

04 | Community Outreach

This Public Art Master Plan is the result of an inclusive, community-based process, involving residents, local officials, and art professionals. The process consisted of five elements: focus groups, public forums, public opinion survey, workshops, and interviews. Written comments and emails were also accepted and incorporated into the discussions for the Plan. The focus groups, public forums, and public opinion survey were held in June and July 2011, and facilitated by GreenPlay, the Master Plan Consultant for the upcoming Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Plan, with assistance from Brown & Keener, the Public Art Consultant. In November 2011, Brown & Keener hosted and facilitated two public workshops called CaryArt Experience and CaryArt Places and interviewed over 20 local officials and municipal staff regarding the public art and capital planning programs.

The public outreach process generated numerous suggestions for future public art projects and programs:

- Focus group discussions expressed an interest in new, integrated, and playful art projects that are linked to the history and culture of Cary. Participants suggested public art themes such as Cary's cultural diversity and the region's technology through both functional and integrated projects (e.g., sidewalks, bus wraps, fire hydrants, etc.) A rotating art display was suggested with the theme "Art on the Move." Several responses indicated a desire to find art in "unexpected ways."
- Through a public opinion survey, respondents indicated parks were the most popular place to discover public art, followed by public gardens, downtown sites, and public buildings. Greenways were ranked significantly lower than these areas for public art. It is believed that this is because people usually travel too quickly through these greenways. In addition, people prefer to keep the greenways in a natural state. In response, this plan suggests integrated or functional public art along the greenways in limited places, such as benches, wayfinding signs, and gateways placed at trail gaps or intersections.
- The participants found some of the goals and principles of the 2001 Public Art Master Plan to be unclear.
- Participants have an interest in a broader selection of public art projects than are currently offered in Cary, and in diversifying the Town's public art collection in appropriate settings and venues.
- In discussing the corridors and gateways of Cary, the majority of participants favored public art in traffic circles, on bridges and at gateways. Suggested art types included lighting on bridges and installations at gateways. Participants also suggested that the scale of public art should be appropriate to its location and should reflect the function of the road. The pedestrian-oriented downtown area could accommodate a variety of scales, from pocket parks and small-scale discovery art to larger landmarks. Where major intersections and gateways are vehicle-oriented, the public art should especially be scaled accordingly. Examples of gateway locations included:
 - High House Road and Route 55
 - Davis and High House Roads
 - North entrance on route 55 and West Gateway along High House Road
 - East Gateway on Chapel Hill Rd.
 - Kildare Farm Road
 - Roundabouts in the downtown area
- For civic and cultural facilities there was a general consensus that these were desirable venues for public art: the arts center and related facilities, amphitheater, museums, libraries, and community centers were all included. Additional suggestions included ball fields, the arboretum, and a sculpture at every school. Recommendations for themes and public art types included video

mapping projections on the arts facilities, art themes at museums and libraries that reflect the use of the building, and public art at community centers that reflect their cultural diversity.

- In parks and greenways the majority of participants preferred that public art be located at trailheads, along paths and trails, in playgrounds, in scenic areas, and integrated in park infrastructure. The only reservation among some participants was that art might not be suitable for some natural scenic areas. This category elicited numerous suggestions for public art types and additional venues, including: a scavenger hunt along trails; gardens in art form; art within niche gardens park; “Zen-like”, serene and powerful art for scenic areas; fun and whimsical art in playgrounds; interactive art around park and greenway entrances; and low-intensity lighting for park infrastructure.
- Participants suggested using historical themes for public art, such as Cary’s history of tobacco and dairy farming.
- In the Town Center, participants discussed building on existing and planned cultural uses such as the pending town theater. Other suggested themes included family- and children-oriented art, interactive art, and the “spirit” of the local community. Large art projects could draw people downtown on weekends, serving as an economic catalyst. Art could be temporary and/or change with the seasons. A small pocket park would be ideal in the downtown area to provide a shady respite in the warmer months. This could be designed as a public art project. Other suggestions included the commemoration of local veterans through public art; cell towers designed as tall sculpture, interactive walks and walkways; history in the sidewalks; creative park benches and places to sit; and public art along Chatham Road near the shopping mall to reflect that area’s international population.
- In the downtown and surrounding shopping centers, most participants supported public art in courtyards and streetscapes, on buildings and on landmark sites. There was little or no support for using art as signage, as this might be distracting. While participants favored breaking up the sight of parking lots, some of the suggestions involved trees and vegetation, which are elements of site improvements rather than of public art.
- Some participants felt that residents were removed and “disconnected” from downtown public art because they did not frequently travel there. Public art might therefore be located at the Green Hope High School, near the tennis courts, or near the Dillon/Tryon Road intersection to “pull you into that area.”

In addition to the public workshops, forums and focus groups, the Cultural Arts Division staff and the Public Art Master Plan consultant met with local officials and staff of the Town departments involved in either the policy, funding, construction or approval of public art projects. Interviews were held with the Cary Engineering staff, Planning staff; Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts staff; the Downtown Development Manager; the Town Manager; the Assistant Town Manager; and the Public Art Advisory Board. The interviews were informative and provided useful recommendations on the planning and policy process, which are reflected in this master plan.

