

THE ART OF THE COMMUNITY:
MUNICIPAL VS. LOCAL ART AGENCY FUNDING FOR PUBLIC ART

Heather Marissa Conboy

Major paper submitted to the faculty of Goucher College in partial

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Abstract

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Public art is the legalized and intentional placement of art in spaces easily accessible by the community. This field has been a contributing factor to community development, planning, and enhancement for thousands of years. Within the last century, government funding for public art has led to a trend of Percent-For-Art ordinances in the United States. Many municipalities have established local legislation that dedicates a portion of available funding, such as capital development projects or specified taxes, to the development of public art projects. There has also been a growth of nonprofit funding for public art, commissioned by LAAs throughout the country.

While there are many examples of successful public art projects developed by both municipal government and nonprofit LAAs, those developed by municipalities are subject to greater limitations regarding funding, organizational management, project development, community input, and project evaluation. Without flexible project development and community input, a municipality has a difficult time ascertaining and

incorporating the culture and identity of the community into the project, thereby diminishing its likelihood of success. A successful work of public art is one that is positively received, reflected upon, and impactful on the community. As evidenced by interviews with professionals within the field, project analysis, and related research, LAAs are better equipped to achieve this success due to the organizations' status as nonprofits with their ability to manage projects internally, employ a variety of funding sources, and measure impact.

Successful examples of public art commissioned by LAAs demonstrate a range of project development strategies, funding options, and levels of community input that result in projects that are more intimately connected to each unique community. These projects play a significant role in the community as they provide an expression of culture, aesthetics, history, tourism, and awareness. As the field of public art continues to expand across new regions of the country, both LAAs and municipal departments of public art development must take into account community input and project evaluation as they look to produce successful public art projects.

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This paper is dedicated to my mother, Ruth Stern Conboy, and my grandmother, Beverly Stern, for being life-long champions of the arts and education, and for always being in my corner.

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Introduction

Public art offers a unique opportunity to unite a community, invigorate social change, ignite discussion, and alter a neighborhood or individual. Big cities, rural towns, and sprawling countrysides across the United States boast innovative and inspiring works of public art that enhance each community. For each of these unique communities, how they express and experience art and their cultural identity is diverse. Murals, sculptures, light displays, performances, and festivals make up some of the many works of art within communities across the country. However, how this art was commissioned and who created it remains a mystery to many neighborhood residents. The community is left asking-who paid for it, who built it, and why did no one anyone ask our opinion?

In the contemporary United States, public art is generally developed through one of two available organizational structures: a government division, often a local or regional municipality, or a local arts agency, LAA, that is often operating as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Both types of organizational structures have developed countless successful and well-received works of art, but municipal departments are faced with a unique set of challenges. Funding regulations, limited project development capabilities, and the inflexibility of management can decrease available resources, artistic opportunities, and community engagement. These challenges may limit a municipality's ability to expend additional resources into strategies of community engagement and project enhancement that may improve current and future works of art. This often results

in unsuccessful public art projects that may not be accepted by the community. In contrast, as a nonprofit, an LAA has greater flexibility in determining funding avenues, internal project management, timelines, community relations, and organizational structure. Public art programming managed by a local arts agency, rather than a division of municipal government, can provide more impactful projects that are reflective of the culture and identity of the community.

The widespread development of modern public art in the US began in the early 1900s, during the time of the Great Depression. The federal government included public art in its strategy for economic growth by hiring unemployed artists (Adler). In 1934, the Public Works of Art Project, PWAP, a part of Roosevelt's New Deal, "hired 3,749 artists and produced 15,663 paintings, murals, prints, crafts and sculptures for government buildings around the country," resulting in dozens of public art projects (Adler). This was one of the first times artists were included in national economic development through government initiatives. Following the New Deal, the establishment of the first Percent-For-Art ordinance in the 1950s and the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 provided the framework to promote public art across the country. "The National Endowment for the Arts, Art in Public Places Program began in the mid-1970s and continued for over two decades. The nationwide CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act) program of the late 1970s put hundreds of artists to work in their communities, on a scale similar to the WPA programs of the 1930s" (Becker 4). Following these initiatives, public art as a strategy for urban planning and community development began to grow in popularity, resulting in many municipal and nonprofit public art agencies across the country.

The term *public art* may be of common usage, but the definition of the phrase varies depending on its context. Originally, “the term ‘public art’ once referred to monumental sculptures celebrating religious or political leaders. Public art evolved during the mid-twentieth century to include art meant to speak for the ‘people’ or advance social and political movements” (Gressel). The definition of *public art* to be used within the context of this research is art that is legally placed in a physically open space by a permitting institution and is easily accessible to the viewer without the cost of admission. This definition contrasts with the phrase *art in public places/spaces*. This phrase may be used to describe illegal graffiti, privatized art, publicly accessible art that requires an admissions fee, or unplanned art. This type of art within the public sphere does not take “into account its site and other contextual issues” (Becker 5).

It is important to define other key terms as well. The word *impact* will be “defined as the contribution of these creative expressions and participation in them to community-building outcomes” in a positive manner (Jackson and Herranz 7). A *community* will be determined as people who are grouped together by a common denominator such as interest, age, location, gender, race, employment or other defining factor. The *culture* and *identity* of such a community is seen as a set of practices, markers, or expressions shared by a group of people. Finally, the term *success* is used in reference to the overall impact and achievement of the work of art, reception by the community, viewed aesthetics, longevity if applicable, scale of controversy, and its overall reflection of and contribution to the neighborhood.

Works of successful public art that are commissioned by LAAs are best demonstrated by examples of specific organizations. Individual works of art will be

referenced within the general research; however it is the overall approach and administrative processes of the organizations that will be highlighted and analyzed. The LAAs to be referenced and analyzed within the scope of this writing include Mural Arts Philadelphia, Portland Public Art, Jackson Hole Public Art, Community + Public Arts: Detroit (CPAD), Public Art Saint Paul, and the Center for Neighborhoods in Louisville, Kentucky. Representatives from each of these organizations, as well as other public art administrators and professionals, were interviewed regarding their individual organizations, experience, knowledge, and expertise in public art. Each organization represents a unique community of varying sizes and locations throughout the United States and has commissioned many successful public art projects.

Chapter I MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ART

Funding

A Percent-For-Art ordinance “is the legislation establishing a public art program within a unit of government. Generally, a public art ordinance establishes the financial mechanism that funds the public art program, identifies the unit of government or private contractor that will manage the public art program, and establishes a basis for the development of public art policies and/or guidelines” (Becker 5). The presence of Percent-For-Art ordinances in municipal regions began to grow in popularity after 1959 when Philadelphia, Pennsylvania established the first ordinance. These ordinances allow officials of municipal government to commission and purchase artwork, create working opportunities for artists, maintain collections, develop programming, educate the public, and create resources of public art information (“Public Art”).

The language and allowances within the ordinance of each city varies, allowing a municipality to develop a system that works for its community. For example, Philadelphia’s ordinance permits up to 1% of funding for capital development projects to be allocated for public art projects (Berg and Haynes 5). The city of Portland, Oregon updated its legislation to permit up to 2% of capital funding to be allocated for public art (Calhoun). City ordinances may include restrictions on temporary and performance works, limitations on external and private funding options, variances on conservation and

administrative spending, and regulations regarding commissioning and acquisition procedures.

Funding is often stated as the greatest challenge to an organization or municipality within the development process of public art projects. A lack of available financing limits the capacity to efficiently and effectively develop a project. Within municipal divisions there are additional legal restrictions on funding options. Percent-For-Art ordinances often limit the use of these funds for the exclusive purpose of new, permanent works (Berg). This restriction may then eliminate opportunities for temporary art, performance art, renovations and conservation, and additional project development efforts. Due to these imposed restrictions, additional funding options may be limited to municipal budgeting, determined by a city council or other governing body, and the Percent-For-Art ordinance. Without the flexibility of multiple funding options such as individual giving, corporate underwriting, and grants, programming efforts may be limited. This constraint limits the department's ability to spend time considering community involvement, which may ultimately greatly affect the success of the project.

In order to increase or change city funding, most municipal public art departments must spend a great deal of time and resources advocating for changes to the city's budgeting process. Frequently, municipalities derive administrative and conservation funding from its general fund budget, rather than the Percent-For-Art ordinance, as is the case in Philadelphia (Berg). Requesting and receiving budget increases through the city's annual budget process is a lengthy and difficult process. In addition, a department may have inadequate staff and time to appeal to outside funding sources for grants and donations, even if permitted, because of the strain on resources (Berg). Due to the

imposed legal restrictions on external funding options, some cities have secured other avenues of municipal funding. These options may include “annual appropriation, departmental allocation, hotel/motel tax, sales tax, tax increment financing, [and] development fees” (Becker 4). However, these avenues of funding may be just as difficult to pass through a city council as a change to an ordinance or an increase of budget.

On occasion, budget increases and adjustments have been accomplished. In 1998, the city of Portland, Oregon approved new legislation that permitted 10% of obtained Percent-For-Art funding to be applied to administrative expenses (Calhoun). In addition, the municipality surrendered control of the public art and mural program, no longer acting as a “regulator”, and transferred control of the funding and programming to a nonprofit LAA (“Percent for Art Guidelines” 12). The change to this ordinance alleviated financial and management strains that limited resources. As a nonprofit LAA, Portland Public Art is now able to independently seek and manage additional funding internally on an as needed basis. This allows the organization to commission more projects with a greater likelihood of success.

Management and Project Development

Project development, arguably the key to developing successful public art, is also where municipal departments tend to have the most regimented structure. Despite the flexibility that each region has to develop its own guidelines, many cities tend to follow a similar regimented structure of an open call that includes a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or Request for Proposal (RFP).

The most common method used by artists to apply for a public art commission is an open call (86 percent). Of the open calls that are circulated, 72 percent of the programs issue requests for qualifications and 68 percent issue requests for proposals. Nearly one half (46 percent) report that artists apply for commissions by invitation or nomination. (Becker 9)

Following this initial process, a review council, panel, or commissioned board will review and take responsibility for the selection and oversight of the project.

According to both government and private nonprofit programs...panels tend to include the representation of architects, artists, arts professionals, business leaders, and community members, as well as representatives from the commissioning agency and the public art program. In general, artist selection panels consist of an average of 8.6 people. (Becker 9)

Some cities have established provisions for the council that a member may not serve for longer than a defined period of time, or for a predetermined number of projects.

However, cities also report that it is also frequently difficult to find willing community members to voluntarily sit on the board or panel (Geraci).

Input on the development of a project does not end with the panel. On occasion, a city council member, or even a mayor, may take interest and include her input on a project (Berg). In addition, as many of the municipal projects are funded by capital development funds, collaboration with other municipal departments is a requirement. The extensive input from multiple sources can often overwhelm and delay the progress of developing a work. This extends the length of the project timeframe, increases the levels of necessary communication and adds additional project input from various individuals

(Berg). While this is a form of community engagement, this development method does not always include the specific community where the art will be installed.

New Models of Municipal Public Art

As cities grow and change, new models of project management have evolved, leading to the expansion of the field of public art. Rather than a traditional Percent-For-Art ordinance, many cities have successfully established other systems of public art development, placing the responsibility of project development throughout several departments of city government. These municipal partners include parks and recreation, waste management, public transportation, airports, and more. This allows each entity to commission projects that are more closely aligned with its goals, responsibilities, and community, increasing the likelihood of successful projects. There are examples of municipal governments that have chosen not to establish a traditional Percent-For-Art ordinance or to have municipal government manage public art funds, as they believe there are better methods of serving the communities.

The first example is the city of Portland. Here, the traditional Percent-For-Art ordinance was kept in place. However, project management and financial responsibility was placed upon a newly created LAA, Portland Public Art. By establishing an independent nonprofit and contracting public art management to the organization, the city was able to alleviate restrictions placed upon itself and the works of art. San Diego, California is the second example that has undergone a drastic transformation. Overall, funding for public art in San Diego had an unpopular and unsuccessful history. The city council chose to disband the Percent-For-Art ordinance that was in place in the 1990s

after determining that this traditional method of funding and management was not successful for the city (Commission for Arts and Culture 20).

In 2004, San Diego wrote a new policy that included community members, artists, and department heads in the creation of this new legislation, the *Public Art Master Plan* of San Diego, California, and the works of art that followed (Commission for Arts and Culture). The city now has a public art department within municipal government that is funded by a Public Art Fund that sets aside eligible capital improvement funds to be managed by the Public Art Program (5). This differs from a traditional Percent-For-Art ordinance, in which funds for use at the site of the capital improvement project, rather than at the discretion of the Public Art Program or managing department. San Diego took a financial risk by disbanding the original Percent-For-Art ordinance and its reliable funding. The city has now successfully reinvigorated its public art development by eliminating single department project development, dividing funding and expenses, and highlighting the importance of community input.

Recommendations were made within this *Master Plan* to achieve six overarching goals: two regarding community building, one related to supporting the role of the artists, one concerning San Diego's urban makeup, and two final goals of administrative funding and management. The committee charged with the task of creating the *Master Plan* identified the integration and celebration of San Diego's many communities and cultural identities as one of the elements of producing successful works of public art (Commission for Arts and Culture 7). Additionally, the *Master Plan* outlines each major region of San Diego and provides recommendations and strategies for working within each community. The document stresses the importance of neighborhood recognition and

celebration. In addition, in consideration of funding concerns, the plan outlines directions for overcoming two funding challenges that many municipal public art departments face-administration and conservation (Commission for Arts and Culture 66). Despite not maintaining a traditional Percent-For-Art ordinance within this legislation, the city has been able to produce successful and well-received works of public art. The input of community members from various areas of the city, a key element of the *Master Plan*, contributes to the success of this new model of municipal public art development.

Mural Arts Philadelphia is another example of an organization that operates under a unique model of management and organization. The organization was originally founded as a department within city government, relying entirely on city funding, although not a Percent-For-Art ordinance (Reilly). As the organization grew and saw success from programming, the decision was made to expand and develop a 501(c)(3) arm of the organization. Mural Arts now operates under a dual management and financial structure. The nonprofit arm of the organization is permitted to seek grants and individual giving, as any nonprofit is legally permitted to do. The municipal arm of the organization is funded by the city budget of Philadelphia and is required to abide by the funding and programming restrictions imposed upon it. The responsibilities and payroll of thirteen upper management employees, including the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, are delegated to the municipal arm of the organization. The nonprofit arm of the organization employs the mid and lower levels of staff. Mural Arts has been able to achieve great success in its projects, funding, and management despite oversight from municipal government because it has the flexibility to operate also as a nonprofit LAA.

Examples of municipalities in the regions of Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Louisville, Kentucky; and Saint Paul, Minnesota, all showcase a common style of new public art management. Each city did not have a history of municipal public art, and each chose not to establish a Percent-For-Art ordinance as its first act of legislation. Elected officials, contracted experts, and local professionals worked together to research public art examples and best practices. The outcome from this research among all examples was similar—public art was recommended, or would continue to be produced, by a nonprofit LAA with general support or oversight, but not necessarily funding or direction, from the municipal government. The *Public Art Master Plan* of Louisville, Kentucky, acknowledged that “it takes a strong vision and curatorial focus, an experienced staff with a background in production, a series of directed and aggressive fundraising goals, and the ability to be agile in timing, site selection, and public outreach. The City of Louisville does not currently have the resources” (Creative Time 41). Municipal governments acknowledged that due to expertise, resources, and municipal regulations, LAAs are better equipped to produce successful works of public art. This has resulted in new styles of management, organizational partnerships, redistribution of funds, and new works of public art.

Community Involvement

Direct involvement from municipal departments and elected officials is, at times, what causes controversy, distrust, and lack of acceptance for the facilitator and the work itself. “Many feel marginalized by what they perceive as an unaccountable, self-referential group of experts: those in the public art field, but also city managers and

politicians who claim to speak for ‘the people’” (Doss 21). The notion that this artwork is being developed for a community, yet the members of the community have little involvement in the project, creates disconnect from the culture, character, and makeup of the community to the work of art. “Americans feel closed out by the public art selection process” as well as “alienated by expert authority” within the public sphere (Doss 23-24). If the community has not provided input into the planning of the project, the ability to reflect these individuals into the work of art becomes very limited.

Many municipal public art departments report a lack of community involvement efforts, other than a community review board, due to time, staff, and budget limitations (Berg). However, some cities and municipal public art departments have made attempts to include the community in the planning process. Public art administrator Barbara Goldstein of the City of San José’s Office of Cultural Affairs cites a strategy of community involvement that aims to “involve them [community members] in conversations when we are planning to integrate art in the public realm, introduce them to the artists, create guide maps, speak to schools and community organizations about the work we do, sponsor tours for policymakers and the public, and cultivate the local press” (Goldstein). These efforts are rarely required by ordinance, and vary greatly between municipal regions.

Community involvement refers to the incorporation of the people’s feedback, activity, opinions, expressions, and ideas into the work. This can be achieved through creative efforts facilitated by the commissioning organization. Examples of community involvement include open meetings and discussion, interviews, paper and digital surveys, social media, special events, and more. Upon examining the public art guidelines of

several large, urban public art municipal departments, the requirements and language of each city's ordinance varies greatly regarding community involvement. In its project guidelines, Chicago, Illinois outlines many steps to incorporating the community and its residents in the planning process. This includes notifying the community of an opportunity for artwork, identifying a local alderman, reaching out to nearby organizations, and formulating these results into a selection of identifiable "community interests" (*Chicago Public Art Program – Percent For Art Guidelines*).

Public forums and community interests are outlined as key elements of community involvement throughout Chicago's guidelines. One technique the city has taken to fulfill this portion of the ordinance is to make available an online, anonymous survey regarding current public art projects. A community forum is held following the closure of the survey to discuss, evaluate, and move forward on a project proposal based on the concluding results (*Chicago Public Art Program – Percent For Art Guidelines*). In contrast, the *Public Art Guidelines* of Philadelphia identify "community-based art" as one of many approaches the city may take in developing public art (Berg and Haynes). Much of the focus within the guidelines of Philadelphia is on the role of the Arts Commission Board instead of community involvement strategies. While the members of this panel may be residents or related professionals from the region, these individuals do not necessarily represent a specific neighborhood or its cultural identity.

Existing municipal public art divisions have found it nearly impossible to incorporate a high level of community involvement into the project development process. According to critic Jurgen Habermas "the public sphere consists of a body of private people coming together... It is an ideal and detached realm...fictitious, utopian [and]

practically impossible” (Doss 16). In this methodology, involving the community as an inclusive element of the planning process becomes a nearly impossible goal. Doss cites examples of public outrage regarding public art as a reflection of the “conglomerate of experts” that are responsible for developing public art works with little thought to the community (17). These entities “make little effort to assess” the community, and therefore tend to develop “generic” artwork, “rarely making the effort to link public art with the cultural needs and direct participation of the specific community, and the result has been widespread eruption of bitter controversy over what is perceived as elitist” (17). Therefore, controversy tends to center “largely on the failure of public artists and arts agencies to engage citizens effectively in the development” of these works of art (38).

Municipalities developed many of the controversial examples showcased in *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs* by Erika Doss. The examples of *Spirit Poles* in Concord, California, shown in Appendix I, and *Titled Arc* in New York, New York, shown in Appendix II, are works of public art that were profoundly rejected by the community. Residents were angered by the aesthetics and practicality of the art, the “authority” and “manipulation” of government, and the “relevance of the work” (38). In Concord, the public opinion was that political figures no longer valued or identified themselves as “citizen representatives”, and instead were consumed with the power of creating policy and acting in self interest (41). This was then seen within the development of public art for the region and the creation of *Spirit Poles*. The municipality had followed a traditional path of selecting a panel of experts that determined the location, the artist and theme of the art. Only after this process was completed was the community asked their opinion on the proposed work at poorly attended town hall meetings (48, 51). This

resulted in a piece of art that was dramatically rejected by the community. The art became a profound topic of discussion in local media, public campaigns rallied for its removal, and suggestions were made to alter the work against the wishes of the artist. After ten years of protests and discussion, the art was eventually removed.

The example of *Spirit Poles* is not an unusual case. “Many government-sponsored public artworks can be described as localized extensions of the elite culture” such as political figures and members of larger art institutions such as museums (53). These experts will then frequently become members of on the art commissions or panels, and public art administrators subsequently turn to “established professional excellence rather than local artists who might collaborate with their communities (or outsiders who may do the same)” (53). While this is not the case with every municipal division, many public art departments resort to following this plan and strategy, even writing it into their city ordinance.

There is no continuity amongst municipalities that directs them to follow a strategy of community involvement, despite general agreement that it is important. Interviews with municipal representatives showcase that there is “broad agreement about increasing access to arts and culture, [but] it can be difficult for government to fulfill and carry out this responsibility” (Rogoff 123). Funding limitations, project development, and management restrictions have resulted in greater limitations to the implementation of community involvement initiatives and the expansion of inclusive project development strategies. When a municipal public art department neglects to include the community in the planning process, the work of public art project will be less successful.

Chapter II PUBLIC ART LOCAL ART AGENCIES

Funding

According to Americans for the Arts, Local Arts Agencies “provide programs, services, and funding to strengthen their local arts industries and make the arts accessible to all” (Cohen). LAAs may be nonprofit or housed within government. According to the Americans for the Arts *Local Arts Agency Census 2015: Public Art*, there are approximately 450 Public Art Programs in the United States. Within this survey of LAAs, approximately 45% report operating at least one public art program. For the purpose of this research, only LAAs that are nonprofit, not housed within government, and highlight public art as one of their core programming efforts will be analyzed as examples.

The funding portfolio of a public art LAA typically follows a traditional arts nonprofit organization and includes a diverse range of funding sources. “Over half of LAA public art programs receive government funding (53 percent) and programs may also receive funding from individuals (44 percent), foundations (36 percent), and private businesses (38 percent)” (*Public Art*). While ticket or membership sales traditionally make up a large portion of individual giving within a nonprofit arts organization, a public art LAA rarely has this form of income, as public art is defined as free and accessible. These organizations may therefore rely more heavily on fundraising efforts such as individual giving, grants, and partnerships or contracts from municipal government.

In order to attract a higher percentage of government funding, which has a reputation of being consistent and reliable once attained, a nonprofit may seek out a contracted partnership rather than a grant (Jang and Feiock 177). However, relying on government funding or support many not create a strong foundation for programming.

Concern is sometimes expressed that government funding detracts from nonprofit agencies' distinctive niche within the service system, creates inappropriate accountability relationships, and results in loss of professional autonomy. In particular, financial dependence on government grants and contracts may undermine flexibility in specialized programming, because it rarely comes without mandates and strings attached. Government funding also creates management difficulties and uncertain ties for nonprofit organizations that are required to work under contract rules and regulations that restrict nonprofits' own specialties as an independent organization. (177)

Contracts and partnerships between nonprofits and municipal divisions pose an excellent opportunity for expanding funding and programming, but come with a set of trepidations as well. The restrictions and additional guidelines that apply to municipal public art may be imposed onto a nonprofit when a partnership or contract is established. This is exemplified within the example of Portland Public Art. Although the organization is a nonprofit LAA, it must abide by the regulations imposed within the city's Percent-For-Art ordinance, as the organization manages this source of funding. However, this applies only to projects produced using these funds. Portland Public Art may seek additional funding and commission projects using these resources without restriction.

As with most nonprofit arts organizations, public art administrators report that funding poses one of the greatest challenges to their organizations (Geraci). These administrators may look to Percent-For-Art ordinances or city funded programs and see reliable sources of income, and therefore the ability to provide consistent, high-quality programming. However, the reliability of this funding may come with stipulations that are not regularly imposed on nonprofits. While this might increase the opportunities for funding, it may in turn decrease the flexibility and success of public art projects.

Management and Project Development

As reported by many representatives of these examples, LAAs have the ability to manage timelines, projects, funding, public input, and partnerships with more flexibility than municipal government. “The flexibility of these programs [nonprofit LAAs] usually results in a greater diversity of activities, from emerging artist programs and temporary installations to community events and educational offerings” (Becker 2). Rather than adhering to predetermined regulations and deadlines within a guideline, ordinance, or project proposal, the structure of the project may develop as the organization and community sees fit. This may, at times, elongate a project timeline. The possible benefits of customizing or lengthening a project timeline include the ability to raise additional funds, increase community input, and allowing the artists to focus on their work.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, a public art LAA will typically follow a traditional nonprofit managerial structure. A Board of Directors will supervise and be responsible for the well-being of the organization as required by law. An Executive Director will oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization. This includes other staff members,

fundraising, and major project development and implementation. Volunteers will likely play a significant role in the function of the organization. In addition to these players, many public art LAAs have chosen to incorporate the municipal model of a community review board within the project development process. This is showcased in cities such as Jackson Hole where projects are overseen by a commissioned board of community individuals. This ensures additional levels of community input, diversity, and project analysis (Geraci). In this organization, the decision was made to utilize a different review board for each individual project, rather than the traditional structure of appointing boards and commissions to a set term of service. This frequent change of members within the review board would not be possible within municipal government due to government oversight, predetermined timelines, and restrictions on the project development process.

Project development methods typically take on one of two strategies-- organization driven or community driven. Organizations such as CPAD in Detroit and the Center for Neighborhoods in Louisville await the approach of community members or organizations in a community driven approach (Stephens). Jackson Hole Public Art, however, derives many of its projects from within the staff of the organization, or from the review board in an organizational approach. The organization will look throughout the region for locations and facilities that they believe could benefit from a piece of public artwork, approach the local individual or government entity that controls the land regarding a potential project, and then consult that local neighborhood about what style of public art they would like within their community (Geraci).

Each of these public art LAAs have customized its management structures and project development guidelines without the imposition of municipal legislation. Some

have chosen to incorporate elements that are traditional to a municipal division, but each organization has been able to adapt elements that are fitting and successful. This has led to a broader range of projects and development strategies.

Partnerships and Contracts

In order to utilize a greater number of resources, many LAAs choose to partner with municipal government departments or other nonprofit organizations. There are many benefits to establishing both informal and contractual relationships between nonprofits and government entities—economic efficiencies, effective problem solving, improving the quality of service, shared responsibility of risk, and access to resources (Jang and Feiock 178). Several examples of public art LAAs hold contracts or partnerships with municipal government including Jackson Hole Public Art, Public Art Saint Paul, and Portland Public Art.

These partnerships take on many different forms. Jackson Hole Public Art has an official relationship with its local municipal government. In 2012, both the founding of the organization and the writing of *The Town of Jackson: Public Art Guidelines* for municipal government occurred under the direction of Carrie Geraci, a local leader in the field of public art and the Executive Director of Jackson Hole Public Art. The LAA manages all matters of public art related to the city and county, and is obligated by a city ordinance to do so. The city therefore provides general support and a limited amount of funding to coordinate these efforts (Geraci).

Public Art Saint Paul operates as an independent 501(c)(3). It has an unofficial-no contract-mutually trusting relationship with the local municipal government that the

organization will facilitate all public art for the region. (Cherry) The government provides support, but rarely funding. The two parties rely on each other a great deal to accomplish their goals and improve the community (Cherry). This long-standing relationship has been of great value to the organization and, at times, has allowed them to bypass or expedite municipal procedures and regulations (Cherry). The partnership has led to several successful projects, the most recently being *Pop Up Meeting*, showcased in Appendix IV. In this project, the municipal government provided the immediate funds to purchase a vehicle that would allow the organization to bring temporary, interactive public art projects to neighborhoods within the Saint Paul region. Both parties view this project as highly successful, and the project has been reviewed positively by the communities it has visited (Cherry). Without the initial investment from municipal government, this project would not have been possible. The organization continues its work independently and is successful because it manages the project internally without government oversight (Cherry).

Another example of a successful organization that is based on partnerships is CPAD. All projects are completed in tandem with neighborhood nonprofits and include high levels of input from the community. Examples of these projects, including a sculpture and mural, are showcased in Appendix V. The engagement process is an essential part of project development planning, and “many community members reported that CPAD’s approach to joining forces with established community and neighborhood initiatives was effective and resulted in meaningful and sustainable community change” (*Using a Case Study Approach* 6). In the organization’s 2014 project evaluation report, *Using a Case Study Approach to Document community+public arts: DETROIT (CPAD)*

Community Engagement Strategies and Impact within Six Skillman Detroit-based Neighborhoods, community involvement was highlighted as a key aspect of its project development approach. The overall feedback throughout the report and various evaluation methods was positive. The residents of the neighborhoods had high respect for the artwork and for CPAD because of this collaborative effort (6). In addition, survey responders stated “participating in the projects reaffirmed their belief in the power and importance of bringing diverse groups of people together” (6). These projects showcased public art’s ability to bring about positive impact and change to many levels of a community’s environment.

The *Public Art Master Plan* in Louisville, Kentucky, made the recommendation that the city institute a public art administrator and commissioning board within city government (Sowada 14). This effectively created a grant-awarding department within municipal government, while public art project management was directed to various nonprofit LAAs in the community. The recommendation was made that “it is more practical for the city to rely upon external partnering non-profit agencies and organizations with an experienced curatorial and fundraising staff to initiate and execute new public art projects” in order to “commission projects with more relevancy to a particular site and the larger community” (16). Municipal government then awards funding to multiple regional nonprofit organizations, such as Louisville Visual Art and the Center for Neighborhoods (16).

These partnerships are a part of what has been identified as a strategy of “creative placemaking”--when “partners from public, private, nonprofit and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city

or region around arts and cultural activities” (“Places of Possibility” 5). This strategy has helped to create positive reception for creative initiatives, as public art has the ability “to remedy social alienation and generate a sense of civic identity when treated as placemaking” (Doss 25). A number of the examples of partnerships and cases of creative placemaking are located in smaller, rural, or isolated communities. One explanation for this commonality may be that “when private markets are weak, nonprofit-government partnerships are demanded. Thus, partnership arrangements between nonprofits and government are the preferred arrangement for social services that do not attract private providers” (Jang and Feiock 180).

Combining the efforts and resources of multiple entities enables facilitators to put forth greater efforts regarding projects such as public art. By incorporating the strategy of creative placemaking, public art administrators have the opportunity to further the goals of “promoting community character and value, inspiring connections to a place, celebrating a unique environment and cultural heritage, creating an identity for your town by telling its stories and histories, and inspiring community participation” (“Places of Possibility” 6).

Community Involvement

Each LAA has a unique strategy of incorporating community voices into project planning. Jackson Hole Public Art is able to use its office space for community and neighborhood gatherings to cultivate feedback and suggestions regarding project proposals (Geraci). As an extremely small region, Jackson Hole Public Art only has two staff members. The primary staff member, the Executive Director, is responsible for

project selection and management, development and funding, and operations. It is the role of the second staff member to manage community engagement and market strategies such as social media, events, and more. Despite such a small staff, the organization felt that the need for community engagement was so great that it warranted dedicating a significant portion of the organization's payroll expenses.

The *Public Art and Placemaking Toolkit* of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, recommended incorporating the community as the first step of developing public art. "Identify the artists, makers, and creative entrepreneurs in your town," as these community representatives and cultural experts will represent many of the needs and wants of the region ("Places of Possibility" 8). Whether these individuals sit on a panel or commissioned board, their input into the project is necessary. A study by The Urban Institute titled *Culture Counts in Communities: A Framework for Measurement* noted, "one cannot enter a community and expect to understand how art and culture are defined, presented, and valued" (Jackson and Herranz 14). Interviews, focus groups, and personal relationships are essential components of initial research for a project. The framework of examining how an organization can work within the region, and the community's context of art and culture, will lead to the production of successful works of public art.

CPAD's strategy of neighborhood partnerships is an important component in the success of its projects. By including a second organization as a key element in the project development plan, the residents of the designated area are more willing to contribute their ideas into the project, citing an initial connection to their local nonprofit and eventually to CPAD (*Using a Case Study Approach* 6). Within CPAD's study and range of projects, this resulted in creating works of art that are more truly representative of their community

and the cultural identity of its members. CPAD believes that its “community engagement process empowers community residents and stakeholders to take an active and leading role in making key decisions as to what types of activities will take place in their neighborhood, where and when these activities will take place, and who will be involved” (9). Without limitations on funding, management, or project development, organizations like CPAD and other LAAs are able to dedicate resources to community engagement and incorporating the community’s cultural identity into the work of art. This results in public art projects that are more reflective of the community and are more successful.

Chapter III IMPACT AND EVALUATION

Community and Cultural Identity

The words of art, culture, identity, and impact have various meanings to each organization and community. These terms must be discussed and mutually agreed to prior to the launch of each project. If members of the community are not involved in the initial discussion and development process, then incorporating their identity, goals, ideas, and aesthetics into the artwork will prove to be a great challenge.

Community participation in the development of site-specific public art projects has many benefits. Taking the time to solicit stakeholder input helps increase project effectiveness, community ownership of the work, and generates motivation for protection and maintenance of the art once it is installed. One important strategy for galvanizing community insight revolves around partnerships with trusted neighborhood-based service organizations. For example, CPAD partners with a local organization for each of its projects in order to identify the community, cultural identity, and the goals and vision for the project. It begins a project development process with several meetings and open forums to discuss the direction of the project, available resources, and goals (Lauerman). CPAD makes these engagement opportunities readily available by bringing them to spaces located within the community (Lauerman). “CPAD reverses the traditional grant-making process by granting communities funds for projects before projects are identified” (*Using a Case Study Approach* 10). The organization also incorporates a

traditional RFQ process as well as “a city-wide Community and Public Art Advisory Council made up of both arts and community organizations [that] identifies and pre-screens artists, helps set policy, and identifies citywide resources” (10). Despite choosing to incorporate strategies that are traditionally used within a municipal division, CPAD has the flexibility as a nonprofit LAA to include additional steps and strategies of community engagement throughout the planning process. The organization cites this strategy as “central to CPAD’s effectiveness” (11).

While CPAD exemplifies one method of successful community engagement, each organization may undertake its own strategy. Overall, the process may include components such as speaking to prominent community members, site visits, cultural participation, and a custom process of receiving ongoing project feedback and input. Including the facilitating organization, its employees, a possible commissioned board, and the project artist in discussion with the community will contribute to the success of the project and its reception by the community.

Role of the Artists

Despite the innate public nature of public art, the project is a direct reflection and creation of the artist. The project begins with an RFQ or proposal, but frequently there is little guidance to an artist following this initial stage, especially within municipal-led projects. “Artists are typically given enormous freedom to decide the material and design of a piece as long as it meets certain standards of safety and aesthetics” (Rogoff 124). However, when tasked with a public art project, an artist’s job description must extend beyond the creation of developing a singular work. Involving the artist, not just the

administrator, is an essential element of community interaction and discussion. The organization or the artists themselves may initiate this style of planning. This incorporation of the artist into community engagement may be a key element to the success of the artwork.

The Santa Barbara County Arts Commission hired Judy Baca in 1987 to paint a mural in Guadalupe, California (Doss 157). As an expert from Los Angeles in the field of utilizing public art as a means of community engagement, Baca took it upon herself to incorporate the community in many facets of project planning and creation process (176). During the time of her project development, she spent months “scoping out its streets and psyche” – living, working, and speaking with residents and business owners within the town (158). Baca, through her own style of project development, was able to initiate a “community conscious-raising” conversation and strategy regarding public art, leading to a highly prized piece of art for the community titled the *Guadalupe Mural* (160).

In this example, the municipal government chose a proactive and engaging artist to complete the project. This was not the case in the example of the *Spirit Poles* in Concord, California, just a few hundred miles north. Unlike Baca, the artist of *Spirit Poles* chose not to incorporate the community within the project planning process. In addition, the municipal review panel did not incorporate community input until they offered a town hall meeting late in the planning process (42). There was no attempt to actively engage the community, or to identify and incorporate the cultural identity of Concord into the project.

In both examples, the decision to engage in early onset of continual community engagement was left to the discretion of the artist. Each artist chose drastically different

paths, which contributed to the overall success and outcome of their respective projects. The role of the artist, and the process of community engagement throughout the project development process, has an integral effect on the outcome and reception of the work. “If artists, government arts agencies, and corporate sponsors tend to devalue the dialogue and debate necessary in the development of public art,” works of public art may not see great success (161). “The model that Judy Baca followed with the *Guadalupe Mural* was clearly part of community engagement...She treated Guadalupe’s public art process as a forum for civic dialogue” (161). Concord, in contrast, treated the process of public art development simply as a municipal obligation, and the community ultimately rejected the work, leading to its removal.

Not all artists are willing to commit to extensive community involvement or project evaluation. “Many artists don’t see as much value in evaluation because, in part, it comes in addition to the difficult work that they just accomplished” (Gressel). If community engagement is not outlined as an integral part of the project development process in the, RFW, RFP, contract, or their personal practices, they may not consider the project. In the example of *Titled Arc* in the Federal Plaza of New York, New York, showcased in Appendix II, the artist rejected community input and the evaluation of the project that followed. Art historian Harriet Senie commented that the artist was “scornful of the need to take the public’s wishes into consideration” (Doss 32). Compromising an artistic vision for the sake of the community, or to require input from outside parties, may limit the integrity and intention of the work according to the opinion of the artist. However, including this input will assist in accomplishing the ultimate goal of creating public art that is well received, reflected, and impactful amongst the community.

Scientifically Tested Impact

Frequently, the impact or value of art is described as intrinsic. However, this definition of impact can neither be measured, nor reported. A majority of public art administrators report, and are supported by critics of the field, that there is no concise, widely used method of evaluation or impact for public art (Gressel). However, many funders consider showcasing a positive impact as essential in providing support, “Public art administrators generally agree that some type of evaluation is key in not only making a case for support from funders, but in building a successful program” (Gressel).

The traditionally accepted method of evaluation and proving impact of any field or practice is a scientific method of a test-approved hypothesis. “Researchers/evaluators test hypotheses about the impact of a social initiative using statistical analysis techniques...[to]... show causal relationships between certain outcomes and the treatments or services aimed at producing these outcomes” (*W. K. Kellogg* 5-6). The Kellogg Foundation published its most updated version of the *Evaluation Handbook* in January 2010. In addition to providing guidelines to a scientific method of evaluation, it outlines additional strategies for measuring impact. The *Evaluation Handbook* recommends incorporating three components into an evaluation method – context, implementation, and outcome (20). An organization looking to develop an internal method of evaluation would benefit from Kellogg’s research and handbook. While not all organizations may have the capabilities of developing and implementing such a complex and scientific strategy, there are additional methods to tracking impact utilizing industry-accepted methods. This may include further interviews of community members,

recording visitors and viewers of the art, tracking news coverage digitally and in print, and more.

The *Evaluation Handbook* asks that project administrators answer questions before beginning an evaluation process. “Who are you going to serve? You and your staff need to think through the family and community level outcomes you are trying to achieve – both interim and long-term” (*W.K. Kellogg* 32-33). This question should be a key component to any project development process and should be measured throughout the progression of a project. Whether an organization chooses to develop a scientifically tested method, or simply relies on the feedback of surveys, interviews, and observation, evaluating the impact of a project on the community is an essential part of a project development process.

Project Evaluation

Developing and testing a hypothesis may be scientific strategy, but there are many possible methods of evaluation. Many organizations may not conclude that a scientific approach is best suited for its project or team. Therefore, other styles of evaluation utilized include general surveys, processing of retrieved and researched data, compiling first-hand accounts, media records and reporting, and more. Most organizations will individually determine what method of evaluation works best for them, but there is rarely consistency between compiled or published results.

There are organizations that are attempting to change that pattern. Ixia, a public art think tank in the United Kingdom, has developed several matrices, evaluation guidelines, databases, and online resources for public art facilitators to evaluate the

success of a public art projects (“Programme”). The Ixia matrix is designed to be completed by various project stakeholders during the initial planning stage, as well as at the midpoint and conclusion stages of a project. This organization also published an extensive report- *Ixia: Research on Public Art: Assessing Impact and Quality*. The report provides examples of what evidence may be collected, and the necessary steps to analyze this information (Thompson et al. 26-28). The report provides guidelines, recommendations, data, and outlines possible strategies to evaluate public art according to standards, funding, and legislation in the United Kingdom. While the matrices and outlines that Ixia has established may not entirely translate to the funding streams used by nonprofits and Percent-For-Art ordinances in the United States, it provides starting guidelines for organizations to begin evaluating a project and its impact.

Due to a lack of consistent evaluation methods across the field of public art, comparing results between regions or projects is difficult.

Data collection practices are inconsistent, vary in their sophistication, and yield information that is frequently not comparable across organizations or reporting levels (national, state, regional, and local). Nor are they anchored in any consensus about how the information is to be collected and used. The information typically centers on grant requirements, attitudes and opinions about the arts, audience participation, and organizational financial conditions. (Jackson 14)

It is not commonplace to utilize a method of evaluation within a public art institution.

“Few public art programs currently conduct evaluations. Only 27 percent of the programs [asked]...stated that they had conducted an evaluation or assessment of an individual

public art project; 22 percent had conducted an evaluation or assessment of their entire program” (Becker 11). The majority of respondents included in Becker’s report were from government agencies (2). Municipal project developers “are paid for their leadership in developing and delivering a strong project...It is also uncommon to spend precious training resources on something like quantitative evaluation techniques” (Gressel). Therefore, the focus lies solely on developing and installing the work, rather than incorporating the community within the process.

Many evaluation programs are typically developed within an LAA. For example, one of the largest studies Mural Arts published was in 2006 when the organization hired local college students, in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania, to conduct door-to-door surveys of community members regarding their perception of the public art in their neighborhood (Stern and Seifert). The overall results were compiled with additional research showcasing the organization’s impact on the city of Philadelphia through public art (Stern and Seifert). This project utilized community members in many facets, multiple techniques of assessment, and provided both a useful evaluation method of the project and important strategies of successful evaluation to the field of public art.

In a 2015 study, Mural Arts published a four-year evaluation about the Porch Light Program. This project “seeks to transform neighborhoods and promote the health of neighborhood residents and individuals” through the creation of murals by partnering with the Philadelphia Department of Health and other municipal and nonprofit entities (Tebes, et al, iii). Examples of this project are displayed in Appendix III. The scientific hypothesis proposed behind the research and project is modeled in Figure 1. The scientific hypothesis composed for this research had many components:

Public murals can have a positive public health impact on neighborhood residents. Murals...will promote collective efficacy among neighborhood residents; that is, increased cohesion and trust among neighbors and enhanced informal social control. Murals would enhance the overall aesthetic quality of the neighborhood near a mural, including the walking environment, related aesthetic neighborhood characteristics, and perceptions of neighborhood safety. We expected murals to create a positive public narrative about mental health and substance abuse issues that would reduce behavioral health stigma among neighborhood residents. (2)



Fig. 1
("Porch Light Program Hypothesis Model")

To produce the evaluation report, the organization conducted surveys, recorded observations of the neighborhood over an extended period of time, completed interviews, and more to test this hypothesis using the "community-based participatory research", modeled in Figure 2 (iii, 3-4).

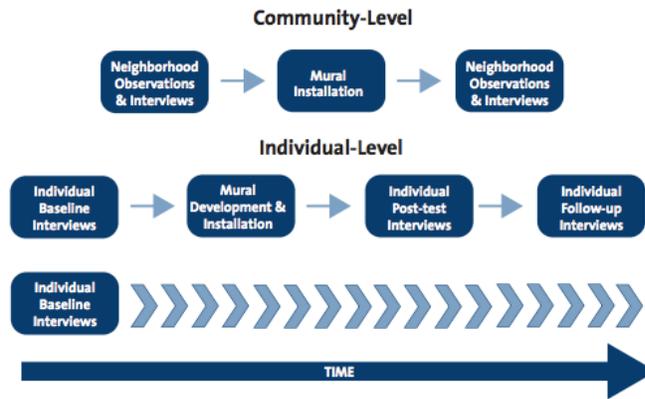


Fig. 2

(“Porch Light Program Community-Based Participatory Research Model”)

The research concluded the following took place:

- A relative increase in neighborhood aesthetic quality, the walking environment, ratings of specific buildings, and perceived neighborhood safety.
- A relative decrease (at a statistical trend) in stigma toward individuals with mental health or substance abuse challenges.
- Case study interviews of Porch Light participants indicated that the program can enhance friendships, sense of self, a desire to give back to one’s community, and hope for the future. (iii)

The research was able to conclude that the proposed hypothesis was found to be correct in that murals and public art had an overall positive effect on the mental health of the community and participants (25). An additional highlighted success of this report was that “researchers and other stakeholders collaborated as partners to conduct research, such that program activities or other naturally-occurring behaviors under study [were] carried out with minimal interference by the researcher” (3). This is an important

discovery because it highlights the fact that the impact and its analysis were observed and recorded without outside interference. The intended purpose for this style of evaluation is to remove the “footprint” of the researcher so that the study may be a “naturally-occurring process” that results in authentic, true information (3). In the field of public art this is a highly effective method, as it allows the community to participate in the research and showcase its own self-described impact.

Throughout its history, Mural Arts has shown consistent effort and success in evaluating the impact of its programming on the various neighborhoods of Philadelphia. However, Mural Arts is under a unique management combination of both municipal and nonprofit funding. This has allowed the organization the flexibility to operate its community-involved strategy, which would not have been fully possible if not for the dual management structure (Reilly). As the organization is at the forefront of the public art field, it is looking to expand its programming and outreach opportunities for other organizations to improve upon the areas of community engagement, research, and project analysis by utilizing Mural Art’s many resources (Reilly).

CPAD has also engaged in comprehensive project analysis throughout its history. Returning to the organization’s 2014 project evaluation report, *Using a Case Study Approach to Document community+public arts: DETROIT (CPAD) Community Engagement Strategies and Impact within Six Skillman Detroit-based Neighborhoods*, the success of six projects was documented through a process of project evaluation. The organization’s research through interviews and surveys displayed a strong, positive sentiment that the works of art positively impacted, and were reflective of the community and its cultural identity. This feedback is reflected in Figures 3 and 4, which document

the community’s reception regarding one of the CPAD projects in the Brightmoor neighborhood of Detroit.

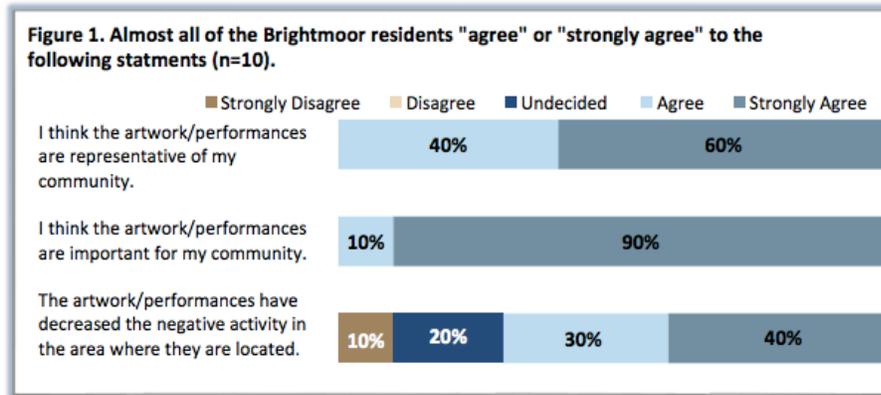


Fig. 3

(“Interview Results #1 of Brightmoor Community Members”)

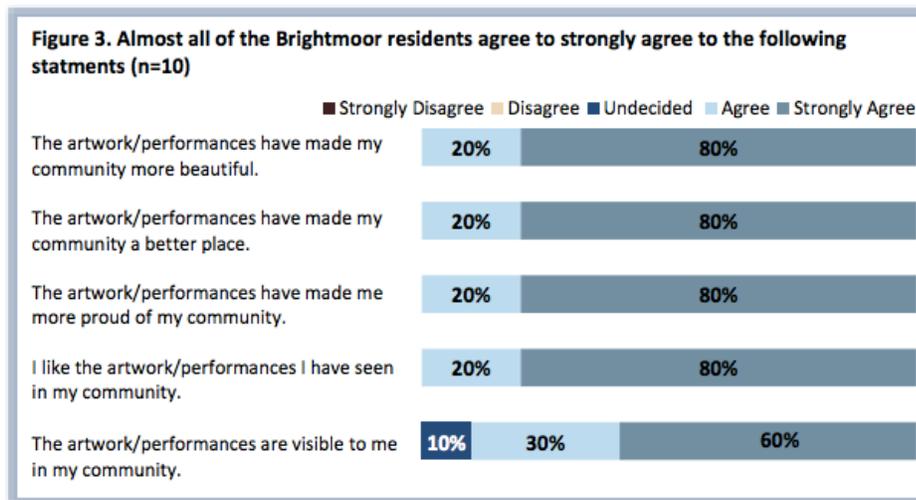


Fig. 4

(“Interview Results #2 of Brightmoor Community Members”)

As with the planning process and evaluation methods of CPAD, a well-rounded impact report incorporates project development, how the community was involved, as well as the reception of the art and its impact after it is granted to the community. Elements of such a plan may include tracking attendees at community events,

interviewing local individuals, analyzing data, and engaging local policy makers and prevalent members of the community. This is a process that organizations may customize and engage in on a smaller scale.

Public art programs can develop their evaluation methods by gathering information from local and national grantmaking organizations about evaluation processes, working with an evaluation consultant, and learning about the evaluations conducted by other public art programs. Reporting back to the field about the evaluation mechanism and results via the Public Art Network, websites, conferences, listservs, and articles is an essential step toward advancing awareness of the need and benefits of evaluation.

(Becker 11)

Throughout the process of creating and planning public art, there are creative methods of evaluating the project. Rebecca Rothman of the Phoenix Public Art Program cites its thorough tracking of everyone who works on a project through a seven-year evaluation (Adams and Lebow). “These people equal jobs...from fabricators to material suppliers...we’ve asked artists and design leads to list each subcontractor they hire...then we ask the contractor to do the same” (Fenner). Phoenix is one of only a few examples of a municipal agency documenting evaluation of their work and publishing an impact report. “When budgets are tight, evaluation is often seen by commissioners/clients as an unnecessary expense, [and] financial and time constraints often impel project managers onto the next project rather than to evaluating past work” (Thompson et al. 7). In contrast, the public art department within the municipality of Philadelphia reports too few resources of time, staff, and money to engage in any reporting on evaluation and impact

(Berg). Attention is diverted first to developing new works, then to the evaluation of current and past projects, which is rarely at the forefront of important tasks (Berg).

Many public art administrators agree that evaluation is a nearly impossible task- identifying research markers, devoting time and resources, and a lack of consistent strategies all create obstacles to evaluation (Berg). Many also consider it common knowledge that with “bureaucratic barriers, evaluation can be perceived as an over-complex activity, where the outcomes are uncertain or potentially unhelpful to future work” (Thompson et al. 7). Successes based on the models created by Phoenix, Ixia, Mural Arts, and CPAD showcase possible methods that may be utilized by LAAs and municipal public art agencies.

If all stakeholders have been effectively engaged in development of the project objectives and identified outcomes which would signal project success for them, then there is much greater likelihood of the evaluation process being seen as a benefit, not merely a chore. If the evaluation process has been handled well from the outset, all stakeholders are likely to ‘buy in’ to the results. (15)

Incorporating community members, artists, policy makers, and stakeholders into an evaluation method can increase the likelihood of successful implementation of a project, its opportunities for connection to and acceptance by the community, and establish a basis for future projects and funding.

Chapter IV COUNTERARGUMENTS AND RELEVANCE

Analysis of Examples

The various LAA examples within the scope of this writing include organizations of varying sizes located in drastically different communities across the continental United States. Several of them have partnerships or contracts with additional nonprofits or divisions of municipal government. However, each of them has created opportunities and strategies for creating successful works of public art that have been well received by the community. This reception has been documented through surveys, studies, interviews, and observations conducted by the organizations.

Representatives from several of the examples cite a key element to their success is the flexibility they have as an independent nonprofit that does not report directly to municipal government (Cherry; Reilly). Mural Arts, arguably the most recognized and respected of the examples, is one such organization that cites this explanation. Despite operating under both municipal and nonprofit departments, the organization recognizes the limitations that municipal government has within the creative arts field, and how that may translate to works of public art. Restrictions on areas such as funding, management structures, and project development have been recognized not only by nonprofit administrators, but within municipal government as well. In the city of Louisville, as well as several other examples, the government elected not to become the developer of public

art for the region (Sowada). Instead, the municipality believed it would better serve the community as a grant-awarding entity so that LAAs would have the flexibility to produce public art projects within individual neighborhoods that highlight the cultural features of various regions (Creative Time).

Interviews with organization representatives of the many examples showcased several successful projects, areas of improvement, and differences between municipal and nonprofit agencies. All organizations wished for increases in funding, community input, and project flexibility, but the concerns expressed by government representatives and relevant research highlighted significant limitations that were detrimental to the success of municipal public art projects. In contrast, examples of municipal public art departments, such as San Diego, that have explored new models of funding and management have increased the quality and quantity of projects within the community.

There are examples of nonprofit LAA public art organizations modeling funding, management structure, and project development processes after municipal government ordinances. However, most of these nonprofits are not subject to the legislation written by city government. Each organization has the ability to determine its own flexibility and stray away from traditional models of funding and management. This inherent malleability of a nonprofit has led to successful partnerships, increased and diversified funding, and greater community involvement, all of which have brought about the resources to engage in evaluation techniques of successful projects.

LAAs also lead the field of evaluation and impact analysis regarding public art. Nationally and abroad, organizations like Mural Arts, Ixia, and CPAD have conducted extensive research analyzing many projects. The results of these studies continue to show

that public art has the ability “to engage a community, defined geographically or through a common experience, to come together to find meaning and shared purpose” (Tebeș, et al. 25). A community can be showcased and positively reflected by public art commissioned by an LAA that has ample resources to produce such successful works.

Relevance

Throughout history, public art has been recognized as an important part of community beautification. Internationally, public art is now frequently incorporated into community, urban, and cultural planning in order to achieve this goal. The Hong Kong Arts Development Council commissioned a report to analyze the value of visual arts to the city, of which public art was a significant element. The report noted several contributions that public art can make to a community:

- Attracting investment from the local authority and private sector
- Making the region a more attractive place for businesses to locate
- Stimulating the local economy
- Encouraging tourism by giving an area a competitive edge
- Contributing to local distinctiveness by giving a voice to artists
- Increasing the use of open spaces, reclaiming areas and helping reduce levels of crime and vandalism
- Humanising environments, involving the community and creating a cultural legacy for the future (Hui 6)

This report defined both “administrative-led” and “community-based” models that parallel municipal and nonprofit models in the United States (13). While the report did

not seek to define which was more successful, the report provided support that public art showcases positive results when contributing to overall community enhancement and planning. As explored by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, as well as Ixia in the United Kingdom, public art continues to be an important element in the discussion of art and its relationship to communities in all regions. Government entities across the globe provide funding and establish legislation that allows for public art project development.

In the United States, government funding for the arts is frequently a topic of controversy. Particularly when pieces of public art are unpopular, government funding for the arts is often called into question. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a federally funded department that provides public art and related project grants across the country, suffered a drastic budget cut during the 1980s and 1990s due to such controversy (Koch). The department was not eliminated as a result of these cuts, but funding cuts to the arts and elimination of the NEA are regularly proposed as a part of the federal budget, and have occurred as recently as early 2017 (Deb). As the level of federal funding for the NEA is often a guide and baseline for government funding for the arts, this could greatly impact the amount and popularity of funding for municipal public art projects throughout the United States. As with many social issues, the topic of public funding for the arts, and public art works, is a relevant subject in the media internationally, within the United States, locally, and on a personal level to many individuals.

Counterarguments

Despite the growing popularity of public art as a field and the increasing number of Percent-For-Art ordinances in recent decades, there has always been controversy within the subject of government funding for art, including public art. The research compiled within this document does not argue for the repeal of Percent-For-Art ordinances, or the elimination of government funding for the arts. Instead of limiting government funding on public art, legislation and restrictions should be examined and rewritten to allow for more funding options, flexible management, and projects. An enhancement of public art related legislation would provide municipalities with the resources and flexibility to commission more impactful projects. The case is also made to support greater funding of nonprofit public art, as well as collaboration with municipal and other nonprofit entities, to ensure the future success of public art programming by all entities.

In contrast to a Percent-For-Art ordinance, a nonprofit's funding portfolio is derived from a variety of sources including individual, corporate, government, and foundation giving. Many proponents of traditional percent-for-ordinances argue that a great variety of funding streams often creates an unreliable or inconsistent variety of funding, possibly reducing the number of projects commissioned. In contrast, a Percent-For-Art ordinance creates one source of revenue that is consistent and reliable. "Public art programs that operate with a public art ordinance tend to have significantly larger and faster-growing budgets than those without an ordinance. This is not surprising since by definition, most ordinances create a consistent and reliable funding stream for public art" (Becker 5). For many, this creates an argument for a shift to municipal funding for public

art due to its consistency. However, despite the reliability, legislation language often establishes undue burden and restriction onto the public art department and the project development process. Interviews with public art administrators within municipalities that have created new models of public art development to allow for diverse funding streams have demonstrated a renewed flexibility in project development and community involvement. Overall, this has allowed for greater opportunities for success, positive impact, and community involvement, creating an argument for reinvigorating the traditional legislation of Percent-For-Art ordinances.

The incorporation of community involvement and participation is not a project strategy that is agreed upon by all. Artists sometimes prefer to work in solitary or limited conditions, as to work more directly on the course of their artwork. “Placing too many restrictions on the review of installations might hold back the potential for creativity and even deter artists from participating altogether” (Rogoff 124). For this reason, some artists have specialized in the field of public art, while others refuse to work on projects within the public realm. The input of so many parties, including project facilitators and the community, deters their participation. “Some artists prefer autonomy in creating their work, which challenges the notion of community involvement” (Sowada 31). Many artists explain that incorporating the vision of the community may influence or directly change their course of work.

Allowing an artist's vision to be changed by input from others is often a hard concept for many artists to accept. This difficulty reflects the generalization that artists are inspired individuals who have a very distinct

and unique vision, which also builds the tension because this creative thinking is often why they are chosen for a project. (54)

Requiring an artist to consider or incorporate the community into his or her work of art may add additional effort, time, and costs to the project. However it is what ultimately will lead to a successful work of public art. While the work is directly a piece of the artist's expression, it is also of the community's identity, as that who provides a home to the art. Overall, the vision of the artist, the culture of the community, and impact of the project are important factors that an LAA, a municipal department, and an artist must take into account when creating and producing a work of public art.

CONCLUSION

Public art has the capability to impact, reflect, change, and beautify any community. While the implementation of art in the public realm has been around for thousands of years, the notion of government funding for the field gained popularity in the United States in the 20th century. After the first Percent-For-Art ordinance was established in Philadelphia in 1959, the path was paved for municipalities across America to utilize public art as a strategy of urban revitalization and community enhancement.

Through analyzing and researching the examples within the scope of this summary, several conclusions can be made. The first is that the public nature of the field of public art determines the necessary inclusion of public input. The second is that traditional Percent-For-Art ordinances have not provided a reliable source of funding that allows for flexible and fluid project development. The third is the discovery that there have been many successful projects produced through collaborative efforts, partnerships, and contracts between municipal government and nonprofit agencies.

This leads to the final conclusion: the complexities of managing public art projects, coupled with the often-inflexible systems of municipal governments and traditional Percent-For-Art ordinances, make projects more likely to be authentic, socially relevant, and efficiently executed when managed by a nonprofit LAA or organization. This success is then best measured by comprehensive evaluation strategies, an important factor in development of current and future projects.

The formula for successful and impactful public art is not “one size fits all”. Collaborative efforts from municipal divisions, nonprofit LAAs, funders, artists, and community members are necessary to produce works of art that are noteworthy and efficacious. This process can begin with asking a simple question: “What do communities hope to gain from public art?” (Landi). Each unique community will answer with a distinctive response, but the overall goal is to improve the region surrounding the art.

The rapid expansion of cities and development of new municipalities across the United States calls for many more works of art in public spaces. Utilizing strategies of community engagement will encourage and assist artists and administrators in producing projects that will become successful. When this goal is achieved, public art will be an integral contributing factor in the transformation of spaces into places. LAAs and other commissioning agencies are important aspects of this process. Public art programming managed by a local arts agency or more nimble commissions or organizations, rather than a division of municipal government, can provide more impactful projects that are reflective of the culture and identity of the community.

APPENDIX I: PHOTOGRAPHS OF *SPIRIT POLES* IN CONCORD, CALIFORNIA



Photo: Kat Wade

Source: McManis, Sam. “Danville tree repair goes awry / Huge ugly braces support historic oak.” *SFGate*, 19 Apr. 2001, www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Danville-tree-repair-goes-awry-Huge-ugly-braces-support-historic-oak-2930205.php#photo-2254741.



Source: “Claycord Online Museum: The Spirit Poles of Concord Avenue.” *Claycord News and Talk*, 16 Sept. 2016, claycord.com/2016/09/13/claycord-online-museum-the-spirit-poles-of-concord-avenue/.

APPENDIX II: PHOTOGRAPHS OF *TITLED ARC* IN NYC, NEW YORK



Source: “Controversial sculpture cut into 3 pieces after heated debate.” *Public Delivery*, 4 Apr. 2017, publicdelivery.org/richard-serra-tilted-arc/. Accessed 18 Apr. 2017.

APPENDIX III: PHOTOGRAPH OF A *PORCH LIGHT* PROGRAM MURAL IN
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



“Our Vision, Our Testament” Porch Light Initiative Year 2 © 2012 City of Philadelphia
Mural Arts Program/James Burns, Sobriety Through Outpatient (S.T.O.P.), 2534 N.
Broad Street.

Source: Matlin, Samantha, and Jacob Tebes. *Porch Light Program Final Evaluation
Report*. Mural Arts Philadelphia, Yale University. *June 2015*.

[consultationcenter.yale.edu/Porch_Light_Program_Final_Evaluation_Report_Yal
e_June_2015_218966_1095_5.pdf](http://consultationcenter.yale.edu/Porch_Light_Program_Final_Evaluation_Report_Yale_June_2015_218966_1095_5.pdf).

APPENDIX IV: PHOTOGRAPHS OF POP-UP MEETING IN LOUISVILLE,
KENTUCKY



Source: "Pop Up Meeting." *Public Art Saint Paul*,
publicartstpaul.org/project/popup/#about_the_project.

APPENDIX V: PHOTOGRAPHS OF PUBLIC ART BY CPAD IN BRIGHTMOOR,
DETROIT, MICHIGAN



Solarfly Mood Swing, 2013, Brightmoor, Detroit, Michigan



Career Paths Mural, Brightmoor, Detroit, Michigan

Source: *Using a Case Study Approach to Document Community Public Arts: DETROIT (CPAD) Community Engagement Strategies and Impact within Six Skillman Detroit-based Neighborhoods*. Contributors Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group, Community + Public Arts:DETROIT, U of Michigan School of Social Work, Feb. 2014. *College for Creative Studies*, www.collegeforcreativestudies.edu/assets/files/81/full-report-executivesummaryallneighborhoods-lowres..pdf.

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