

# PLAN FOR PUBLIC ART

## DAVIDSON North Carolina

13 March 2007

### **Submitted by the Steering Committee**

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**The Davidson Plan for Public Art was made possible through funding  
from the North Carolina Arts Council and the Town of Davidson**

# **The Davidson Plan for Public Art**

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## Executive Summary

The Plan for Public Art gives form to community aspirations for public art throughout Davidson and supports Town goals of economic development, community building, sense of place, open space, and citizen leadership. The Plan, which has been nurtured and developed by an eight member Steering Committee, builds upon the 2004 Arts & Science Council Cultural Plan for North Mecklenburg, and is informed by more than fifty-five interviews with residents of Davidson who emphasized that public art be educational and connect people to place, particularly through interaction with public artworks.

This planning effort also has been attentive to the development of a permanent organizational structure and sustainable funding to support its goals; it is a strategic yet flexible public art planning resource. Specifically, the Plan helps fulfill the Town's mission to sustain its distinct character; strengthen community opportunities for social interaction through art; contribute to Davidson's vitality; facilitate the creation of works of public art on public land and in private development; integrate public art into Davidson's built and natural environments; and expand opportunities for residents to experience, understand, and appreciate public art.

To this end, the Plan,

- Defines objectives for public art in Davidson
- Identifies organizational relationships to municipal government and funding sources
- Sets responsibility for project management, maintenance, and conservation of works of public art
- Describes methods to formally engage the community in public art commissions

The Plan for Public Art recommends a two-phased process through which to further refine public art program and implementation guidelines. The first phase is the creation of a Public Art Task Force that advances the work of the Public Art Steering Committee. This work includes the management and oversight of a public art project as well as completing the organizational architecture for a permanent 501c3 Public Art Commission. The Steering Committee recommends that the Public Art Task Force be funded by a grant from the Town of Davidson and encourages the Town to request additional support for this phase of work from the Arts & Science Council.

The second phase of program implementation is the formal assembly of a Public Art Commission, established as a 501c3 non-profit organization. A nine-member board appointed by the Town of Davidson would govern the Commission, a majority of which are arts professionals. The primary responsibility of the Commission is to oversee and support identified policies and direction for Town-wide public art programs and projects. The Public Art Commission has formal and informational liaison relationships to Town Management and relevant Town Boards and Commissions, specifically the Design Review Board and the Planning Board, and all meetings are open to the public. The Steering Committee recommends that sustainable funding for the Commission be derived from a contributed percent for art ordinance with additional funds for projects generated from a Public Art Trust. The Commission would take a leadership role in recommending opportunities for public art in private development.

The Davidson Plan for Public Art is an dynamic, sustainable, and community-driven program that responds to Town goals and residents' desires for extraordinary public art experiences.

# The Davidson Plan for Public Art

## Background

### History

In July 2006, Downtown Davidson Inc in association with the Town of Davidson was awarded a Creating Places planning grant from the North Carolina Arts Council. The grant was used to define and give form to community aspirations for public art in Davidson. The Plan for Public Art, herewith in draft form for consideration by the Town Board of Davidson, recommends implementation procedures for public art projects and a structure for a sustainable public art program. These proposals capture the breadth of ideas generated to date by Town residents and complemented by the expertise of the Plan's Steering Committee.

The development and structure of the Plan for Public Art was organized to respond to residents' increasing interest in supporting public art throughout the community. The planning effort was tasked with,

- Defining objectives for public art in Davidson
- Identifying organizational relationships to municipal government and funding sources
- Setting responsibility for project management, maintenance, and conservation of works of public art
- Development of artist selection procedures
- Describing methods to formally engage the community in public art projects
- Analysis of contractual concerns including ownership of artwork.

To execute this undertaking, the leadership of Downtown Davidson Inc and the Creative Art Exchange organized a Steering Committee to guide and inform the direction of the Plan. The composition of the Steering Committee reflected the core constituencies that should have voice during the planning for public art in Davidson as well as referenced potential partnerships for project implementation.

## **Members of the Steering Committee**

### **Dawn Blobaum, Assistant Town Manager for the Town of Davidson**

Ms. Blobaum has over 20 years of experience as a licensed architect. Her firm in St. Louis, Kingsbury Design Studio, specialized in new infill construction in historic neighborhoods, winning the St. Louis Urban Design Award for work in the Soulard and Lafayette Square neighborhoods. In 1996 she co-founded The Lawrence Group, Architects and Town Planners, in Davidson. She joined the Town of Davidson staff in 1999 and was instrumental in the development of the town's innovative planning ordinance adopted in 2001. The ordinance includes open space and affordable housing requirements as well as design guidelines that regulate construction in Davidson. Ms. Blobaum is a Mecklenburg County Public Art Commissioner.

### **Robert Lee, Resident of Davidson**

Mr. Lee has lived in Davidson for 24 years. In 2005, he served as a member of the Station Area Plan Task Force. He is a graduate of Davidson College and is currently a College employee.

### **Kate MacIntyre, Executive Director of Downtown Davidson Inc**

Ms. MacIntyre, the first Executive Director for Downtown Davidson, was hired in August 2004. Her responsibilities include promoting Davidson through arts and community events; working with the Town on downtown issues; outreach to community organizations such as the Davidson Historical Society; the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce; and Lowe's Hometown Grants.

### **Sherry Malushizky, Director of Friends of the Arts at Davidson College**

Ms. Malushizky has worked for the Davidson College since 1993 and served in her current position since 1999. She has provided arts-related consultation to various programs at Davidson College, implemented an ongoing program of outreach, and collaborated with outside arts-related organizations including The Mint Museums of Art. As assistant director of the College Union for Programs, she coordinated the efforts of approximately 300 volunteers annually. Her professional volunteer activities include work for the Arts & Science Council, Davidson Community Players, Davidson Elementary School, Lake Norman YMCA, and North Carolina Presenters Consortium.

### **Diane Ruggiero, Executive Director of Creative Art Exchange**

Ms. Ruggiero serves as the arts partner on the project. The Creative Art Exchange is a non-profit visual art center that offers classes, lectures, films, and exhibits to the Lake Norman region, and was recently named an Associate of the Arts and Science

Council. Ms. Ruggiero has 12 years of experience in non-profit visual arts management in Mecklenburg County and has served on a variety of boards and committees. She has a MA in Arts Administration from UNC Charlotte.

**Cort Savage, Associate Professor of Art at Davidson College**

Mr. Savage teaches sculpture and drawing at Davidson College; he has been on the faculty since 1992. He is also a professional artist; his mixed media kinetic sculptures are exhibited internationally.

**Margo Williams, Town Board Commissioner**

Ms. Williams is a long-time resident of Davidson and was elected to the Town Board in 1995 after serving on the Planning Board, Land Plan Committee, and General Plan Committee. She has more than 25 years' experience as a professional business writer, editor, and trainer. In the community, she has served as president of the Davidson Housing Coalition, president of New Schoolhouse of the Arts, Board Member of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Arts and Science Council, and was a founding member of Downtown Davidson. In May 2004, she was awarded the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award by the Honorary Degrees Committee of Davidson College for service to community.

**Beth Weast, Architect with The Lawrence Group**

Ms. Weast's architectural experience includes community, civic, mixed-use, cultural and residential projects. With a background in art, architecture, and community planning, she brings a commitment to design as a process, actively involving all stakeholders in building consensus to reach design solutions. Ms. Weast is a Davidson College graduate; she holds a BA in Art History, and a MArch from UNC Charlotte. She works for the Lawrence Group in Davidson NC.

- 19 September 2006**  
Steering Committee Meeting
- 17 October 2006**  
Steering Committee Meeting
- 17 October 2006**  
Public Outreach Forum
- 17 November 2006**  
Steering Committee Meeting
- 8 December 2006**  
Steering Committee Meeting
- 17 January 2007**  
Steering Committee Meeting
- 26 February 2007**  
Steering Committee Meeting
- 13 March 2007**  
Presentation to Town Board

The Steering Committee has guided the progress of the Plan for Public Art. To date, the Committee has met on 19 September 2006; 17 October 2006; 17 November 2006; 8 December 2006; 17 January 2007; and 26 February 2007. In addition, there was a Public Forum held at Town Hall on 17 October 2006 to solicit ideas about public art. On-going communications with interested residents have transpired through a blog about the development of a Plan for Public Art, which offers opportunities to those with an interest in the Plan to express their comments should they be unable to attend a scheduled meeting. Outreach efforts have also been maintained through Steering Committee members' availability to communicate via email, telephone, and personal appointments.

# The Davidson Plan for Public Art

## Introduction

**New developments are potential sites for public art**

The Town of Davidson is undergoing significant growth. There are approved plans for a new grocery store, two hotels, private school, 2000 housing units, and an additional 100,000 square feet of retail and office space. Population is projected to grow from 8,000 to 15,000 by 2010. In addition, CATS has plans to extend its commuter rail service north of Charlotte, which will motivate mixed-use development proximal to the train station in Davidson. To mitigate traffic, two roundabouts will be constructed by 2007. New development activity provides potential sites for public art and the catalyst for public discussion. Planning for the inclusion of public artworks and adopting guidelines for art that are consistent with the Town's planning ordinance will ensure that public art projects could be carefully integrated into all approved development.

**Commitment to preserving the Village**

At the core of Davidson's planning ordinance lies the commitment to preserving the Village: its walkability, open space, and scale. Downtown Davidson remains the heart of the Town. The efforts to make downtown a cultural destination can naturally draw on the arts resources of both Davidson College as well as local and regional artists. There are an estimated 60 artists living and working in Davidson and neighboring towns. Although many of these artists do not currently work in the field of public art, to be sure they can enrich the discussion about the role of the arts in the Town and how and where public artworks can positively contribute to the life and well being of Davidson.

## Rationale for a Plan for Public Art

**Public art helps articulate municipal goals and civic identity**

The Town of Davidson is committed to creating a civic environment in which education and learning are valued and emphasized. As a means of articulating Town priorities and history, works of public art have the potential to echo these municipal and private goals. Although there are many examples of how public art can contribute to and activate public space, Davidson is uniquely positioned in its history to redefine how public art could be expressed and to authenticate Davidson in tangible forms with which the community and its visitors can connect. For example, downtown Main Street is a vibrant and trafficked corridor with an emergent arts district at its south end. The Town also boasts wonderful parks, greenways, and open space for recreational enjoyment, and would like to accentuate its older neighborhoods and gardens. Among other unique attributes, including the significance of Davidson College

**The Plan is strategic  
and flexible**

as integral to the community's public reflection, the Town has the potential to be an exciting host to the work of artists in a variety of environments.

The context for developing a Plan for Public Art was predicated on the recognition that Davidson would benefit by including the work of public artists as integral to its development and identity. As an important and necessary first step, the Plan defines and recommends how a public art program could be incorporated into municipal and private land use planning decisions, how such a program should be organized and funded, and how to evaluate the appropriateness of a public art opportunity or the role of artists in the community. The Plan is intended to be a strategic yet flexible planning resource, with recommendations that support and enhance the goals articulated by planning participants.

The Plan also creates a context that unites two important and critical dimensions, each of which is fundamental to the success of every public art initiative: leadership to develop and direct a program that makes a positive contribution to the community, and clarity of definition concerning the financial and organizational structure through which project goals can be achieved.

**Public art adds  
vitality and spirit**

Public art describes an enormous variety of original work created by artists that we can encounter in public spaces. Great public art changes our expectations and perceptions of community; it adds immeasurably to one's vitality and spirit. Public access to a variety of artistic expression can exhilarate a sense of community, and because sites and themes for public artworks are as varied as the history, culture, need, and desire of a particular project, all works are original and site specific.

The Town of Davidson is knowledgeable about cultural arts programming and the attributes it shares with a quality of life that is illuminated through collaboration between an artist and the community. The commitment to explore various means and approaches to formalize a public art program that reflects these aspirations is a primary directive for consideration of a Plan for Public Art, which will complement and strengthen the Town.

## Regional Context

### Ordinance

Asheville 1% (2002)  
CATS 1% (2001)  
Charlotte 1% (2003)  
Chapel Hill 1% (2002)  
Triangle Transit Authority 1% (2004)

### By Project

Hickory public-private (2004)  
Raleigh-Durham International Airport

### Voluntary or Being Planned

Burlington  
Cary (yearly appropriation  
for public art)  
Concord  
Durham  
Greensboro  
Hendersonville  
Kingston  
Rocky Mount  
Salisbury  
Waynesville  
Wilmington  
Wilson  
Winston-Salem

Public art initiatives, programs, and projects have a significant history throughout North Carolina. Charlotte has been privileged with private investment in public art and manages a program to commission permanent public works of art. In 2003, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners and the Charlotte City Council each adopted a percent for art ordinance, which is administered by the Arts & Science Council (ASC). In 2002, Chapel Hill created a percent for art ordinance, which to date has engaged ten artists or artist teams for selected capital improvement projects. The Town is currently reviewing a proposal by the Public Arts Commission to embed public art planning in all land use management policies.

Elsewhere in North Carolina, percent for art ordinances have been approved by Asheville 1% (2002); CATS 1% (2001); and by the Triangle Transit Authority 1% (2004). Percent for art projects are undertaken on a project basis since 2004 in Hickory, which encourages public and private support for works of art, as well as by the Raleigh-Durham International Airport. Burlington, Cary (yearly appropriation for public art), Concord, Durham, Greensboro, Hendersonville, Kingston, Rocky Mount, Salisbury, Waynesville, Wilmington, Wilson, and Winston-Salem each have public art programs and volunteer public art boards or commissions comprising residents and arts professionals who establish policy about public art and participate in project identification and artist selection. Their funding and staff vary according to the host agency.

Davidson already invests in the arts with leadership that has exhibited vision and the ability to attract support for cultural arts programming. In 2004, the Town also contributed to the development of a cultural plan for North Mecklenburg, which was directed by the Arts & Science Council. This study concluded that there is *interest among municipal leaders and residents in developing public art for beautification, wayfinding, historical demarcation, and advancing regional identity*. Furthermore, those who participated in the ASC planning process expressed a desire to bring public art to those sites where there is already a predisposition to congregate as well as sites where art would encourage social interaction.

In addition, the Town of Davidson actively supports the work of the Arts & Science Council through direct financial contributions as well as active membership and involvement on the ASC Board of North Mecklenburg.

# The Davidson Plan for Public Art

## Development of Objectives

The project to discover how the Town of Davidson could specifically incorporate public art and the work of artists into its social, cultural, built, and natural environments was directed by the Steering Committee of the Plan for Public Art. Three critical questions framed this work, which explored how public art projects might be implemented. Specifically, the Committee tasked itself with establishing direction and focus for public art initiatives that would respond to an expressed mission for a future public art program in Davidson, proposing how public art projects could be funded, identifying which constituent representatives should be involved and responsible for decisions about public art. Throughout this effort, the work of the Steering Committee was informed by the Town of Davidson's goals of *economic development, community building, sense of place, open space, and citizen leadership*.

**Informed by Town goals of economic development, community building, sense of place, open space, citizen leadership**

## Community Response

These fundamental planning issues were further considered as a series of interrogatives, which were posed to the broader community for their response. The Plan for Public Art was – and continues to be - an iterative process: the Steering Committee identified planning objectives which were then refined through outreach and public input, and subsequently redefined as a consequence of extended public involvement and opinion.

**55 individual interviews**

The following questions evoked broad and exciting responses from the community:

- What words describe your experience of Davidson?
- How do you think public art could animate public spaces throughout the Town of Davidson?
- If there were a permanent public art program in Davidson, what should be its mission?
- Organizational affiliations help define program relationships: where do you think is the best place to manage public art projects?
- Based on your experience and expectations, how should public art projects be funded?
- What are approaches to involve the community in planning for a public art project?

Residents and organizational representatives offered multivalent perspectives to these questions although their aspirations for public art in Davidson were uniformly supportive and encouraging toward the establishment of a public art program that would, at its core, be *educational and interactive*.

### **Community Response: Proposed Program Goals**

Interviewees and participants speaking in public forums and in personal interviews contributed to the identification of program goals that were initially objectives designed by the Steering Committee. In summary, the community suggested that the following criteria should advance the mission of a public art program in Davidson:

*...enlivens and animates spaces*  
*...promote cultural ideals*  
*...accessible*  
*...community participation*  
*...art is a springboard*  
*...commemorative*  
*...reveals the identity of the Town*  
*...artistic expression of the community*  
*...helps us to visit, enjoy, discuss and think*  
*...expression of uniqueness*  
*...invites us to connect with spaces*  
*...engenders pride*

- The program should *create an atmosphere in which artists would like to work*.
- The program should create an essential *expectation* about the ability to engage with art.
- Works of public art should be *integrated into the environment*, buildings, and landscape.
- *Downtown* should be a primary project site for public art.
- The program should *emphasize arts education*.
- Public art should be both an expression of *individual neighborhoods* as well as their shared physical, political, and cultural geography with the Town of Davidson.
- Works of public art should stimulate discussion, engage the population through social interaction, and increase civic consciousness.
- Public art should maintain and increase the beauty of Davidson.

These descriptions for the incorporation of public art throughout Davidson are unyielding in the emphasis on education and the connection of people to place, particularly through interaction between people and works of public art.

# The Davidson Plan for Public Art

## Organizational Relationship to Government and Funding

The purpose of the Davidson public art program, as defined by the Steering Committee and its research with the public and multiple constituent groups, is to:

- Help fulfill the Town's mission to sustain its distinct character
- Strengthen community opportunities for social interaction through art
- Contribute to Davidson's vitality
- Facilitate the creation of works of public art on public land and in private development that are integral to Davidson's built and natural environments and become intrinsic to the community
- Expand opportunities for residents to experience, understand, and appreciate public art

## Phased Implementation

### **Public Art Task Force 12 - 18 months**

Planning for and structuring a public art program for Davidson that responds to the Program's purpose, or mission, recognizes the need to have a phased implementation process toward the permanent establishment of a Public Art Commission. Phase I is the creation of a Public Art Task Force that would continue the work of the Steering Committee while advancing the development of Davidson's first Public Art Commission.

### **Public Art Commission 501c3**

The second phase is the formal assembly of a Public Art Commission as a 501c3 non-profit organization. The primary responsibility of the Commission is to oversee and support identified policies and direction for Town-wide public art programs and projects.

Each recommended organizational phase, the Task Force followed by the Public Art Commission, is responsible for the successful management of public art projects in Davidson as well as administration and oversight of a broader public art program, which includes public education, advancing artist selection processes, contract negotiation and management, community forums, design reviews, and coordination and communication among approval agencies and funders.

**Finalize Public Art  
Commission Procedures**

**Coordinate a Public  
Artist-in-Residence  
project with ASC**

**Facilitate management of  
the work of a selected artist  
throughout the process of  
identifying future sites for  
public artworks throughout  
Town as well as designing  
one project for construction**

**File to become a 501c3  
non-profit organization**

**Identify members of the  
Public Art Commission**

## **Phase I: Formation of Public Art Task Force**

The Task Force is the organizational management structure for the realization of Davidson's first public art project. This charge emphasizes an approach to the creation of public art that is site specific, informed by community participation, and offers maximum opportunities for public education about public art and its processes. The Task Force is also responsible for the facilitation of all public reviews with appropriate Town authorities. Once the Task Force has completed this important first project, which collaboratively works with the selected public artist to recommend potential sites for public art, propose specific ideas for artworks, and receive commitment for funding of the public artwork(s), the Task Force will dissolve and be replaced by the Davidson Public Art Commission.

The Task Force will likely complete its work within 12 – 18 months, to be succeeded by the Public Art Commission.

The Task Force has two primary functions. First, it is responsible to collaborate with ASC in the administration of Davidson's first public art project.

The Task Force is specifically charged with the following work:

- Drafting a Call to Artists to evaluate possible sites for temporary and/or permanent public artworks
- Selecting an artist for this assignment
- Managing all public communications about this undertaking, the work of the artist, and the development of specific proposals for community consideration
- Resolving all site and construction considerations including public review and approvals

The second charge of the Task Force is to refine public art program implementation procedures and to create a nominating committee with representation of arts professionals to identify members of the Public Art Commission who are interested and willing to serve for either one or two three-year terms. This mandate of the Task Force also includes establishing by-laws through which to become a 501c3 non-profit recognized by Federal and State governments.

## **Funding for Public Art Task Force**

The Public Art Task Force should be funded in part by a grant from the Town of Davidson with additional support from organizations with an interest in and commitment to the advancement of public

art in Davidson. Approximately 85 percent of the allocation would be used to pay a public artist to evaluate sites for public art (an initial list of public art sites is identified on page 15) and to develop one work of public art at one of these sites. Fifteen percent of the allocated funding would be reserved for project administration and management. It is recommended that ASC provide initial support and administration to this first public art commission, preferably as an in-kind service or for a nominal fee.

## **Phase II: Establishment of Public Art Commission**

Based on research and discussion conducted, the Steering Committee recommends the establishment of a Public Art Commission for Davidson, which sponsors and directs public art program initiatives and projects. The proposed Public Art Commission is structured as a 501c3 non-profit organization. The Commission would be governed by a nine-member board appointed by the Town of Davidson. One member of the Commission would be a representative of the Davidson Town Board; five members would be arts professionals (artist, architect, landscape architect, curator, arts writer, arts educator, arts administrator, or other individual with considerable experience and knowledge in the visual arts including ASC); and the balance would be constituent interest organizations. Creating a governing Board with a majority of arts professionals is an important component of a public art program because it needs to have authority to adjudicate the quality of artists and artworks that would be commissioned for the Town.

The Public Art Commission would have formal and informational liaison relationships to Town Management and relevant Town Boards and Commissions, specifically the Design Review Board and the Planning Board. The Commission will hold monthly meetings that are open to the public.

The Public Art Commission is tasked with refining and advancing public art goals for the Town, which create opportunity for substantive, public engagement and solicitation of opinion. In this capacity, it also holds responsibility for the on going educational and outreach efforts for all approved public art commissions including their development and public communication about the artworks and the artists. The Commission will explore the possibility of a percent for art ordinance applicable to Town of Davidson projects and other opportunities for the inclusion of public art in private development. The structure of the Commission is designed to reflect the artistic process of creating public artworks that attend to the expressed needs and ineffable desires of the community and local population.

**Nine member Board, a majority of which are arts professionals**

**Adjudicate the quality of artists and artwork**

**Liaison and coordinate with the Town**

**Facilitate public outreach and education**

**Organize artist selection**

**Manage public art projects**

The function of the Commission is to provide public forums to discuss ideas about public art programs and projects and to recommend sites for public art, public art projects, and artists, decisions about which would be made in collaboration with municipal government and other interests. This is important because specific public art projects are typically sited on public land with open and free access to the work(s) at all times. Elected officials and staff of the Town of Davidson would therefore be involved in the planning of public art as well as responsible for its care and maintenance once fabricated and installed. This municipal support and engagement is necessary to the sustainability of the Program and is an important form of redress for residents and taxpayers concerned about particular works of art in public space. Its work would be organized and managed by a part-time staff person.

### **Phase II: Funding for Public Art Commission**

#### **Contributed Percent for Art**

It is recommended that a contributed percent for art is the most sustainable funding stream for the development and execution of permanent public artworks and program-project administration. Percent for art funds include bonds and direct grants to and from the Town when identified as a direct allocation to a public art project or initiative. As such, it is appropriate and necessary for the general public to be organizationally engaged in the development of the work.

#### **Establishment of a Public Art Trust**

Because the annual CIP of the Town of Davidson is modest when compared with other municipal percent for art programs, it is strongly recommended that all acceptable CIP projects be pooled into a Public Art Trust, or fund, for use on public sites throughout the Town. To that end, it is important that funds, unless restricted by bond language, carry the ability to be expended in aggregate for a public art project at a single site. Percent for Art Ordinance language should include the ability to use funds for both the commissioning and/or acquisition of public artworks as well as administrative support to manage and implement the work of the Public Art Commission. All public art funds should be held in the Finance department of the Town of Davidson where fiduciary oversight can be maintained.

#### **Maintenance and Conservation**

All public art programs must find the resources for the long-term maintenance and conservation of the community's collection of public artworks. Davidson College has both curatorial and conservation expertise; it would be advantageous for the Public Art Commission to gift to the Town of Davidson each permanent public artwork. The Town, in turn, could contract with the College for maintenance and conservation of its public art.

Finally, no one involved in this planning process for public art in Davidson suggested that property taxes should be considered as

funding sources for public art projects or the administration of a public art program.

## **Voluntary request for public art allocation**

### **Public Art in Private Development**

Davidson is experiencing significant growth and private development. To date, there are more than 60 public art programs across the Country with either an ordinance requiring private developers to contribute or allocate a percentage of their project's construction value to public art, or a voluntary request for this percentage, which is issued by the local municipality, and frequently recommending that the public art project be facilitated through the local public art program. To date, North Carolina State law does not permit municipal authority to enforce public art in private development. It is therefore recommended that Davidson's Public Art Commission, in association with Town government, voluntarily ask owners of private development projects to consider the inclusion of public art in their plans and to coordinate artist and site selection with the Davidson Public Art Commission.

Davidson has an exemplary history of public-private partnerships to achieve community goals, which serves as a model for the implementation of a public-private public art project (from ideation to installation.) This structure to realize public art in private development can be met with a changing membership of individuals, non-profit organizations, government, corporations, and private interests, among other possible project participants with a material and planning interest in the project. This organizational committee is organized on an ad hoc basis to create or respond to a specific public art project, thereby elevating the constituent role of the individuals and organizations directly affecting a public art initiative.

Public art projects developed in conjunction with private development projects should be administered through the Public Art Commission; decisions about the role of the artist and the identification of the artwork, including its periodic review and management, would be made by the Commission in collaboration with respective Town governing boards and Town management.

Anticipating future private development projects throughout Davidson, it would be vital to begin the solicitation for public art project funds at least one to two years in advance of project design to enable the artist(s) identified and selected to make a substantial artistic contribution to the development.

## **Eventual consideration of a transfer tax on deeds or as an adequate public facilities ordinance once public art projects have been recognized as public resources**

## **Identification of Roles and Responsibilities for Project and Program Implementation**

**Public art needs leaders  
with vision**

**Progressive artist selection  
procedures**

**Dynamic partnerships**

**Program development and  
project management**

Every public art program needs leaders who have vision and a commitment to the creation of great works of public art. These attributes can be manifest in Public Art Commission Board responsibilities, progressive artist selection procedures, responsible reviews by the public, and dynamic partnerships between the program's administration and other appropriate agencies and organizations. These responsibilities are integral to how the many constituent publics of Davidson will become invested in the creation of public artworks and collaborate with artists throughout a planning and design process. Each public art program, and the sponsorship of a unique public art project, holds the potential recognition that art is a vital form of expression; its power of communication depends upon a reciprocal relationship between the attender and the work, which is advanced through the administration of the program or the project.

To this end, the flexibility of the public art program to establish linkages between and among various interest groups is one means to sustain a commitment to public art in Davidson. The roles and responsibilities of program staff are not necessarily discreet by project but function in the broad interests of the Town and its residents. Specifically, Commission staff is charged with functions similar to a director of a non-profit. These obligations and responsibilities cover communications, board or committee development, fundraising, community outreach, enhancing the reputation of the program, and attracting qualified and exciting artists to apply for commissions.

The public art program director will successfully translate committee directives into implementation practices that include project budgeting, scheduling, contract negotiation, communications with a broad public, and liaison to project participants. A project manager or facilitator works with the selected artists to achieve the goals and ambitions of the project as defined by the community and the constituent organizations responsible for its conception. In established public art programs, the project manager directs community design meetings, facilitates the daily work of the artists, confirms drawings of proposed work(s) with all parties invested in the project site, and anticipates and resolves design and construction issues. In sum, the project facilitator advances the artist's work from its earliest stages of consideration through installation and dedication.

The role of municipal government is varied. In projects sited on

## **Comprehensive public reviews**

public property, the Town is obligated to review the project through its appropriate boards, commissions, and staff. In projects for which it may be a co-owner, the Town may have financial interests that have certain restrictions that require keen oversight and unique specifications for artist selection, such as capital improvement projects that are supported through bonds or with matching Federal funds.

The private developer, while answering to local government for all project approvals, has perhaps the most flexibility in awarding public art projects because the financial risk is exclusive; once planning documents are approved by the Town, the selected artist has tremendous opportunity to aesthetically shape the development albeit to the taste of the developer. When feasible, the Public Art Commission should assist artist selection.

## **Public art is predicated on active community participation**

### **Methodology for Community Engagement**

Community involvement is fundamental to the work of public artist; the making of a contemporary public artwork is predicated on active community participation and dialogue with the artist(s). Specifically, community conversations should direct the early identification and development of public art projects, including their general site locations. Once projects are underway, there should be a way for residents to express their views on the project as it evolves. For example, the Public Art Commission should periodically hold public forums to activate the community and educate the population about the work. Outreach and community participation in the program and/or project would be facilitated by a part-time public art coordinator who is charged with public education about public art and the work of the artist commissioned for a project.

## **Sustained commitment to community education**

Successful community engagement is increased when participants are informed about how a public artwork is conceived and how the work of public art fits into other contemporary artistic expressions. This aspect of a public art program requires a sustained commitment to community education about challenging ideas about art; the history of the artist; celebrating the source of artistic creation and role of the artist; and how to talk about art.

Project planners should identify specific constituencies who should be involved in the project from inception through installation. Members of these planning committees could represent either the neighborhood or be geographical proximal to the proposed project, or have direct expertise with the medium the artist is suggesting for the work.

Building general consensual direction yet permitting the artist to do what s/he does best, which is to reinterpret and reorient us to ourselves. To this end, regularly scheduled open conversations and discussions about the progress of the proposed work are important so that the community is not surprised when the work is complete and installed or constructed.

## The Davidson Plan for Public Art

### Discussion of Possible Projects

The Plan for Public Art in Davidson generated many wonderful ideas about possible public art projects that respond to and reinforce its statement of purpose, which is to:

*Strengthen community opportunities for social interaction through art*

*Facilitate works of public art that are integral to the built and natural environments throughout Davidson*

*Work with artists who can create public artworks that make a positive contribution to residents' and visitors' understanding and appreciation of the Town*

*Oversee artistic efforts that will maintain and increase the beauty of Davidson*

### Greenways and Parks

Public art that contrasts the built and natural environments through the identification of open space resources



## Public Buildings

Community Center

Public Library

Post Office plaza

Town Hall



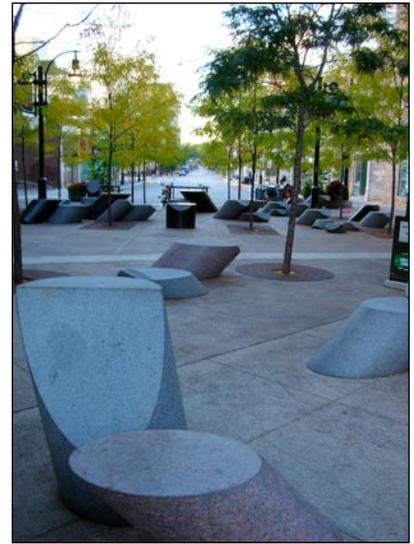
## Streetscapes

Art that connects destinations  
and encourages walking



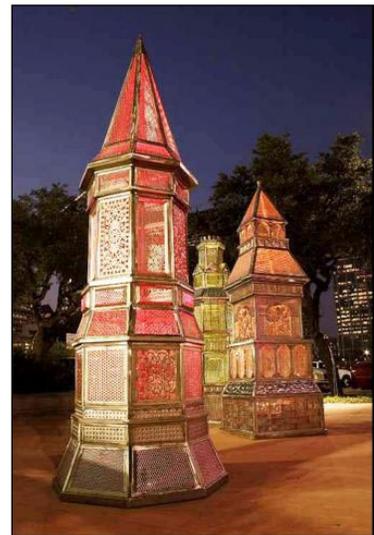
## Plazas

Creation of new public spaces or enhancement of existing public places



## Gateways

Neighborhood gateways



## **Additional Public Art Projects**

- Artist residencies within municipal government departments such as public works, parks and recreation, or planning
- Nurture regional artists to become public artists
- Pilot Project: professional artist working in a community-neighborhood
- Integrate an artist on the design team for the proposed traffic circles

## Next Steps

### Town Board Resolution

The next step in the development of the Plan for Public Art is approval of formal resolution by the Town Board, which affirms the inclusion of public art as fundamental to the beauty and well being of the Town.

**WHEREAS** a Steering Committee was created to develop a Plan for Public Art in Davidson; and

**WHEREAS** there is broad and substantive interest in establishing a program to direct and manage public art projects throughout Davidson that offers opportunities for citizen leaders; and

**WHEREAS** public art can be a community building process that promotes social interaction and appreciation of art; and

**WHEREAS** public art is integral to the Town goals of economic development, creation of a sense of place, and open space; and

**WHEREAS**, public art is inherent to the expectation of a beautiful environment that enhances a sense of place;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of Davidson does hereby affirm a commitment to make public art a priority for the Town through adoption of the 2007 Plan for Public Art as a guide for the implementation of public art planning and projects;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Board asks the Plan for Public Art Steering Committee to recommend seven individuals to serve on the Public Art Task Force; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Board requests that the Plan for Public Art Steering Committee submit a budget request to the Town of Davidson for FY 2007 – 2008 to realize the goals articulated in the Plan for Public Art.

Adopted that 13 day of March 2007.

Randall R. Kincaid, Mayor

# The Davidson Plan for Public Art

## Acknowledgements

**Members of the Davidson community representing government, academia, non-profit organizations, private and business interests, residents, and arts professionals were interviewed during November and December 2006**

The Plan for Public Art has benefited from the generosity of the many people who have shared their perspectives on art in general and public art in particular. During November 2006 and December 2006, members of the Davidson community representing government, academia, non-profit organizations, private and business interests, residents, and arts professionals were interviewed to solicit their opinions and suggestions concerning a potential public art program that would direct and manage public art projects in Davidson. These interviews would not have been possible without the dedication of the Steering Committee and the enthusiasm and commitment of Scott Sherrill.

Roy Alexander: Executive Director, Davidson Lands Conservancy

James Bartl: Architect; Davidson Design Review Board

Lauren Blackburn: Planning Department, Town of Davidson

Jan Blodgett: Archivist, Davidson College

Doug Boone: Developer

Emily Boone: Student, Davidson College

Elizabeth Bradford: Artist

Jim Burbank: Principal of JCB Urban Company

John Chesser; Davidson Planning Board

Lacy Dick: Davidson Garden Club; Davidson Lands Conservancy

Charlotte Epley: Real Estate Broker; former Main Street manager; Resident

Jay Everette: Senior Vice President, Wachovia; Resident; Art Collector

Katy Gray: Program Director, Arts & Science Council (ASC) North

David Holthouser: Davidson Design Review Board; Facilities Director, Davidson College

Martha Jenkins: Davidson Planning Board

Bill Johnson: Executive Director, Ada Jenkins Center

Lynn Keener: Property Owner; Developer

Randy Kincaid: Mayor, Town of Davidson

Kris Krider: Planning Department, Town of Davidson

Bob Lauer: Architect; Davidson Design Review Board

Bill Lawing: Professor, Music Department, Davidson College

Craig Lewis: Planner with The Lawrence Group; Davidson Design Review Board;

Margot Leydic-Boyd: Resident

Robert G. McIntosh: McIntosh Law Firm

Magdalena Maiz-Pena: Spanish Department, Davidson College; ASC North Board

Dave Malushizky: The Lawrence Group; ASC North Board

Ladianne Mandel: Artist; ASC North Board

Lauren Massey: Student, Davidson College

Bill McCoy: Davidson Planning Board; former Director, Urban Institute UNCC

Bruce McMillen: Town Board, Town of Davidson

Kate Merrill: Merrill-Jennings Galleries

Doug Oldenburg: Resident

Alan Michael Parker: English Department, Davidson College

Brian Shaw: Professor of Political Science, Davidson College; Davidson Planning Board

Christy Shi: Davidson Planning Board

C. Shaw Smith Jr: Professor of Art History, Davidson College

Angela Soper: Student, Davidson College

Richard Terry: Director of Business Services, Davidson College

Evan Webster: Town Board, Town of Davidson

Veronica Westendorff: Resident; Landscape Architect

Margo Williams: Town Board, Town of Davidson

John Woods: Town Board, Town of Davidson