

**DAKOTA COUNTY PUBLIC ART BLUEPRINT
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1. DAKOTA COUNTY PUBLIC ART INVENTORY

Purpose and Methodology

The Dakota County Planning Department staff, with input from the Public Art Advisory Committee and the consulting team, developed the following inventory of public art currently in Dakota County parks and facilities.

The purpose for developing the inventory is to:

- Clarify what works are public art and formally part of the Dakota County Public Art Collection.
- Provide a snapshot of the works of art in the collection, including the types of work and what Dakota County facilities and parks already have art, which can help inform future public art decisions.
- Better understand how works of art have come to be located in Dakota County facilities and parks.
- Document the works in a single location and identify gaps in documentation.
- Inform issues related to collection management that need to be addressed in the Blueprint, i.e.: maintenance, conservation, de-accession.

The inventory is broken into three categories: public art, portable works, and works on loan to Dakota County. It does not include temporary exhibition displays organized by individual libraries.

Preliminary Inventory

PUBLIC ART

For the purpose of inventory, public art is defined as permanent or temporary elements of a public place that are designed by an artist or an artist team, that reflect an awareness of the site, enrich the character of the location, and are owned by Dakota County. These works are generally sited intentionally and are sometimes integrated into their site.

Balance

Artist: Milligan Studio

Location: Judicial Center, 1590 Highway 55,
Hastings

Sponsor: Dakota County



Charlton Tunnel Mural

Artist: Megan Moore and Meg Erke

Location: River to River Greenway, Charlton
Tunnel, West St. Paul

Sponsor: Dakota County Parks, PAAC



Children Reading on a Bench

Artist: Max Turner

Location: Wentworth Library, entry area, 199 E
Wentworth Ave, West St. Paul

Sponsor: Dakota County Library





Equinox Sunrise

Artist: Juliette Perine Myers

Location: Kaposia Library, Quiet Zone, 131
Seventh Ave N, South St. Paul

Sponsor: Dakota County Library, PAAC



Friends of the Library

Artist: Carolyn Papke, Bruce Mainquist

Location: Farmington Library, Spruce Street
Parking, 508 Third Street, Farmington

Sponsor: Dakota County Library



Hastings

Artist: Unknown

Location: Pleasant Hill Library, outside, right
of entrance, 1490 S Frontage Rd, Hastings

Sponsor:



Jail Mural

Artist: Inmates at County Jail

Location: Dakota County Jail, gymnasium wall,
1580 Highway 55, Hastings

Sponsor: Dakota County Corrections

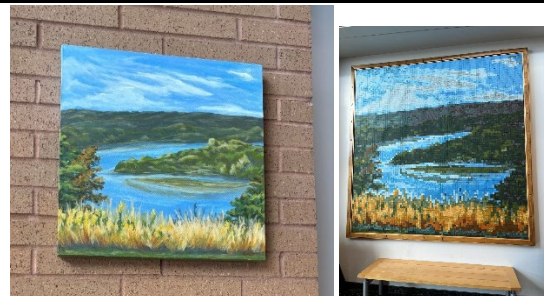


Journey

Artist: Carly Schmitt

Location: Robert Trail Library

Sponsor: Friends of the Robert Trail,
Rosemount Area Arts Council, and others





Lucy

Artist: Jaclee Slaba

Location: Kaposia Library, outside northeast corner, 131 Seventh Ave N, South St. Paul

Sponsor: Peanuts statue donated by City of South St. Paul



Mikaela Juliet and Isabella Grace

Artist: JuliAnne Jonker

Location: Corrections Lobby - Western Service Center, First Floor, 14955 Galaxie Ave, Apple Valley

Sponsor: Dakota County



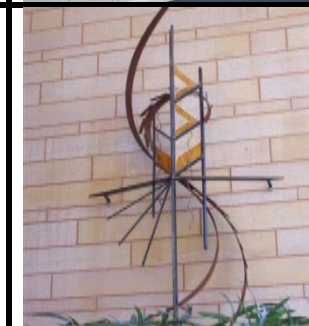
Sentinels

Artist: Paris Pasch

Location: Administration Center, atrium, 1590 Highway 55, Hastings

Sponsor: Donation

Donated by Hazel Jacobsen Theel



Wall Sculptures

Artist: Unknown

Location: Northern Service Center, 1 Mendota Road, West St. Paul

Sponsor: Dakota County



Unknown (Reef Display with Fish)

Artist: Christopher Tully

Location: Robert Trail Library, Children's area wall, 14395 S Robert Trail, Rosemount

Sponsor: Donation





Unknown (Two children on a bench)

Artist: Unknown

Location: Robert Trail Library, outside by entrance, 14395 S Robert Trail, Rosemount

Sponsor: Dakota County Library



Unknown

Artist: Unknown

Location: Wescott Library

Sponsor:

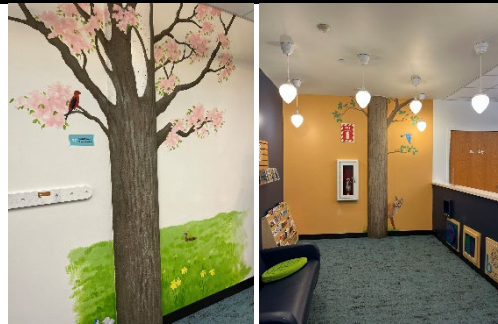


Unknown

Artist: Unknown

Location: Wescott Library

Sponsor:



PORTABLE WORKS

Portable works are defined as smaller-scale, movable, non-site-specific artwork in a variety of two- and three-dimensional media and materials that is owned by the County for the purpose of display in County facilities. The works shown below are a sample of the portable works.

Farmington Library

Artist: Not available.

Location: Farmington Library, staff workroom, 508 Third Street, Farmington

Sponsor:

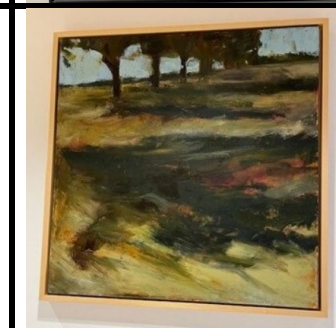


Grass Wind and Trees, near Schaar's Bluff -- Summer

Artist: Rose Goehring

Location: Pleasant Hill Library, behind service desk, 1490 S Frontage Rd, Hastings

Sponsor:



High Water Marker/Under the Highway 61 Bridge

Artist: Luke Erickson

Location: Pleasant Hill Library, staff work area, 1490 S Frontage Rd, Hastings

Sponsor:



Spiral Bridge

Artist: Unknown

Location: Pleasant Hill Library, window overlooking patio, 1490 S Frontage Rd, Hastings

Sponsor:





Symbol of America Flag

Artist: Caprice Glaser

Location: Western Service Center, Atrium, 14955

Galaxie Ave, Apple Valley

Sponsor: Dakota County



WORKS ON LOAN TO DAKOTA COUNTY

Works on loan include public artworks that are sited in Dakota County facilities or parks, but are on loan from the artist, a private individual or organization, or another government entity.

fin, 1590 Highway 55, Hastings

Sponsor: Public Art Advisory Committee and
the Prescott Hastings Arts Council



Trellis

Artist: Dale Lewis

Location: Pleasant Hill Library, 1490 S

Frontage Rd, Hastings

Sponsor: Public Art Advisory Committee and
the Prescott Hastings Arts Council



Triskele

Artist: Foster Willey

Location: Robert Trail Library

Sponsor: City of Rosemount





Inventory: What We Learned

THE COLLECTION

- There are public artworks, 16 portable works, and 3 works on loan.
- The public art pieces represent a range of work from sculptures, murals, mosaics and reliefs. The portable works are almost entirely framed works. The loans are all sculptures.

LOCATION OF WORKS

- All but one of the works are sited or housed at facilities, most indoors.
- A majority (75%) of works are in libraries.

ORIGIN OF WORKS

- The works include commissioned pieces, acquired work, and works that have been donated to the County and/or to an individual Library.
- Four of the commissions (Balance, Charlton Tunnel Mural, Equinox Sunrise, and Mikaela Juliet and Isabella Grace) were partially funded through the Public Art Advisory Committee.
- Several library projects appear to have been supported through library-specific friends groups.
- Several pieces, including *Sentinels*, the Lucy from Peanuts at Kaposia Library, and the reef relief at Robert Trail Library were donations.
- Documentation on the origin of many of the pieces is still being tracked down.

THEMES

- A majority of the works appear to reflect elements of Dakota County nature or history.

OTHER CURRENT ART PROGRAMS

- Dakota County Library and Dakota County Parks Departments provide arts education programs and music programs throughout the year.
- Interpretive exhibits in Dakota County parks include elements, such as illustrations, that are artful.
- Dakota County Library interior design includes artful elements such as murals, historic photographs.
- Both Dakota County Library and Dakota County Parks Departments have hosted artist in residence programs.



2. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Purpose and Methodology

As part of the process to create a Public Art Blueprint for the Dakota County, community engagement efforts were conducted to better understand the perspectives of those who live, work, and visit Dakota County. Several engagement methods were used to learn about the types of public art they value most: pop-up engagements, an online questionnaire, and roundtable discussions. These engagements were designed to help shape a vision for public art in Dakota County, and to learn about preferred locations for new installations and what that art could express or achieve. The results offer important insights into how respondents perceive public art in Dakota County and how they hope to see it evolve in the future.

POP-UP ENGAGEMENTS

Dakota County staff participated in 11 community events to gather public input on the future of public art in the county. At each event, people were invited to place sticker dots on a county map to indicate where they would like to see new public art installed, share words and short phrases describing their vision for future public art, and place dots on examples from other communities that resembled what they felt would be most successful in Dakota County. In addition to these activities, a QR code linking to the questionnaire was shared for those who preferred to give their input digitally.



POP-UP ENGAGEMENT EVENTS			
Name	Date	Approx. No. of Participants	Participants
Party on the Plaza Nicolette Commons Park, Burnsville	August 13, 2025	63	General public
Dakota County Public Art Committee Student Art Contest Reception Robert Trail Library, Rosemount	August 18, 2025	20	Art Contest Participants
Market Fest Central Park Eagan, MN	August 20, 2025	67	General public
Avivo's Back to School Event Dakota Lodge, Thompson County Park, West St. Paul	August 21, 2025	35	Lower income
Weaving Abundance with Ifra Mansour, Community Celebration Spring Lake Park Reserve, Nininger Township	April 26, 2025	5	General public
Music In the Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Empire, MN	August 26, 2025	41	General Public
Lakeville Arts Festival, Lakeville, MN	September 20-21	200	General Public
Eagan Art Block Art Extravaganza at Westcott Library, Eagan, MN	September 24, 2025	20	General Public
Music in the Park Whitetail Woods Regional Park Empire, MN	September 30, 2025	27	General Public
Caponi Art Park Eagan Mn	October, 2025	20	Event Participants
School of Environmental Studies 30 th Anniversary Celebration	October 25, 2025	30	School of Environmental Studies Community



QUESTIONNAIRE

A public questionnaire was launched on August 5, 2025, and was up through October 19, 2025. The questionnaire was offered in both English and Spanish. It received 285 responses. The questions were designed to better understand the public's view on public art, how public art could have an impact on Dakota County, and what locations and types of public art are of most interest.

Most respondents were long-term residents of Dakota County. Nearly half (46.6%) have lived in the county for more than 20 years, and another 23.5% have lived there for 10–20 years. Demographically, the questionnaire skewed toward adults aged 45 and older (68.8%), with a majority identifying as female (78.5%) and white (80.1%).

Respondents showed strong engagement with Dakota County, frequently accessing parks (89.8%), trails and transit routes (86.0%), and library services (78.5%). Many also stay informed digitally through social media or newsletters (72.1%) and the county website (53.2%). Smaller portions attend county events (29%) or volunteer/access services (10%).

Nearly all respondents (97.4%) attended at least one arts-related event in the past year, with many participating in multiple events, 29.1% attended 4–7 arts events, and 25.3% attended more than 12, demonstrating strong cultural engagement locally and regionally and a solid foundation to support future public art initiatives.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

The consulting team facilitated three roundtable discussions with different groups. Each roundtable began with a presentation, followed by discussion questions. All groups discussed the impact that public art can have in Dakota County and potential places for art installations. The arts ecosystem group discussed their own challenges and successes with implementing public art projects. The staff group discussed the definition of public art and how it pertains to Dakota County. The artist group discussed what makes a successful public art process from an artist's perspective.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSIONS

Dakota County staff facilitated individual discussions with Dakota County Commissioners to introduce the project and to learn about each Commissioner's vision for public art in Dakota County, thoughts on the impact of public art, types of public art and places for public art that could be successful, and expectations for the Public Art Blueprint.



ROUNDTABLES			
Name	Date	Approx. No. of Participants	Participants
Arts Ecosystem Roundtable	October 2, 2025	14	Rosemount Area Arts Council, Caponi Art Park, Public Art St. Paul, Apple Valley Arts Foundation, Lakeville Area Arts Center Advisory Board, Friends of the Lakeville Area Arts Center, Hastings Arts and Culture Commission, City of Eagan, City of Bloomington Creative Placemaking, Hastings Prescott Arts Council, Art @ MSP, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council
Dakota County Staff Roundtable	October 2, 2025	10	County Staff Advisory Team with representatives from Planning, Parks, Library Public Service and Revenue, Office of Performance and Analysis, Sheriff, and Social Services.
Artist Roundtable	October 20, 2025	5	Artists based in or that have worked in Dakota County, an art fabricator, and an art educator.

DAKOTA COUNTY COMMISSIONER MEETINGS	
Meeting	Date
Commissioner Hamann-Roland, District 7	October 28, 2025
Commissioner Halverson, District 3	October 31, 2025
Commissioner Atkins, District 2	November 3, 2025
Commissioner Droste, District 4	November 3, 2025

Engagement: What we Learned

Several themes emerged from the community engagement results that cut across multiple questions and help us understand people's preferences related to public art.

DESIRE FOR INTERACTIVE, FUNCTIONAL, AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY ART

Findings from both the questionnaire and pop-up engagement events reveal that Dakota County residents strongly favor public art that is hands-on and playful, especially for children and families. On the questionnaire, popular examples included *Turtle Park* by Bob Cassilly, *Hands On Children's Museum* by Patrick Dougherty, and the *Ohio Birds Mural* by ALternative. Interactivity was the most frequently mentioned quality (122 mentions), with residents emphasizing climbing, touching, or walking through art. Functionality was also highly valued (72 mentions), with residents appreciating art that doubles as benches, pavilions, shade structures, or playgrounds.

At pop-up events, the theme "Encouraging Exploration and Play" was among the most frequently selected preferences for public art. Participants also showed strong interest in multi-functional artworks, valuing designs that could be incorporated into play areas, picnic shelters, benches, or murals that serve a practical purpose, such as helping to deter vandalism.



Clockwise from upper left: *Hands On Children's Museum* by Patrick Dougherty, the *Ohio Birds Mural* by ALternative, and *Turtle Park* by Bob Cassilly



PREFERENCE FOR VIBRANT AND MEMORABLE PUBLIC ART

Color, brightness, and visual appeal were highly valued, with 96 mentions, as residents noted that vivid designs lift spirits, especially during Minnesota's long winters. At engagement events, participants frequently shared memorable experiences with public art from their travels, recalling colorful or large-scale installations that left lasting impressions. These personal stories reinforced how memorable public art can shape identity, pride, and connection to place.

INTEREST IN NATURE-CONNECTED PUBLIC ART

Questionnaire responses mentioned connecting art and nature 88 times, highlighting respondents' strong connections to natural landscapes and agricultural heritage. Participants expressed interest in artworks that incorporate natural materials, honor local geography, and promote environmental stewardship. At pop-up events, the theme "Connecting to the Natural World" was especially popular, with attendees valuing art that celebrates the county's natural beauty and reflects its identity as a place where creativity and nature coexist.

PUBLIC ART AS A CATALYST FOR GATHERING AND INCLUSIVITY

On the questionnaire, a key theme (65 mentions) was using art as a tool for fostering togetherness and belonging. Respondents emphasized creating shared spaces for conversation, connection, and inclusion. At pop-up events, most participants were supportive of public art and expressed pride in the community and optimism for art that brings people together. Art that celebrates local culture, history, and Indigenous heritage (54 mentions) was seen as essential to strengthening community identity and shared pride across the county.

INTEGRATION INTO EVERYDAY LIFE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Respondents expressed strong support for public art that enhances frequently visited spaces. Parks were overwhelmingly identified by respondents as ideal locations (92.1% of questionnaire respondents), followed by libraries (61% of questionnaire respondents), trails (53.9% of questionnaire respondents), and community centers (47.6% of questionnaire respondents). At pop-up events, participants echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that they would like to see art in the places they already go, like libraries, parks, greenways, downtown areas, and along roads. Integrating art into functional or high-traffic spaces, such as bridges, tunnels, and benches was seen as a practical and inspiring way to weave creativity into everyday life. Roundtable participants mentioned parks, libraries, greenways and greenway tunnels, gateways into Dakota County, and roundabouts. Across both the questionnaire and pop-up, there was also enthusiasm for rotating exhibits and temporary art, which participants saw as a way to keep public art evolving and accessible to a broader audience.



SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ARTISTS AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION

More than half of questionnaire respondents (56%) prioritized art by local and regional artists, reflecting strong pride in homegrown talent and community identity. Respondents also valued art that celebrates Dakota County's history, diverse cultures, and Indigenous heritage. Engagement event participants expressed similar views, emphasizing the importance of supporting local creators and ensuring that art reflects Dakota County's unique character.

LOCATIONS FOR PUBLIC ART IN DAKOTA COUNTY

At the pop-up engagements, a map activity was done that provided valuable insight into where residents most want to see public art in Dakota County. Across events, participants overwhelmingly placed pins in locations close to their homes, showing that people want art integrated into the everyday places they frequent. Beyond these examples, participants often selected familiar and accessible destinations, like local libraries and regional parks as preferred sites. Roundtable participants discussed the power of public art in unexpected places. This pattern reinforces a broader theme from engagement events: residents view public art as something that should be woven into their daily routines, enhancing places they already love and visit regularly.



3. BENCHMARKING

Purpose and Methodology

We have begun studying a selection of public art programs in the region and across the country. With input from Dakota County staff, we selected 6 County-level programs, as well as two regional programs to study in-depth. Working with staff, we developed a list of questions and a research methodology focusing on the following topics of interest:

- Vision and Goals
- Funding Mechanism(s)
- Organizational Placement and Staffing
- Governing Body and Decision-Making Process

We are in the process of developing full profiles of each program detailing these topics and have compiled a chart comparing key facts about the programs. This research is intended to (a) provide context and background information about the state of public art programs, and (b) inform forthcoming recommendations in the Public Art Blueprint.

Our research included reviewing publicly available information on each program's website and elsewhere on the Internet, such as codes, master plans, press releases and news articles. Whenever possible, we also conducted phone interviews with program staff to ask them specific questions focused on how things work on the ground. In addition, we are providing a file of supporting documents gathered in the research, such as ordinances, guidelines, master plans and other materials for reference, as well as a list of staff we spoke to for each program.

The County programs we are studying include:

- Adams County, CO
- Bernalillo County, NM
- Frederick County, MD
- Johnson County, KS
- Johnson County Parks and Recreation District, KS
- Santa Cruz County, CA

The regional programs include:

- City of Minneapolis, MN
- City of St. Paul, MN

In addition to this in-depth scan, we are looking at public art efforts in the 7 Counties in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Metro Area:

- Anoka, MN
- Carver, MN



- Dakota, MN
- Hennepin, MN
- Ramsey, MN
- Scott, MN
- Washington, MN

Staff will be compiling information regarding public art and other arts activities in the 12 cities in Dakota County.

- Eagan
- Mendota Heights
- Burnsville
- West St. Paul
- South St. Paul
- Farmington
- Inver Grove Heights
- Apple Valley
- Farmington
- Lakeville
- Rosemount
- Empire

The information in these two scans will help provide further context for Dakota County as it envisions its role in public art in the future.



County Public Art Programs

	VISION/GOALS	FUNDING	ORG PLACEMENT AND STAFFING	GOVERNANCE
ADAMS COUNTY, CO Pop: 519,572 (2020) Area: 1,184 sq. miles	Vision: Adams County is an inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a rich diversity of art and culture experiences. Goals: to expand opportunities for residents to experience art in public places, establish image and character unique to Adams County, and to contribute to the civic pride of this dynamic, diverse, and culturally rich place.	2% of the total cost of construction on any eligible Adams County capital project.	100% of 1 FTE and 50% of 2 FTE Part of the Parks, Open Space and Cultural Arts Department	The Adams County Arts and Culture Commission (ACE) acts as an advisory board to the county's arts and culture initiative to place public art in county facilities as part of the Percentage for the Arts Program. Artworks acquired through the Program are advised by a selection panel consisting of a diverse group of individuals who bring a crucial perspective to the process. For each project the Artist Selection Panel will jury, vote, interview artists, and recommend the award. Staff make the final decision for award.
BERNALILLO COUNTY, NM Pop: 671,747 (2024) Area: 1,160 sq. miles	Vision: Public Art has the power to inspire curiosity, encourage contemplation, facilitate dialogue, foster community engagement, and create a sense of place. Located throughout the county the collection enhances quality of life through the acquisition of exceptional works of art by artists at various career stages.	1% of the county's general obligation bonds, with the exception of library bonds. 10% of the one percent funds are used for administration and conservation. The General Fund covers operating costs.	1 FTE Part of the County's Cultural Services Department	The Arts Board is a 10-member advisory board appointed by their respective county commissioner for three-year terms. The Board makes recommendations to the County Commission.
FREDERICK COUNTY, MD Pop: 271,717 (2020) Area: 667 sq. miles	Vision: A Frederick where public art connects residents and visitors, expresses an authentic and unique sense of place, drives economic prosperity through creativity, and advances a culturally inclusive and empowered future. Goals: • Connect people and places in the city, towns and countryside, and foster people's curiosity about areas they aren't familiar with, • Reflect Frederick's heritage and forward- thinking spirit,	The National Endowment for the Arts, the Maryland State Arts Council, the City of Frederick, Frederick County, and numerous charitable foundations and businesses.	3 paid staff and 2 volunteers (not just public art)	The Frederick Arts Council has a Board of Directors. The Public Art Master Plan calls for the development of a Public Art Committee as a committee of the Board. Each public art project would also have its own Project Task Force comprised of a maximum of two representatives of the Frederick Arts Council, at least two arts professionals, at least one project stakeholder, and at least two community stakeholders.



	VISION/GOALS	FUNDING	ORG PLACEMENT AND STAFFING	GOVERNANCE
	- Embrace the community’s diverse cultures, - Encourage the creative growth of artists working in public space, - Expand audiences for and engagement in public art, - Strengthen Frederick’s community fabric and economic prosperity.			
JOHNSON COUNTY, KS Pop: 609,863 (2020) Area: 480 sq. miles	Vision: The Johnson County Public Art Program will be nationally recognized for its contributions to a culturally rich environment that binds its diverse population into a community of choice. The Johnson County Public Art Program is structured to create unique works of art. Such works are vital to making our County a vibrant and desirable place to live, work, and visit. The Program envisions that art can cultivate a sense of community between cities, neighborhoods, and public places. The public art program will encourage awareness of and appreciation for the services provided by County government. It will advance the missions of the County departments wherein the projects live.	For each capital building project, that costs more than \$1,000,000.00, funding in an amount equal to at least 1% of the total project cost, but not to exceed \$1,000,000 for one project, shall be credited to a special Public Art Trust Fund, to be accumulated for use in securing the acquisition and installation of public art on public property or public buildings of the County.	Johnson County Facilities Department	The Public Art Commission serves as an advisory commission to the Board, advising on selection processes for artists and art works to be commissioned or acquired under the Program and making recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for final selection action.
JOHNSON COUNTY PARKS AND REC DIST, KS Pop: 609,863 (2020) Area: 480 sq. miles	Vision: Public art in JCPRD parks, trails and facilities will inspire a deeper connection to place through immersive, interactive, and inclusive experiences. Goals: Celebrate Place. Tell stories that are unique to the ecology, history, or culture of Johnson County and its landscape.	.5% of the annual Capital Improvement Plan budget is dedicated to public art. These funds are pooled and can be used for public art at any park, trail or facility. 10% of those funds is diverted into a maintenance account. Between 2020 and 2025, the amount of funding ranged from approximately \$23,000 to \$97,000 annually.	100% of 1 FTE and 25% of 2 FTE Part of the JCPRD Culture Division	The Public Art Committee is a standing committee of the JCPRD Board responsible for making recommendations to the JCPRD Board about the implementation of the Public Art Program. Project-specific Artist Selection Committees (ASC) are ad hoc committees appointed by the PAC to advise on project plans, recommend artists, and



	VISION/GOALS	FUNDING	ORG PLACEMENT AND STAFFING	GOVERNANCE
	• Cultivate Community. Create opportunities to draw both new and returning parks visitors, building awareness and enthusiasm for JCPRD’s role in land stewardship and placemaking. • Support Creativity. Invite artists to create new works of art based on local research and community engagement, with varied opportunities for a broad range of artists.	The Johnson County Parks Foundation also raises funds to support the Program through the annual Meadowbrook Park Festival and through soliciting funds. The Foundation strives to match the program’s annual percent for art allocation.		recommend concept proposals/designs for a public art project.
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA Pop: 262,406 (2024) Area: 607 sq. miles	The goals of the public art program are to: enhance the visual environment for the citizens of Santa Cruz County, to integrate the design work of artists into the development of County public works projects, and to promote tourism and economic vitality of the County through the enhancement of public spaces.	A budget allowance of 2% of total construction costs may be allocated for works of art. For any County construction project involving jails or detention facilities, a budget allowance of 1.5% of the total construction costs may be allocated for works of art. Allocations for Parks project shall be required at the 2% level. 5% of the funds may be allocated for community education activities and program support costs. 5% of the funds from public art projects may be allocated and placed in a special account for maintenance and preservation of art works funded by the Public Art Program.	1 FTE - Cultural Services Program Coordinator Housed in the Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services (POSCS)	The Santa Cruz County Arts Commission advises the program. Artists are selected through Artist Selection Panels the composition of which varies from project to project.



Large Regional Municipal Public Art Programs

	VISION/GOALS	FUNDING	ORG PLACEMENT AND STAFFING	GOVERNANCE
CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MN Pop: 311,527 (2020) Area: 56.10 sq miles	Vision: Through daring leadership, we will champion innovative public art practice, imagining and creating with artists, civic leaders, and our neighbors a 21st century city that is just, sustainable, and beautiful. (Public Art Saint Paul)	1% of eligible capital project funds for public art. One half (½) of one percent of total Capital Improvement Budget capital maintenance projects supports maintenance and restoration of the City's public art collection.	The City of Saint Paul works in partnership Public Art Saint Paul, a nonprofit, to maintain, promote, and exhibit public art.	The City Artist Program is overseen by a committee composed of City department directors and by representatives of Public Art Saint Paul and the art community. For selecting artists to work on planning projects, the artist is recommended by the planning consultant to the City Project Manager and approved by the relevant City Department Head. For selecting artists to work on capital projects, the program can utilize a juried process, the artist can be selected by the relevant City department, or they can utilize the City Artist to manage the selection. Artists are approved by the relevant City department head.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN Pop: 429,954 (2020) Area: 57.51 sq mi	Mission: To enrich the lives of local citizens and visitors by integrating public art into City planning, services, design and infrastructure. Values/Goals: • Stimulate Excellence in Urban Design and Public Arts • Enhance Community Identity and Place • Contribute to Community Vitality • Involve a Broad Range of People and Communities • Value Artists and Artistic Processes • Use Resources Wisely	The city's public art ordinance states that each year the City shall dedicate the equivalent of 1.5 percent of the total amount of net debt bonds authorized by the City Council through the city's annual budget process. The annual budgets for FY25-FY30 range from \$1,251,000 to \$1,590,000.	1 FTE Part of the Planning Division of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department.	The Minneapolis Arts Commission (MAC) advises on the commissioning, placement and maintenance of art purchased, accepted and owned by the city and produced or created with public funds. The MAC is represented on artist selection panels and reviews and acts upon recommendations by the Public Art Advisory Panel (PAAP). The PAAP reviews proposed public art projects and makes recommendations to the Arts Commission on Project Site Selection, Design Review, Conservation and maintenance of artworks, Gifts and Loans, Permits, and Deaccession and Removal.

Scan of Counties in Metro Area

	County-wide Program	County Policies	Structure	Funding
ANOKA	Artist Exhibits at the Library		County Program	Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy Fund
CARVER	Art Consortium of Carver County		501c3	Fundraising – Donations and Business Sponsorships
DAKOTA	Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC), Art Programs and Exhibits at Libraries		County Program	Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy Fund (programs at libraries), Public Art Fund as a part of the Dakota County's Public Services and Revenue budget (funds PAAC)
HENNEPIN	Art at the Library, One Percent for Art Program	Commissioned Art Policy, Donation Policy	County Program	One Percent for Art Program (exclusively funds art in libraries), Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy Fund
RAMSEY	Art in Ramsey County Parks		County Program	
SCOTT	No Program		N/A	
WASHINGTON	No Program		N/A	

*All Counties have funded projects using Minnesota's Arts and Culture Heritage Legacy Fund.

Dakota County City Scan

This scan is ongoing and will be incorporated in the future



Benchmarking: What we Learned (so far)

VISION AND GOALS

Sense of Place and Identity All of the County programs emphasize creating or enhancing a unique character and identity for their communities. They see public art as a way to express what makes their location distinctive and authentic. Many reference using art to tell local stories, celebrate history and culture, and honor the community's heritage while looking forward.

Community Connection and Inclusivity All of the programs have elements in their vision and goals around bringing people together, fostering community engagement, and ensuring diverse populations feel included and represented, with explicit emphasis on involving "a broad range of people and communities."

Quality of Life Many of the programs view public art as tool for making their areas more vibrant, desirable, and enriching places to live, work, and visit. Public art enriches lives and contributes to community vitality.

Economic and Civic Benefits Many programs connect public art to economic prosperity, tourism, and civic pride, seeing it as an asset that provides tangible community value.

Artist Support Several programs explicitly mention supporting artists at various career stages and providing opportunities for creative growth.

Accessibility and Broad Engagement Most public art programs emphasize expanding access to art experiences for residents and visitors, moving art beyond traditional gallery spaces into public life.

Strategic Integration Rather than viewing public art as decoration, many programs position public art as integral to place-making, community development, and even government service delivery.

FUNDING

Percent for Art is Standard Model Nearly all of the programs benchmarked, with the exception of Frederick County, Maryland), earmark a percentage of capital construction/improvement project costs as the primary funding mechanism for public art. Percentages range from 0.5% to 2%, with 1% being most common. In most cases capital projects become the trigger for commissioning public art because funding is tied to capital construction



projects: new buildings, major renovations, parks infrastructure. This links public art investment directly to physical development.

Minimum Thresholds Several public art programs specify minimum project costs to trigger the percentage (e.g., Johnson County's \$1M threshold), recognizing that smaller projects may not generate meaningful art funding.

Public Art Fund Most public art programs reviewed establish separate trust funds or accounts that allow funds to carry forward to subsequent years. This prevents "use it or lose it" pressure and enables larger, more significant projects.

Several also explicitly allow transferring funds between projects or pooling resources when:

- The capital project site isn't suitable for public art
- Funds generated by an individual project are too small to commission a work of art
- Projects need supplementation

Administrative and Maintenance Set-Asides Multiple programs allocate a portion (typically 5-10%) specifically for:

- Program administration and project management.
- Artwork maintenance and conservation.
- Community education.

This recognizes ongoing operational needs beyond artwork acquisition.

Multiple Funding Streams Most public art programs that utilize percent for art supplement that funding with:

- Operating budgets (for temporary projects, programs, staffing)
- Grants (NEA, state arts councils)
- Private donations/foundations
- Special fundraising efforts

ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT AND STAFFING

Cultural/Arts Placement The majority of programs benchmarked are housed within a cultural, arts, or cultural services departments or divisions. Some of those divisions are within the parks department.

- Adams County: Cultural Division within the Parks, Open Space and Cultural Arts Department
- Bernalillo County: Cultural Services Department
- JCPRD: Culture Division within the Parks and Recreation District
- Santa Cruz: Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services



Facilities/Infrastructure Departments Some programs are embedded in operational/capital project departments:

- Johnson County: Facilities Department
- Minneapolis: Planning Division of Community Planning and Economic Development

Nonprofit Partnership Some programs utilize a nonprofit partnership model to staff or manage the program:

- Saint Paul partners with Public Art Saint Paul (nonprofit)
- Frederick operates through Frederick Arts Council (nonprofit)

Staffing Most programs operate with one dedicated full-time employee. Some have additional support through their department or through capital project management.

GOVERNANCE

Standing Advisory Commissions Most public art programs have a permanent advisory body (7-11 members typically). Some have responsibilities beyond the public art program. They provide continuity, strategic oversight, and policy development.

- Adams County: Arts and Culture Commission (ACE) - 9 members
- Bernalillo County: Arts Board - 10 members
- Johnson County: Public Art Commission - 7-9 members
- JCPRD: Public Art Committee - 7-9 members
- Minneapolis: Arts Commission + Public Art Advisory Panel (11 members)
- Santa Cruz: Arts Commission – 10 members

Project-Specific Selection Panels Nearly all create ad hoc panels to guide the artist selection for individual public art projects. This allows tailored expertise and community representation per project. Many require a mix of stakeholders and professionals including people with professional arts experience, or knowledge of architecture or design.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LANDSCAPE

- Five of the seven counties benchmarked have some kind of arts programming.
- Only Hennepin County has a dedicated percent for art, which appears to only apply to libraries.
- One County, Carver County, partners with a 501c3 organization to offer arts programs.
- All Counties have funded projects using Minnesota's Arts and Culture Heritage Legacy Fund.
- There are several local non-profit arts organizations in the Dakota County (Hastings Prescott Area Arts Council, Rosemount Area Arts Council, Caponi Art Park, Lakeville Area Arts Council, Friends of the Lakeville Area Arts Center, Apple Valley Arts



Foundation, South St. Paul Arts Council). These organizations support local arts programs and events and partner with cities on arts programming, events and public art, support arts programming in schools, and partner with Dakota County Librarians on exhibits.

- Of the 12 largest cities in Dakota County there is a range of city involvement in the arts. Eagan, Lakeville, and Hastings have established public art and/or arts and culture programs. Other cities are exploring establishing programs. For example, West St. Paul is in the process of establishing an arts advisory committee and Mendota Heights is exploring adopting a public arts ordinance. And some cities in the County do not have public arts or arts and culture programs.



4. FINDINGS AND DIRECTIONS FOR BLUEPRINT DEVELOPMENT

DOCUMENT THE COLLECTION

Finding: Dakota County has been acquiring public art through various means over many years. The information recorded about these works is decentralized, in many cases incomplete.

Directions:

- Develop criteria in the Public Art Blueprint for accessing works into the Dakota County Public Art Collection and then apply that criteria to this inventory to determine what is part of the County Public Art Collection.

- Develop a central database of artwork that tracks key information. Continue to do forensics to fill in the missing information in the inventory, and as new works are added keep records, including:
 - Title
 - Artist (with artist contact information)
 - Media
 - Size
 - Year
 - Location
 - Brief description
 - How the work entered the collection
 - Budget/value
 - Conservation and maintenance instructions
 - Conservation and maintenance history
 - Other conditions/information

- Make information about the Public Art Collection publicly available. This could be through a webpage on the County's site, printed materials, or other ways of disseminating information.

- Create a standard label format for new artwork labels and, over time, replace or add labels to existing works.

DEVELOP A CLEAR PATH FOR NEW WORK ENTERING THE COLLECTION



Finding: Works of art come to be owned by the County through a variety of means: commission, acquisition, donation, and loan; and come through different acceptance processes. This has led to a lack of consistently applied criteria for what is accepted, a lack of clarity regarding of who is responsible for the work once it is accepted, and no centralized location for documenting the work.

Directions:

- Update policies and procedures related to commissions, acquisitions, and acceptance of donations and loans. Clarify where a County department has autonomy to acquire, commission or accept works and when they need to go through a more rigorous process.
- As stated above, create a centralized place for documentation of the collection.

OUTLINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Finding: It is a common practice for public art programs to have clear responsibilities articulated for staff, advisory bodies, and elected officials, as well as the utilization of ad hoc selection committees for specific projects. This exists in part for Dakota County but has elements that are missing.

Directions:

- Develop clear roles and responsibilities especially related to planning, commissioning and acquiring work, accepting gifts and loans, and de-accession and relocation of artwork.
- Articulate the role that ad hoc Art Selection Committees and potentially other ad-hoc committees may play in advising the PAAC and the County Board.

EXPLORE WHERE THE PROGRAM LIVES AND THE ROLE STAFF

Finding: Most public art programs are situated within a County or City department, creating departmental ownership of the program, and have a dedicated staff person that is an arts administrator. This elevates the importance of the program, creates a central point of contact for art-related matters, and professionalizes the execution of projects and programs.

Directions:

- Through articulating the roles and responsibilities of staff (above), consider staffing needs and how they could be met.
- Work with staff to recommend where a program could be situated.



FORM A VISION AND GOALS FOR PUBLIC ART IN DAKOTA COUNTY

Finding: The engagement process surfaced preferences for the goals for Dakota County’s public art, including art that interactive, functional and family friendly; is vibrant and memorial, is nature-connected, and is a catalyst for gathering and inclusivity.

Direction:

- The Public Art Blueprint should have a bold and exciting vision and goals statement that can galvanize support for the program. It should reflect the ideas expressed through community engagement and consider how art can support the County’s overall vision and goals for its future across all County departments and services.

EXPLORE HOW PUBLIC ART SUPPORTS PUBLIC SPACES AND SERVICES

Findings:

- Engagement revealed that people in Dakota County are interested in functional art and designs that could be incorporated into play areas, picnic shelters, benches or murals that serve a practical purpose.
- Engagement also revealed a strong interest in art in places that people visit regularly such as libraries, parks, greenways, and gateways.
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- Engagement indicated interest in incorporating both art and public art into all County services.

Directions:

- The Public Art Blueprint should reflect how public art can thoughtfully planned into Dakota County’s public spaces and support the efforts of the County departments that are designing, building and stewarding these places and providing services to residents.

ANALYZE FUNDING OPTIONS

Findings:

- While most public art programs benchmarked utilize capital funding, many use a combination of capital, operating, and fundraising to support staffing, temporary projects, and related community and educational programming.
- Many public art programs have started with smaller budgets and, with success, increased funding over time.

**Directions:**

The public art Blueprint should outline options for funding public art in Dakota County that take into account:

- There may not be a single, one size fits all solution to public art funding.
- Project funding should allow for flexibility, including the ability to incorporate art where it can make the biggest impact.
- For public art projects to be successfully integrated into capital construction projects, it is helpful to know the public art budget and have access to the funds early enough for the artist to be selected during the architectural design process and the work to be integrated during construction and not added after the fact.
- Public art projects can take more than a year to plan and execute. Funds should be able to be rolled over into future fiscal years.
- Non project funding needs such as staffing; for conservation and maintenance of the County's public art (existing and future), and programming that engages and informs people about public art