

July, 2017

# CITY OF NORTH MANKATO

## Public Art Ideas Plan



CITY OF *Minnesota*  
NORTH MANKATO





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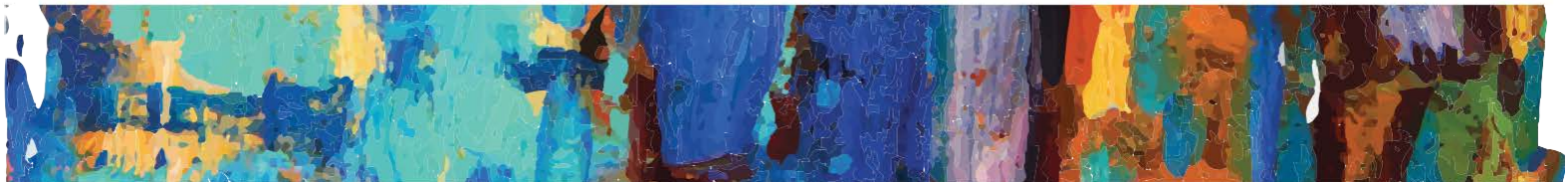
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# Acknowledgments



With gratitude, we acknowledge the passion and assistance of those who participated in the planning process for this Public Art Ideas Plan. Additionally, thank you to the many citizens who participated in the open house and left their public art ideas in the collection boxes.







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# Introduction

Since 2011 North Mankato has experienced a surge in public art acquisition and interest due in large part to the CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour, a rotating public art walk displayed in the city center of North Mankato. Each year North Mankato displays seven new sculptures in the 200 and 300 blocks of Belgrade Avenue. The City has received two People's Choice sculptures (Guidance and Godzilla) and has purchased three pieces for its permanent collection (Spirit of Energy, Circle of Friends and Rock Ants Roll).

With increased interest in public art and expanding the public art collection, there is also a growing awareness of the importance of creating a process for selection, siting the artwork and maintenance for these public assets. In June 2016, the city of North Mankato hired Twin Rivers Council for the Arts to develop a Public Art Ideas Plan. Twin Rivers is a nonprofit arts service organization, serving over seventy artists and arts organizations in Greater Mankato. Twin Rivers is also recognized as the city of North Mankato's arts commission, providing strategic planning and facilitation in the areas of arts and culture.

The goal of the Public Art Ideas Plan (PAIP) is to create a public art ideas bank that can be used by the city as a guide to integrate public art into existing planning initiatives, including the *North Mankato Comprehensive Plan*, *Brewing Ideas Report*, the *Belgrade Avenue Master Plan* and future planning initiatives. The PAIP begins to define policy and procedure around current public art projects and assets. However, additional time will be spent developing these policies further by the Twin Rivers Public Art Advisory Committee.





## WHAT IS Public Art?

In general terms, public art is publicly accessible original art that enriches the community, provides visual identity, and encourages connection between community members. It may include permanent visual art like sculptures and murals, temporary installations, exterior building architectural features, signage, bridges, benches, artist designed plazas, performances, events, etc. Context and audience are important aspects of how public art is used and experienced.

Public art provides more than just aesthetics. It can help create pulse points and gathering places in targeted areas; acting as an economic driver—drawing visitors, shoppers and development.





## WHY INVEST In Public Art?

A recent study by the Knight Foundation called, *The Soul of the Community*, found a connection between community attachment and economic growth, indicating that cities with the highest levels of community attachment had the strongest economies.

- Knight Foundation. 2006. *The Soul of the Community*.

### How do you create community attachment?

Of the various attributes studied, the three that rose to the top are:

1. **SOCIAL OFFERINGS**
2. **AESTHETICS**
3. **OPENNESS** or how welcome you feel in a community.

Based on the results, the study found that residents who have a keen sense of community attachment are more inclined to contribute to the community's growth. To create this sense of attachment, many cities are partnering with local businesses and organizations in public/private partnerships to include public art programs that strengthen community attachment.





## GOALS OF THE Public Art Ideas Plan

The goals of the Public Art Ideas Plan are:

1. Identify and prioritize areas in North Mankato to be enhanced by public art that communicate a visual identity for the community.
2. Create a reference guide/idea bank of public art ideas for specific locations.
3. Identify partnerships and/or funding sources to implement public art ideas.
4. Outline roles and responsibilities of the Twin Rivers Public Art Advisory Committee.
5. Create guidelines for selection of art and how to submit proposals.

### Questions to consider when planning for public art:

- What makes North Mankato unique and how can we enhance that uniqueness with public art?
- What types of artworks are we lacking and what types should be encouraged?
- Where can public artworks best leverage existing assets and build upon existing community benefits?
- What city plans are already being created where public art can be integrated?



## Planning Process



Beginning in August 2016, an advisory group made up of North Mankato residents, artists, community leaders and city staff met to explore innovative ways to incorporate public art into North Mankato, helping to create a more cohesive visual identity for the community.

The questions the group kept front of mind were:

- What makes North Mankato unique and how can we enhance that uniqueness with public art?
- What types of artworks are we lacking and what types should be encouraged?







## PLANNING PROCESS

# Session One

The first session explored each participant's relationship to North Mankato and what makes this community home to them. Through sharing and personal story, each group member answered the questions:

- **How is art part of your world? How do you engage with art in your world?**
- **Why do you live in North Mankato? If it's great, why is it great? If it's not, why do you stay?**
- **Where are the places/ spaces in North Mankato that you most value?**

Prominent themes and community values that emerged from this discussion included:

- Hometown feel
- Neighborhood charm
- Maintain integrity of local character
- Longing to tell the story of the history of the community
- High priority on education/lifelong learning
- Fitness/recreation opportunities
- Cleanliness of streets and feeling of safety
- Convenience/connectivity

- Relationships with neighbors/community
- Desire for more diverse, local, creative businesses and services
- Commitment to citizen engagement - people are eager to help North Mankato move forward.

The advisory group also explored the idea of **P.A.R.K. Preserve, Add, Remove, Keep Out** - as it relates to Public Art. Together, the advisory group answered the following questions:

- What do we have now that is positive?
- What do we not have that is positive?
- What do we have that is negative?
- What do we not have that is negative?

Many positive features and assets of North Mankato were identified related to public art, including:

- CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour
- Permanent sculptures
- Walkability of Lower North
- Art Park on Cross Street with outdoor piano
- Holiday lights and decorations
- Downtown Belgrade community gathering space
- Live music events
- Beautiful parks with continued upgrades
- Connectivity through bike paths/trail system
- Business on Belgrade Association
- Library programming for adults and youth
- ArtSplash art fair
- Patrons of lower north businesses

The group also reported that North Mankato experiences low crime rates and vandalism, which is a positive attribute when considering an increase in public art assets.



## PLANNING PROCESS

# Ideas for Next Steps

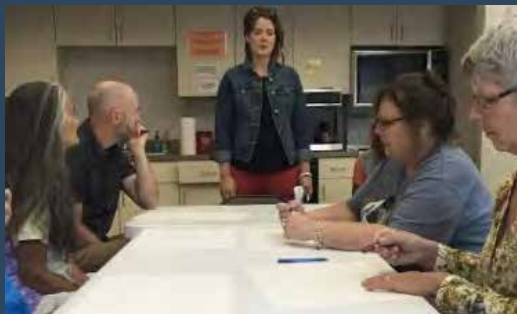
The advisory group identified positive assets North Mankato could benefit from related to public art.

- Community center/art center
- Galleries
- Farmers' Market
- Art in the parks
- Pop-up art in vacant lots
- Film/light projection onto buildings
- Community band
- Improved performance space within parks
- Activation of open spaces for more diverse demographic of people to gather

Existing attributes that were identified as opportunities for growth:

- Lack of wayfinding signage
- Perceived lack of safety at night
- Lack of a framework for public art and civic placemaking to help build a sense of community identity.





## PLANNING PROCESS Session Two

*The second session was facilitated by artist and consultant, Megan Flod Johnson of Briar Patch Arts. Megan led the advisory group through a progressive drawing exercise and a sequence of movement tableaux to encourage the group to think outside the box on what public art could look like for North Mankato, and what places in North Mankato bring us the most meaning.*



The last session involved a field trip to specific locations throughout North Mankato, including parks, business districts and residential neighborhoods.

As the group visited the different spaces there was a broad discussion and ideas generated based on the following questions:

- **How is the space used? How could it be used to encourage human interaction?**
- **Who uses the space? Who else would we like to attract?**
- **What happens here throughout the year?**
- **What are the challenges and opportunities of this site/neighborhood?**

The ideas generated from the group during this session are integrated into the overall ideas listed throughout the plan.

Several members of the advisory group were also able to attend a one-day workshop at Twin Rivers Council for the Arts facilitated by Forecast Public Art from Minneapolis called, *Making it Public*. The workshop was an introduction to public art; expanding the definition of what public art can be, addressing the different lifespans of public art (temporary vs. permanent), maintenance planning and community engagement/possibilities for community involvement.





## PLANNING PROCESS

# Community Engagement

The next step in the planning process involved several community engagement techniques. The first was a community open house to present the ideas generated by the public art advisory group, get feedback, prioritize locations for public art, and generate new ideas from participants. There were about 30-40 people in attendance and the event garnered valuable input from the community on priorities and new ideas.


The City of North Mankato also outlined the planning process and collected ideas from the public on their website, [northkatoideas.com](http://northkatoideas.com). Additionally, three Public Art Ideas collection boxes were placed in key locations throughout the community, encouraging people to fill out the “Public Art Ideas Card” and share their big idea for public art in North Mankato. The one question posed on the card was:



WHAT KINDS OF PUBLIC ART DO YOU WANT TO SEE FOR NORTH MANKATO?

DRAW IT, WRITE IT, CUT & PASTE IT!

Painted Crosswalks in the business districts. (Belgrade & Commerce)



Drop your public art idea card in a marked box at the N.Kato Library, City Hall or Dino's. Thank you!

WHAT KINDS OF PUBLIC ART DO YOU WANT TO SEE FOR NORTH MANKATO?

DRAW IT, WRITE IT, CUT & PASTE IT!

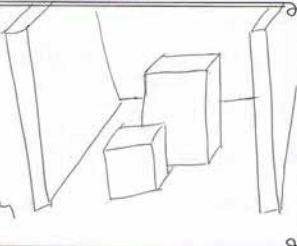
I like art that kids can play in/ with like a fountain  
By Renn

Drop your public art idea card in a marked box at the N.Kato Library, City Hall or Dino's. Thank you!

WHAT KINDS OF PUBLIC ART DO YOU WANT TO SEE FOR NORTH MANKATO?

DRAW IT, WRITE IT, CUT & PASTE IT!

In town there is a "box" of art. Surrounded by 3 walls people can come in and spray paint over any surface within this area. the art can change daily. It would also be a way to involve the community with the making of art.



Drop your public art idea card in a marked box at the N.Kato Library, City Hall or Dino's. Thank you!

WHAT KINDS OF PUBLIC ART DO YOU WANT TO SEE FOR NORTH MANKATO?

DRAW IT, WRITE IT, CUT & PASTE IT!

HAND Painted SIGNS

Drop your public art idea card in a marked box at the N.Kato Library, City Hall or Dino's. Thank you!

A. BELGRADE AVE

1. Business sponsored colored light poles
2. Additional CityArt sculpture walk banners (colorful)
3. Artistic signage directing people to park locations
4. Welcome to North Mankato signage coming over bridge
5. Outdoor seating
6. Stone pathway
7. Incorporate greenspace into existing Art Walk rotation zones



Love this

PLANNING PROCESS

Community Engagement

Participants were encouraged to think about their favorite spaces in North Mankato and how public art can enhance that space. They were asked to draw, write, and/or cut and paste their thoughts and ideas on the card; communicating the creative possibilities they imagine for North Mankato. Approximately 50 public art idea cards were collected from the community from a wide variety of demographics.



A black and white photograph of a hand-drawn sketch on a piece of paper. A pen is resting on the sketch, which appears to be a simple line drawing of a building or structure. The pen is positioned diagonally across the sketch. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Public Art Ideas

The public art ideas generated from the advisory group and community are intended to be broad. When specific projects are identified, a call for artists will go out for specific designs or an artist will be hired directly.

Public art ideas from the community were analyzed and broken down into major categories for public art in fusion. We've taken the main ideas from the community and have condensed them down into possible solutions for public art in North Mankato.

When possible, this plan identifies current city projects already in discussion at each location and current public art assets that already exist.





# Parks

## FACILITIES & POOLS



### Existing Public Art Assets:

- Poetry walk signs at Spring Lake Park and Benson Park
- Sculptural bench at Wheeler Park
- Military memorial at Wheeler Park



## Ideas

**Interactive Art Pieces:** that children can play on; interactive music stations.

**Natural Landscape Elements:** Create art from materials from the landscape; stones, boulders, plantings, tree trunks, etc.

**Additional Use of Color:** Painted curbs, colored fencing, colored rocks, color at entry points.

**Artistic Seating:** Artist designed seating in the gazebo at Spring Lake Park.

**Bandshell Upgrade:** Varying colored pavement to add artistic quality; permanent exhibit highlighting the history of the brick industry.

**Restoration of Unique Historic Features:** Re-establish the artesian well that created Spring Lake Park; sculpture made of bricks with historical reference to the brickyard at Wheeler Park.

**Interpretive Art:** Educate and engage through new experiences and ways of perceiving landscapes; habitat descriptions; motivational messages.

**Artistic Fencing:** Incorporated into Spring Lake Swim Facility upgrades; laser cut design.



# Streets/ STREETSCAPE

## Existing Public Art Assets:

- City Art Walking Sculpture Tour
- Permanent Sculptures (3) on Belgrade Avenue



## Ideas

**Seating:** Encourage public gathering and sociability; conversation starters; neighborhood identity; color; playfulness.

**Gathering/ Resting Places/ Pocket Parks:** Promotes neighborhood socializing; uses small leftover spaces; identity; landmarks.

**Murals:** Color; history; identity; supported by local businesses.

**Paving Details:** Wayfinding; identity; logo; poetry stamping into the concrete; bronze or granite inlays.

**Painted Crosswalks:** In the business districts (upper and lower North Mankato).

**Painted Utility Boxes/ Fire Hydrants:** Colorful; nature inspired; identity; artist designed.

**Flower Baskets/ Landscape art:** Hanging flower baskets; window flower boxes; creative; artist designed art.

**Holiday Lights:** Updated holiday lights in business districts.

**Signature Sculpture in Roundabouts:** Permanent sculpture installations; identity; history; color.

**Landscaping in Roundabouts:** Perennial grass; switch grass; prairie flowers.



# Bridges

PEDESTRIAN &  
VEHICULAR

## Ideas

**Walls/Cast-in-place concrete, brick, ceramic or metal reliefs:** Function; texture/sculptural relief; imagery; iconography; community identity.

**Paving Details/Street name inlay or bronze or granite inlays:** Identity; history; texture/detail.

**Lighting:** Day/night presence; neighborhood identity; wayfinding; landmark; color.

**Handrail/Railings:** Color; texture; local history; interaction with the landscape.

**Markers/Gateways:** Landmark; gathering spot.

**Murals:** Neighborhood identity; history; color; texture.



# TRAILS & Bike Lanes



## Ideas

**Markers/Gateways:** Transition between environments; stronger visual entry points into trail; enhance natural elements; archways.

**Bollards:** Sculptural delineation of space; protection/safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Trail Markers:** Identifying trail routes; directions; education.

**Gathering/Resting Places:** Multi-function for social space; history; identity; commemoration.

**Stone Objects:** Material sympathetic to natural environment; mark trail nodes.



# PLAZAS/ Courtyards

## Existing Public Art Assets:

- Art Park located at the corner of Belgrade Ave & Cross St (private property for public use)

## Ideas

**Plazas:** Resting and gathering places; Landmarks; Civic character.

**Furniture:** Natural imagery; Texture; Function; Organic and man-made materials; Artist designed benches.

**Environmental Art:** Earth forms and plantings; Sculptural form; Functional amenity; Landmark; Gathering place; Natural materials; Texture; Color.

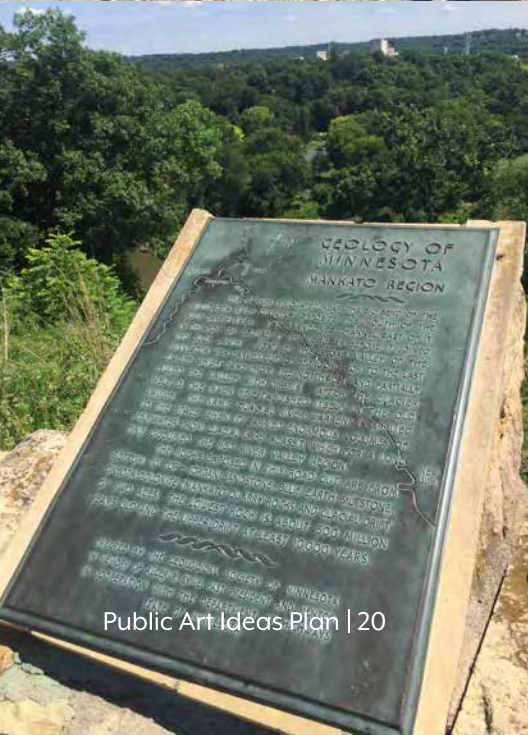
**Rain Gardens:** Functional amenity; Educate and enlighten about natural systems.

**Water Features:** Natural elements.

**Sculpture Parks:** Permanent sculptures; Community identity.







# WAYFINDING/ Signage

## Ideas

### Improve Welcome Signs:

Gateway into downtown;  
improved landscaping for a more  
prominent presence.

**Wayfinding:** Direction to parks; Parking;  
Businesses; City Hall.

**Kiosks:** Interactive/ educational  
information; Maps; Announcements;  
Tours.

**Interpretive Signage:** Engaging  
information source; Public education;  
Commemorate historic events and  
significant individuals; Natural habitat  
and environment; Inspirational.

**Art Park Sign:** Identify space; Invite  
people to enjoy.





# Temporary/ EVENTS & PERFORMANCES

## Ideas

**Graffiti Wall:** Community is encouraged to participate in designated area; interchanging.

**Art/ Historic Tour:** Identifying historic structures, places or events; Walking; Biking; Bus.

**Pop-Up Art:** Including dance, poetry, theatre, healthy food stands.



# SOURCES OF Funding

The Public Art Ideas Plan will require financial support. Each public art project comes with a unique budget depending on the type and scale of the artwork. Funding strategies for public art projects are outlined below.

## **Percent for Art / Capital Improvement Project Funds**

A percent for art approach would allocate funds for public art from North Mankato's capital improvement project budget on a varying basis depending on the scale and nature of capital projects the City is undertaking in any given year. Typical funds generated for public art using this approach could range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year. This type of funding in addition to revenue from other funding sources identified below could yield adequate funds for public art initiatives that would have a major impact on the aesthetics of the community.

## **Sales Tax**

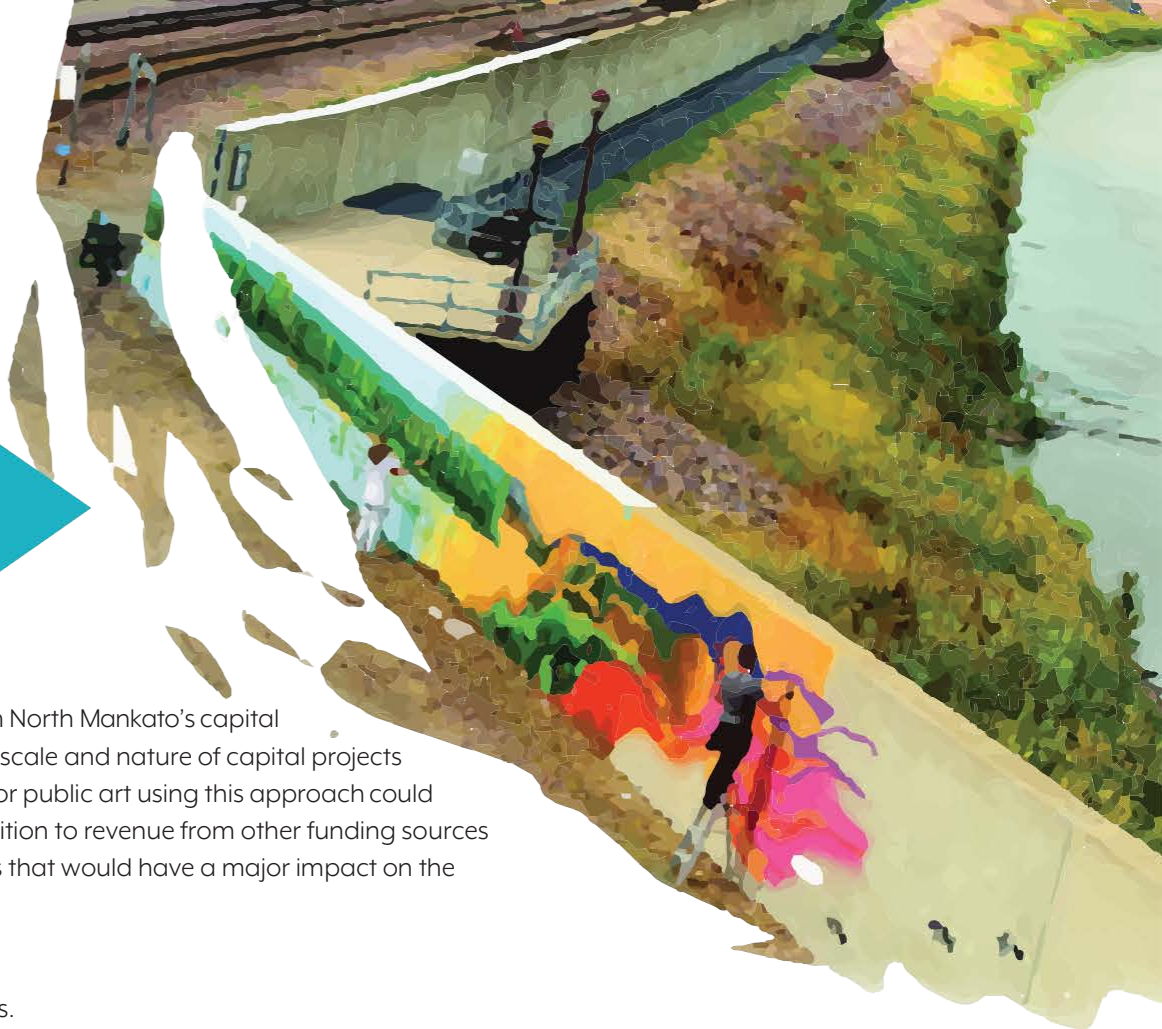
Funding from the local sales tax may be used for qualifying projects.

## **Round up for the Arts**

The round up program gives utility bill customers the option of rounding up their utility bill to the nearest dollar. The extra funds generated would then go into a public art fund. This fund could go towards city driven initiatives or the city could establish a public art community grant. Members of the community could apply for this grant funding and administer their own public art projects. This type of project could generate \$3,000 - \$5,000 per year. Examples of this type of program in Belle Plaine, MN - <http://www.belleplainmn.com/utility-bill-round-program>.

## **Grants**

**Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council** - The City of North Mankato is eligible to receive MN Legacy grant funding from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council for public art. The maximum available to apply for in 2017 is \$8,000 through the Arts and Cultural heritage Fund. <http://plrac.org/>





# SOURCES OF Funding

## **MN State Arts Board**

There are several grant programs within the MN State Arts Board that the City could apply for in partnership with other arts/culture organizations. Specifically:

- Arts Access
- Arts Learning
- Arts Tour MN
- Cultural Community Partnership
- Folk and Traditional Arts
- MN Festival Support

Additional information on each grant can be found at <http://www.arts.state.mn.us/grants/organizations.htm>

## **Southern MN Initiative Foundation**

Community Growth Initiative Grant - SMIF has invested in 30 Community Growth Initiatives (CGI). Each community commits to three stages of involvement: community visioning, project implementation, and sustainable operation. The CGI community receives coalition support and project implementation grants of up to \$20,000. CGI communities are selected through an invitation only application process. [http://smifoundation.org/what-we-do/com\\_development/community\\_grants/](http://smifoundation.org/what-we-do/com_development/community_grants/)

## **Parks and Recreation Enhancement Funds**

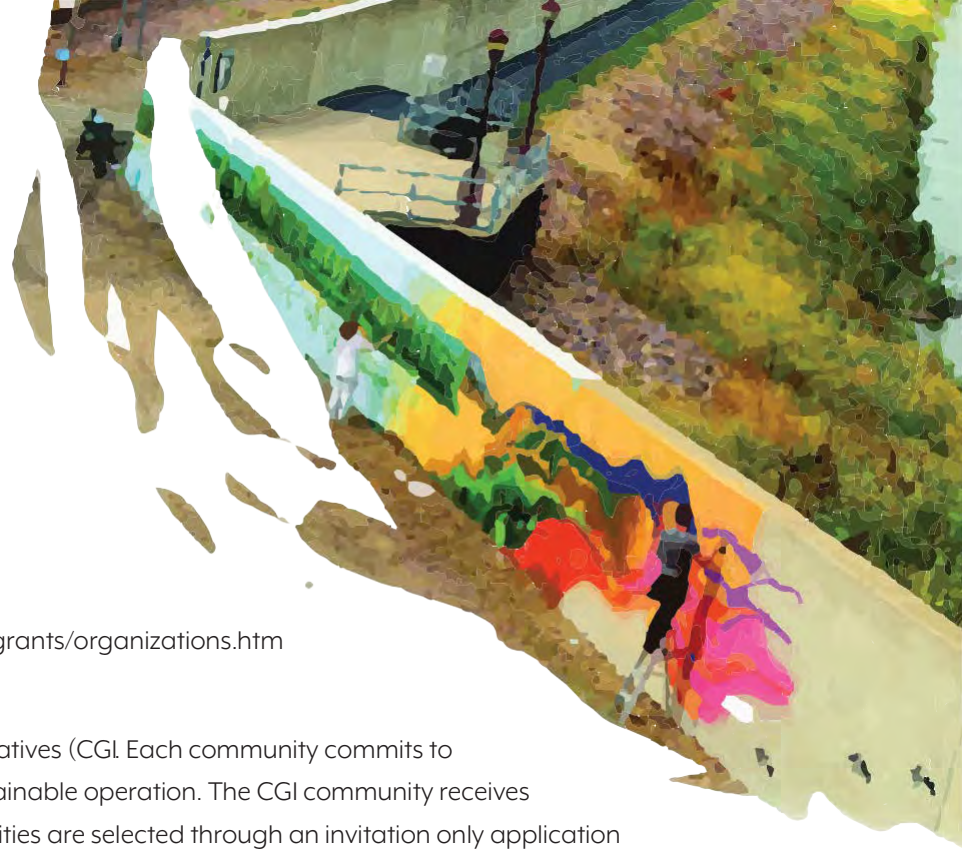
The City of North Mankato could designate parks enhancement funds towards specific public art projects within the parks system.

## **Special Service District (SSD)**

SSDs, also known as Business Improvement Districts, are a tool for improving and maintaining a commercial district. If this was developed along Belgrade Avenue or Commerce Drive, a certain amount of the funds could be designated for public art projects or public art maintenance.

## **Private Partnership**

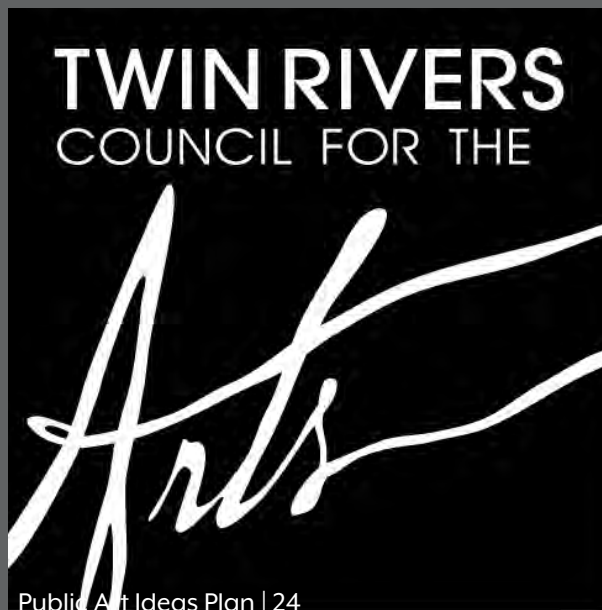
Public art projects can be accomplished through the partnership of individual, corporate or civic sponsorships, such as Business on Belgrade or North Mankato Civic and Commerce Association.





# Twin Rivers

## COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS



Twin Rivers Council for the Arts (TRCA) is recognized by the City of North Mankato as its arts commission; advising the city on art related issues and helping to guide art projects. To strengthen this partnership and to facilitate communication related to civic projects and other capital improvement projects, the Twin Rivers executive director meets with City staff monthly to plan for upcoming projects where public art can be incorporated.



# Public Art

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE



### Purpose

The Public Art Advisory Committee shall endeavor to develop a collection of public art that is of the highest quality, that will encompass a broad aesthetic range reflecting the City of Mankato and North Mankato, and the minds of its citizens, that will improve the quality of life in the area, that will be accessible to all individuals and be a source of pride to all residents.

The Public Art Committee shall seek to develop the public art collection in such a way so that it is intimately integrated into the fabric of the City of Mankato and North Mankato and reflects a broad range of community input and involvement by artists and professionals. The Public Art Committee is responsible for reviewing, advocating and developing public art projects in the public domain for the City of Mankato and North Mankato.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- In collaboration with city staff, develop, review and update a public art plan that identifies appropriate spaces and mediums for collection development in Mankato and North Mankato
- Oversee quality control of public art policy and projects
- Review and recommend public art projects for approval by the City of Mankato and North Mankato City Council
- Make recommendations regarding any issues that arise from a specific artwork or art project
- Advocate for and oversee best use of public art funding.
- Oversee and make recommendations for public art selection, acquisition, placement, installation, marketing, maintenance and/or decommission public art of works of art
- As part of the overall public art plan for each city, develop by-laws and procedures for different public art mediums (i.e. murals, temporary installations, etc.)
- Oversee the acceptance of gifts of art ensuring that the artwork fits within the overall public art plan and can be properly maintained
- Conduct an annual inventory and condition assessment of the city's public art collection.

### Composition of Public Art Advisory Committee

The Public Art Advisory Committee will be made up of seven (7) members of the community selected because of their expertise in visual arts, architecture, historical preservation, or affiliation with a local business association or public entity. Each member will be asked to serve a three (3) year term, though in the beginning some terms may be shorter to stagger when members leave the committee.

The Public Art Advisory Committee will meet quarterly or on an as-needed basis for special projects.

# APPENDIX







## A. INITIATION OF Public Art Projects

Concepts for public art projects should be submitted to the PAAC and City of North Mankato for consideration through: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, North Mankato City Administration, North Mankato City Planner and North Mankato Public Works Director. Preliminary meetings may be held to determine possibilities for location, timeline, budget and appropriate artist(s).

Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, working with the City of North Mankato may develop a comprehensive plan to establish parameters, themes and objectives in relation to a particular project or series of projects to be approved by the City Council. A plan may be developed in response to other city projects, such as capital construction projects or cultural enhancement endeavors. Plans will be reviewed by the PAAC, city staff and the City Council.



## B. PLACEMENT Of Artwork

Determining the location or site for artwork is of equal importance to selection of the work. Site planning will consider not only the location itself (suitability and sustainability for artwork, but the potential for the artwork to activate various places around the city.

### Criteria to consider when siting public art:

- Obtain written permission of the appropriate public/private authority.
- Public accessibility and any potential safety issues.
- Traffic patterns and interactions with the artwork.
- Environmental impacts
- Relationship of proposed artwork to existing or future development plans for the area.
- Relationship of proposed artwork to existing art works in the vicinity.
- If located near a facility, consider the desired interaction of the community with the proposed artwork.



## C. CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour

### PLACEMENT OF PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD ACQUISITIONS

The CityArt program is a partnership between Twin Rivers Council for the Arts and the City Center Partnership. The CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour is a principal element of the Mankato/North Mankato City Center, contributing greatly to the vibrancy of the City Center and the community.

In the initial Memorandum of Understanding, the two parties agreed that assets acquired from and after January 1, 2016 will become property of the GMG, Inc. Foundation, and that any sculptures acquired as People's Choice Award winners during the term of the agreement would remain publicly displayed within the City Center. In North Mankato, this includes the core blocks (200-600 of Belgrade Avenue. An Addendum was created to formally address where the People's Choice Award acquisitions will be placed.

#### **Addendum Statement:**

Any sculptures acquired by GMG, Inc. Foundation as People's Choice Award winners during the term of this agreement will remain publicly displayed in the area designated by the City Center Partnership as the "City Center". These sculptures will be placed on a rotation such that two sculptures are placed in Mankato, followed by one sculpture placed in North Mankato. For Example, the 2015 People's Choice Award was placed in North Mankato, and the next two People's Choice Award acquisitions will be placed in Mankato. The parties understand that there may be years where the People's Choice Award winner is not acquired, and further understand that these years are not "counted" for purposes of the rotational placement.

The placement within the City Center shall be determined by the CityArt Committee, after considering input from all stakeholders.



# APPENDIX E: MAP

## Inventory of Current Public Art Assets

