust can look for opportunities to do placemaking and environmental projects, particularly in underserved areas.
   The Trust can provide guidance in identifying opportunities and priorities, and technical support in developing projects.

4. Infrastructure
   Montgomery County has few artworks that are integrated into infrastructure. Though investment in infrastructural systems is declining, the Trust should consider these opportunities when they are relevant to other goals.

5. Temporary
   Temporary artworks are popular with the public, artists and planners, and can obtain outside funding. They can be a way of unleashing creative capacity, bringing more artists into the public art process, and engaging the public.

Environment
Though not highly ranked by the public or the Trust committee, the Trust should look for key opportunities for environmental projects, given the increasing urgency of environmental issues such as global warming.

Social Practice
This genre of work is popular with artists and can help the Trust reach new audiences, raise public awareness about critical issues, and reach underserved communities.

Science and Technology
Montgomery County is the third-largest biotech research center in the U.S. In the long run, this could lead to interesting projects and outside funding.

Working with Planning and Development
The County’s approach to incorporating public art in planning and private development has been relatively passive.

Reinventing AHCMC’s Role
Build a consolidated public art portal for information about public art in the County. The portal should include all work in the public and private collections of the County, the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, and the areas of Bethesda and Silver Spring.

Building a Robust Public Art Infrastructure
The AHCMC should build a public art ecosystem that extends beyond the role it plays in managing the County’s public art collection. It should strengthen the County’s public art ecology through information, networking and support of public art practices.

Building an Audience for Public Art
The Trust must build the public case for public art through outreach and engagement with County agencies, public art stakeholders and the community at large. This constituency should be mobilized to advocate for funding the Trust at the full level contemplated by the County’s public art ordinance.

1. Build a consolidated public art portal for all information about public art in the County. The portal should include all work in the public and private collections of the County, the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, and the areas of Bethesda and Silver Spring.

2. Create a consolidated newsrewind about public art news and topics in Montgomery County, and the region. Focus on both arts and general audiences.

3. Support and publicize temporary art projects, including creative placemaking, as key "entryways" into public art.

4. Build constituencies for public art for targeted OIP projects, so the project managers hear about it.

5. Ensure that public art professionals are involved in M-NCPCC-sponsored area plans, especially in areas where public art is encouraged through the optional method.

6. Collaborate with M-NCPCC and professional organizations to generate events, awards and other dialogue and recognition of public art in Montgomery County.
Artistic Focus

Roadmap: Artistic Focus

**Placemaking**
- **Examples:**
  - Art Alley (Judy Sutton Moore)
  - Silver Creek (Deirdre Saunders)

**Infrastructure**
- **Example:** Rock Creek Pedestrian Bridge (Vicki Scull)

**Temporary**
- **Example:** Big Burr (Mark Parsons)

Why:
- Placemaking projects are popular with the public, a priority for the PTOC, and of interest to M-NCPPC.
- Placemaking projects can attract outside funding. They can cross-pollinate with many art forms, such as performance. There are many artists interested in this work.

**Opportunities:**
- Urban Cores
- Urban Parks
- Optional Method Projects

**Who:**
- M-NCPPC, Parks and Planning
- M-NCPPC, Parks
- Developers
- Arts Districts

**Environmental**
- **Example:** Woodside Urban Park (Buster Simpson)

Why:
- Can address issues such as aging, health, housing, refugee resettlement, that are important to the County.
- Can allow for cross-disciplinary work, which allows for more innovation.
- Can be flexible in location.
- Can be inexpensive.
- Can engage new audiences and partners.

Opportunities:
- Parks
- Stormwater management

**Who:**
- AHC/CM
- Arts Districts
- Arts non-profits
- M-NCPPC Parks and Planning

**Social Practice**
- **Example:** Outdoor Living Room, Wheaton (Matthew Mazzotta)

Why:
- Can connect people with critical public issues.
- Can strengthen County’s existing commitments to park and stream corridors and agricultural landscapes.
- Can contrast with urbanizing landscapes.

Opportunities:
- Recreation, health, and senior centers
- Immigrant and refugee services
- Criminal justice system

**Who:**
- Culture and Recreation
- Health and Human Services
- Arts Districts
- Arts non-profits

**Science, Tech**
- **Example:** Cozystyle (Jim Sanborn), United Therapeutics

Why:
- Represents an important part of the County’s economy that is not reflected very strongly in public art.
- Represents a genre that is popular with artists but under-represented in the collection.
- Projects at Discovery Channel and United Technologies popular in Silver Spring

Opportunities:
- Great Seneca Science Center
- White Oak Science Center
- Montgomery College
- Optional method projects

**Who:**
- Montgomery College
- Economic Development
- Developers

Montgomery County Public Art Roadmap
Horizon: Public Art in Capital Projects

The Public Arts Trust was created in 1995 as an umbrella entity to advise the Arts and Humanities Council and other County agencies on the development and stewardship of the County’s public art collection. Those agencies include departments directly managed by the County as well as quasi-independent entities such as the M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College.

The Trust is structured as a steering committee of representatives of these agencies. It also includes several at-large members, including representatives of the Gaithersburg and Rockville public art programs.

The County does not have a formal percent-for-art program; therefore, County agencies take on projects voluntarily. Capital budget staff and agency project managers identify potential projects and bring them to the Trust Steering Committee for consideration, using criteria in the Montgomery County Public Art Guidelines. Then, agency project managers initiate, plan and manage the projects, with assistance from the Trust in artist selection. The Trust does not have full-time professional staff, and therefore it does not have the resources to track the Capital Improvement Program, develop projects or manage them once the artist has been selected.

In the future, the Public Arts Trust should be more proactive in urging departments to take on projects that meet its goals, more selective in taking on projects, and more active in managing the public art component of County projects. Generally, projects should be undertaken with County agencies if:

- the project can help the agency advance its mission and achieve its goals for the project;
- there is expressed community interest for public art as part of the project;
- the projects can help the Trust meet its goals of expanding the distribution of public art into under-served areas;
- the project can help the Trust meet its goals of developing work in new genres, and
- the agency is willing to maintain the artwork.

M-NCPPC / Planning

- Develop tools for incorporating public art recommendations in area plans.
- Incorporate public art in the Wheaton Headquarters project. This is a private development being developed as a turnkey property for the County.

M-NCPPC / Parks

- Provide guidance in identifying opportunities and priorities and technical support in developing projects. Look for opportunities to do placemaking and environmental projects, particularly in underserved areas, and for opportunities related to M-NCPPC priorities of urban parks and trails.
- Collaborate on incorporation of public art into Woodside Urban Park, Caroline Freedland Urban Park and Hillandale Local Park.

Montgomery College

- The College has not commissioned new works for several years, but there are large capital projects and potentially interesting public art opportunities in the works. Germantown Student Center, Rockville Student Center, Takoma Park Math and Sciences Center. These could be some of the more significant commissions in the coming years, and potentially could be linked to the goal of developing projects related to the County’s science and technology sector.
- The College has also raised questions about conservation and maintenance that need to be addressed.

MC-DOT

- Short-term opportunities for pedestrian and bike zones have been identified. The Trust will have to play a strong hands-on role for these to happen.
- Near-term possibility for a two-dimensional study along the Met Branch Trail.

The best opportunities are bus-rapid transit corridors, because they connect communities in areas of the County that are underserved by public art. The Trust should position public art to be a component of these projects.

Economic Development

- The Public Arts Trust has not typically collaborated with Economic Development. However, areas such as the Great Seneca Science Corridor, the Universities at Shady Grove and the White Oak Science Gateway are attracting businesses in the research and life sciences sector. The Trust should explore partnerships with the Economic Development Corporation to develop artworks that speak to that sector of the County’s economy.

Culture and Recreation

- Two current capital projects are in areas that are underserved by public art: Wheaton Library and Good Hope Road Recreation Center. The Library is also adjacent to the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District.

Health and Human Services

- The Public Arts Trust has not collaborated recently with the Department of Health and Human Services. The Trust should consider exploring a partnership with Health and Human Services to develop artworks that speak to the issue of the County’s aging population.
Working With Planning and Development
Building a Public Art Infrastructure

PUBLIC ART news-wire
from AHCMC and the Montgomery County Public Art Trust
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Building an Audience for Public Art
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