

## City of Greenbelt Public Arts Policy

*Draft approved by the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board, May 5, 2015  
Re-affirmed by AAB with updates incorporated here: August 7, 2018*

The purpose of this document is to define key terms, articulate core principles, identify necessary resources and articulate important considerations to inform city action in the arena of public art.

### **Section 1: Definitions**

Throughout this document, "**public art**" is understood to include artwork in any medium which is exhibited, performed or otherwise presented for any duration in a public space or in a privately-owned space which is publicly accessible without charge. Public art may be ephemeral or enduring. It may be programmed by the city or another sponsor, or presented independently by artists acting within the scope of applicable laws and regulations.

The **audience** for public art is understood to include all persons who encounter the artwork, intentionally or by happenstance, directly or through documentation. *No work of art can be expected to appeal equally to all those who encounter it;* the audience for public art may include persons who favor a specific work of art, those who dislike it, and those who are indifferent to it.

### **Section 2: Rationale**

Presenting artwork in public spaces can advance Greenbelt's historic cultural legacy, affirm community values and further civic goals.

#### **A. Historic legacy**

Public art has been integral to Greenbelt's social and architectural environment since the city's origin. The bas reliefs on the Community Center façade and the Mother and Child statue in Roosevelt Center, both by artist Lenore Thomas Straus, are beloved Greenbelt icons. These artworks help create a meaningful sense of place and a visual identity for the city. This work can be furthered by the presentation of new works of art in public spaces, as the city's legacy, boundaries and demographics continue to evolve.

#### **B. Community values**

Public art affirms the **dignity and humanity of the citizen**, in keeping with the city's overall commitment to providing a high quality of life and encouraging active civic participation.

Public art is well-suited to Greenbelt as an **inclusive community**, in that it is provided for the enjoyment of all, free of charge. Public art creates shared reference points, and shared experiences, among diverse citizens.

Public art embodies the creativity of the maker and nourishes the imagination of those who encounter it, making it an especially suitable amenity for Greenbelt as a community founded in **visionary thinking**.

### **C. Civic goals**

Public art contributes to the city's **economic vitality** by making Greenbelt a more attractive place in which to live, work and play.

Public art supports **public safety** goals by promoting awareness of one's surroundings, building civic pride and demonstrating public commitment to the neighborhoods in which artwork is presented.

### **Section 3: Greenbelt Public Art - Past and Present**

Currently and throughout the city's history, Greenbelt has promoted public art through programming, technical services and support for community initiatives. Examples include:

- Coordinating periodic professional conservation of the Lenore Thomas Straus bas reliefs and Mother and Child statue (1999, 2007), original to Greenbelt's construction
- Coordinating the installation of Lenore Thomas Straus' donated, untitled pedestal sculpture at the Community Center (2000)
- Facilitating the creation of painted murals on the Co-op grocery store and pedestrian underpasses (date unknown; murals are no longer present)
- Installing and maintaining artist Richard Zandler's donated deer sculpture in Greenbelt East, (circa 1990)
- Operating an art gallery at the Greenbelt Community Center (circa 1997 to present)
- Extending gallery programming to include temporary, outdoor installations at the Youth Center, a pedestrian underpass and the Community Center front lawn (projects with Jill Romanoke in 2001 and David Page in 2008)
- Exhibiting community artwork (ongoing) at venues such as the Municipal Building, Youth Center, Community Center, Aquatic and Fitness Center, Springhill Lake Recreation Center and Greenbelt library, as well as student art shows at the Greenbelt Consumer Co-Op (2010) and Beltway Plaza shopping mall (2010).
- Supporting Artists in Residence at the Greenbelt Community Center in the creation of public artwork with community involvement. Examples have included: a Weaving Web at Schrom Hills Park with Elizabeth Morisette for Schromfest, aka Fall Fest (2000); the ceramic "Fly" mural created for the Community Center with Marla McLean (2004); the "Friends and Family" community memory quilt organized by Celestine Ranney-Howes (2008); a lantern display developed by Sherill Gross for the Festival of Lights opening ceremony (2008); art flags created with Russ Little, used on July 4th (2010); the "Faces of Greenbelt" ceramic tile mural dedicated at the Community Center in 2012 at the opening of Greenbelt's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration; a yarn-bomb installation coordinated by Rachel Cross near the Community Center (2016); the "Crazy Quilt" ceramic tile panel series

installed at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center (2017); and the “Birds Gone Wild” portable painting/photo stand-ins designed by Rachel Cross (2018).

- Administering the Arts Emerge program to facilitate community participation in additional public art projects, such as: the dancing figure shaped panel paintings created with Arlette Jassel for Greenbelt New Year (2000); polar bear sculptures created with Alice Sims for Greenbelt New Year (2001); floating sculptures created with Recreation staff for Buddy Attick Park July 4th celebrations (2002, 2005 - 2008); and the creation of "stick people" sculptures with Recreation staff (2004), and panel paintings with Eli Halpin (2009) to identify homes participating in the Greenbelt Homes, Inc. House and Garden Tours.
- Collaborating with the Chesapeake Education, Arts and Research Society (CHEARS) and alight dance theater to commission artwork for the Three Sisters Demonstration Gardens located at the Greenbelt Community Center, Springhill Lake Recreation Center and Schrom Hills Park (2014-2015).
- Presenting community and professional performances at special events, including theater, dance, music and spoken word (ongoing)
- Providing funding and/or in-kind support for community arts organizations such as the Greenbelt Concert Band, Greenbelt Arts Center, Greenbelt Writers Group, alight dance theater, and Friends of Greenbelt Theatre that provide free public programs (ongoing).
- Providing funding and/or in-kind support (ongoing) for community initiatives such as: the Labor Day festival art shows and concerts; performances in Roosevelt Center and art shows organized by the New Deal Café, with support from Friends of New Café Arts; and the Greenbelt Association for Visual Arts/ Greenbelt Access Television animation program.

#### **Section 4: Statement of Policy**

"The City of Greenbelt is committed to facilitating a vibrant role for the arts in community life. We recognize the capacity of public art to preserve and expand on the city's historic cultural legacy. We believe that public art can affirm community values such as inclusivity, visionary thinking and the dignity and humanity of the citizen. We believe that public art can help further civic goals including economic vitality and public safety. Therefore, the City of Greenbelt supports the exhibition, performance and other presentation of the arts city-wide in public spaces and in private spaces which are publicly accessible without charge. We recognize the value of both amateur and professional creative work, and both programmed and spontaneous expression, which are consistent with the Greenbelt Community Pledge. Through community planning, direct programming, conservation, and support for artist and arts organization initiatives, the City of Greenbelt will continue to encourage and recognize creativity broadly through public art."

#### **Section 5: Procedural Guidelines**

##### **A. General guidelines**

1. City of Greenbelt professional arts staff are authorized to develop and implement specific procedures for public presentations in the visual and performing arts and protocols for collection management. These procedures are subject to review by the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board and approval by the Director of Greenbelt Recreation and by the City Manager. Flexibility should be maintained in order to enable the city to learn from its own

and others' experience over time and to respond to a range of potential opportunities that cannot fully be anticipated in this document.

2. Consideration will be given to the Public Art Site Index developed by the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board in the selection of sites for the performance or exhibition of public art. The Site Index is intended to be suggestive and not limiting.
3. The City of Greenbelt will notify the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board and professional arts staff early in the planning process for any renovations to public areas of indoor and outdoor city facilities and public areas within any planned new construction. The Board and staff will report to the City Council and City Manager, respectively, on any opportunities identified for the inclusion of visual art or for the general enhancement of a facility's capacity for presentation of the visual or performing arts. The Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board will update the Public Art Site Index accordingly, as new opportunities are created.

**B. Guidelines for the development and management of a collection of enduring visual art works**

1. The City of Greenbelt will provide for the responsible stewardship of its current and future holdings of enduring works of visual art. The city will maintain its public art works in good physical condition and present them with appropriate attribution to the artist.
  - a. The City will provide an assigned fund for the cultivation and maintenance of its collection of enduring works of visual art.
    - i. Funds may be used to meet collection management expenses including but not limited to: appraisals and insurance coverage; drainage and other grounds management; signage; lighting; means of public access; measures needed to protect the artwork during festivals and extreme weather events; routine, professional inspection, cleaning and conservation by qualified contractors; vandalism mitigation and other extraordinary repairs; and costs associated with the relocation or removal of art works.
    - ii. Funds may also be used for the acquisition of new works through extended loan, purchase, gift or commission. New project expenses may include but are not limited to: artist's design work and travel; engineering consultations; conservation review; site preparation; fabrication, delivery and installation of the artwork.
    - iii. Collections management will have priority over the acquisition of new work for use of the assigned fund.
    - iv. Individuals, organizations and corporate donors will be able to contribute to the assigned fund.
  - b. The City will provide professional arts staffing at a level sufficient to fulfill the duties of collection management and to implement procedures for new acquisitions as a pre-condition for approval of proposed acquisitions through commission, loan, gift, or purchase of existing work.