



CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

ABSTRACT

This Public Art Master Plan for the City of Colorado Springs outlines a vision and mission for a new public art program along with goals and strategies for implementation.

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SUBMITTED BY

Art Management & Planning Associates, Inc. in partnership with ThereSquared, LLC, More Sky Less Ceiling and Brian Corrigan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2018, the City of Colorado Springs selected Art Management & Planning Associates, Inc. (AMPA) to create a community-driven Public Art Master Plan. The endeavor, while not unique to large metropolitan cities like Colorado Springs, is the first of its kind for the City. Previously completed planning efforts in Colorado Springs paved the way, including PlanCOS 2019, which describes the importance of culture: “Our architecture, public art, parks, wide boulevards, museums, performance and educational institutions, historic areas, and public gathering places all help define the collective sense of place for our growing and diversifying citizenry” (PlanCOS, Chapter 6: Renowned Culture). PlanCOS recommends two strategies for public art: 1) to complete, update and implement public art plans and 2) to consider arts and culture in other City plans (Chapter 6: Renowned Culture). Furthermore, PlanCOS asserts that arts and culture in Colorado Springs not only has intrinsic value, but also contributes to the city’s economic vitality in that it “...directly benefits our tourism industry and attracts businesses and residents to the city” (PlanCOS Chapter 6: Renowned Culture).

As envisioned in PlanCOS, AMPA’s master plan team followed the ethos, “It is our imperative to provide a climate, places, and opportunities for the continued flourishing of our renowned

culture in cooperation with the for-profit and non-profit sectors” (PlanCOS, Chapter 6: Renowned Culture). The building blocks of the planning process for the City of Colorado Springs Public Art Master Plan project were four-fold: 1) bringing together the community to share their hopes, dreams and aspirations, 2) understanding current City policies and procedures that may affect public art programming, 3) evaluating the existing public art collection for gaps and opportunities and 4) providing examples of public art industry best practices and case studies.

AMPA focused on the following objectives as outlined by the City-led master plan Steering Committee:

- Review of the status of the City’s existing public art procedures, ordinances and activities.
- Identify key action items for the near- and long-term to get City programs better aligned with best practices.
- Identify community and/or neighborhood projects that might serve as near-term priorities for new public art.
- Develop a tool kit that neighborhoods could utilize to help spread more public art around the community.
- Define an “Aspirational Vision” for public art in Colorado Springs.

AMPA’s team spent several months engaging the community in dialogue to learn the unique Colorado Springs story of place and its residents’ vision for the future. Through interviews, focus groups, an online questionnaire and hosting playful, unique outdoor activities, the team gathered information that helped to uncover the community’s perceived needs and interests and we gained insight into the community’s attitudes and behaviors toward public art. This phase was critical in crafting the vision, goals and strategies of the Public Art Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONTINUED

The final Public Art Master Plan, endorsed by the Mayor's Office, Steering Committee and the Public Art Commission, establishes and shapes the direction of a new public art program for the City of Colorado Springs. The scope of this public art program extends to public art that is funded, owned, maintained and/or borrowed by the City of Colorado Springs. The newly formed public art program encourages developers to provide opportunities for art in private developments. For the purposes of this document, public art is defined as artwork in any medium, including sculpture, monuments, murals/paintings, mosaics/ceramics, fiber art, film/video, digital, web-based, projections, performance, light installations, photography, stained glass, text-based, sound art, architecture or landscape integrated (environmental art) and/or mixed-media. The definition of public art does not include reproductions of unlimited editions or original artwork, objects that are mass produced or architectural rehabilitation or historic preservation, signage (except when designed by an artist) or works that are decorative, ornamental or functional (except when designed by an artist).

The Public Art Plan identifies a clear vision and mission for the City to implement public art initiatives, and it recommends seven goals and accompanying strategies to define a clear path for implementation.

VISION

The City of Colorado Springs public art program reinforces Colorado Springs' reputation as a special cultural destination and state leader in the creative economy.

The City's public art collection is a legacy that will remain in place for future generations to enjoy and celebrate.

The public process and resulting artwork will be a valuable catalyst to build community by enriching more neighborhoods and public spaces throughout the city, creating a sense of place and celebrating our collective history.

Public art will be integrated into all City initiatives, developments and planning projects as standard practice.

MISSION

To build a robust, impactful and more widely accessible public art program funded and staffed by the City of Colorado Springs while leveraging private-public partnerships, collaborating with City departments and engaging local talent.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ART GOALS

GOAL 1: BEGIN BOLDLY AND SUSTAIN MOMENTUM



Colorado’s “Olympic City USA” is booming with a thriving community, affordable housing, great schools and friendly neighborhoods (www.coloradosprings.gov). Nationally known for its grassroots arts and cultural life, it is a time of excitement and the energy is palpable within the arts community. Colorado Springs can capitalize on this energy by quickly moving on a highly visible public art project to celebrate Colorado Springs’ Sesquicentennial. This project will set the tone and help facilitate the ambitious yet-to-be-realized public art program, thereby inspiring more support for its creation.

GOAL 2: DEMONSTRATE DEDICATION TO PUBLIC ART



Public art in Colorado Springs needs champions. The City’s various, recent planning documents state very clearly that the City recognizes and values arts and culture in Colorado Springs and desires more public art in and around the city. This desire was echoed by community input received during the master planning survey process. AMPA recommends designating a public art expert who can shape a public art program, its policies, as well as guide future public art projects. Such a designated position can begin collaborating to develop policies and procedures and creating connections and a supportive network for the new public art program. Such a position can also be a resource for various City departments, which have identified public art in their master plans, goals and initiatives.

GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE AND INCENTIVIZE PLACEMAKING FOR DEVELOPERS



Collaborating with developers can allow the City to extend its presence into new areas that may not have any public artworks present now. A designated public art expert will work with the Planning and Community Development Department, Economic Development and other appropriate City departments to evaluate current incentives and where possible, add incentives to further encourage the inclusion of art assets in private developments. The existing University Village development was identified in the community survey as an important place where people experience public art. Major developments that are in progress around the city represent an opportunity for collaboration and leveraging funds to support public artworks.

GOAL 4: PLACE ART THROUGHOUT THE CITY



The City of Colorado Springs currently owns 99 public artworks. The vast majority of these are located in the downtown area. The longstanding collaboration with the Downtown Partnership has led to the significant growth of the City’s public art collection and has also been indirectly responsible for the high

concentration of the artworks downtown. This has resulted in a high concentration of artworks Downtown and a higher appetite for public art citywide, even as some neighborhoods remain devoid of public art. The locations without art are important opportunities for the City to demonstrate a new dedication to providing a publicly accessible experience of art to its constituents.



GOAL 5: PROMOTE AND FOSTER LOCAL CREATIVE ECONOMY THROUGH PUBLIC ART

The creative community is alive and well in Colorado Springs and creative professionals contribute significantly to the local and regional economy. The Downtown Colorado Springs Creative District reports a Creative Vitality Index of 5.91 in 2015, more than five times the national average (United States CVI = 1.0). Artists don't just pocket the entirety of their project budgets; they hire staff and subcontractors, buy materials and supplies, procure insurance, pay sales and property tax and pay rent or own property. In addition, young people and businesses want to be located in a place where there are cultural amenities as well as creative opportunities for work. A city-recognized funded public art program and a dedication to supporting local creatives will highlight, attract and retain the talent that exists in the area and demonstrate the City's involvement (and commitment) in supporting the growth of the whole economy by circulating the funding through the creative economy.



GOAL 6: CREATE A UNIFIED, OLYMPIC-LEVEL PUBLIC ART COLLECTION

Colorado Springs has declared itself the Olympic City, USA. As such, it should aspire to a world-class, Olympic-level public art collection. Public art is a means to tell a compelling and authentic story about Colorado Springs, so thought and intention on how and which public artworks are acquired is necessary. The designated public art expert can develop a collection strategy, art selection policies and procedures and help plan for the growth of the collection. The community will be engaged in the selection process so that the public art collection can grow to reflect the community and to become a source of civic pride and connection.



GOAL 7: MAINTAIN, PRESERVE AND CHERISH THE PUBLIC ART COLLECTION

The existing public art collection is a valuable City asset. Just like other City assets, the public art collection deserves to be maintained and celebrated. The City must create a more robust and proactive maintenance and deaccession plan for the existing collection. This will ensure the integrity of the collection, grow civic pride and enable the value of the artwork to increase.

In the report "Beyond Accumulation: Understanding and Envisioning Public Art in Albuquerque," the author Joni Palmer, PhD analyzed ways in which the City of Albuquerque public art program could "... move forward, away from simply accumulating artworks, towards envisioning a more dynamic role for public art within the city." Similarly, the AMPA team views the Colorado Springs Public Art Master Plan as a step-by-step framework to help the City of Colorado Springs and the community identify ways to build a dynamic, robust public art program.