

Summary of The Public Art Field Guide for Madison Wisconsin

By what process does public art actually become a part of city-building? How can you judge whether or not a site is a good choice for public art? What are some of the questions that enable a site's potential to be explored? What issues should be examined that are particularly relevant to artists, and which issues are important to the community? What factors are important?

The Public Art Field Guide lays out design guidelines and a comprehensive but easy-to-use process that provide a way for artists, city staff and community members to begin to think about, and have a dialogue, regarding the potential of public art. The Field Guide shows how ideas can be shaped into workable scenarios for public art.

The design guidelines and process are applied to four case studies featuring actual places in Madison that have been identified by the citizenry as potential places for public art activities. These locations represent four prototypes: large scale sites and environmental settings; gateway projects; neighborhood gathering spots and small scale sites; and planning, streetscape and infrastructure projects.

The process includes three steps: 1) developing an **inventory** of current conditions; 2) the **analysis** of information collected in the inventory to produce a profile; and 3) identifying the **opportunities** revealed by the analysis to create scenarios for public art efforts.

This process is similar to that used by city planners, designers, and public art program administrators. In the Field Guide it is provided to equip and empower artists, community members and others to take on the issues of city-building.

The **inventory**, which is the first step, assembles the "raw material" that informs the public art project. Common aesthetic and practical issues are explored along with social meanings, but the categories included in The Field Guide are not exhaustive. Rather, they should be used to help to uncover issues relevant to the situation at hand. With practice, the relevant issues become apparent.

The second step involves using the inventory to generate a **profile** of significant factors for analysis. Factors that are meaningful to the public art project are summarized in this step.

Finally, the significant factors are fully explored to identify particular **opportunities** for public art. At this point, the Design Guidelines Influencing Site Selection and the Creation of Public Art (found in the complete Field Guide Document) are used as a lens through which the opportunities may be viewed. During this phase, funding incentives and sources also are considered, along with available maintenance resources. The result is a workable scenario for the public art project.

The Complete Field Guide with a detailed process and case studies is available to interested artists, individuals, neighborhood groups exploring possibilities for public art opportunities.