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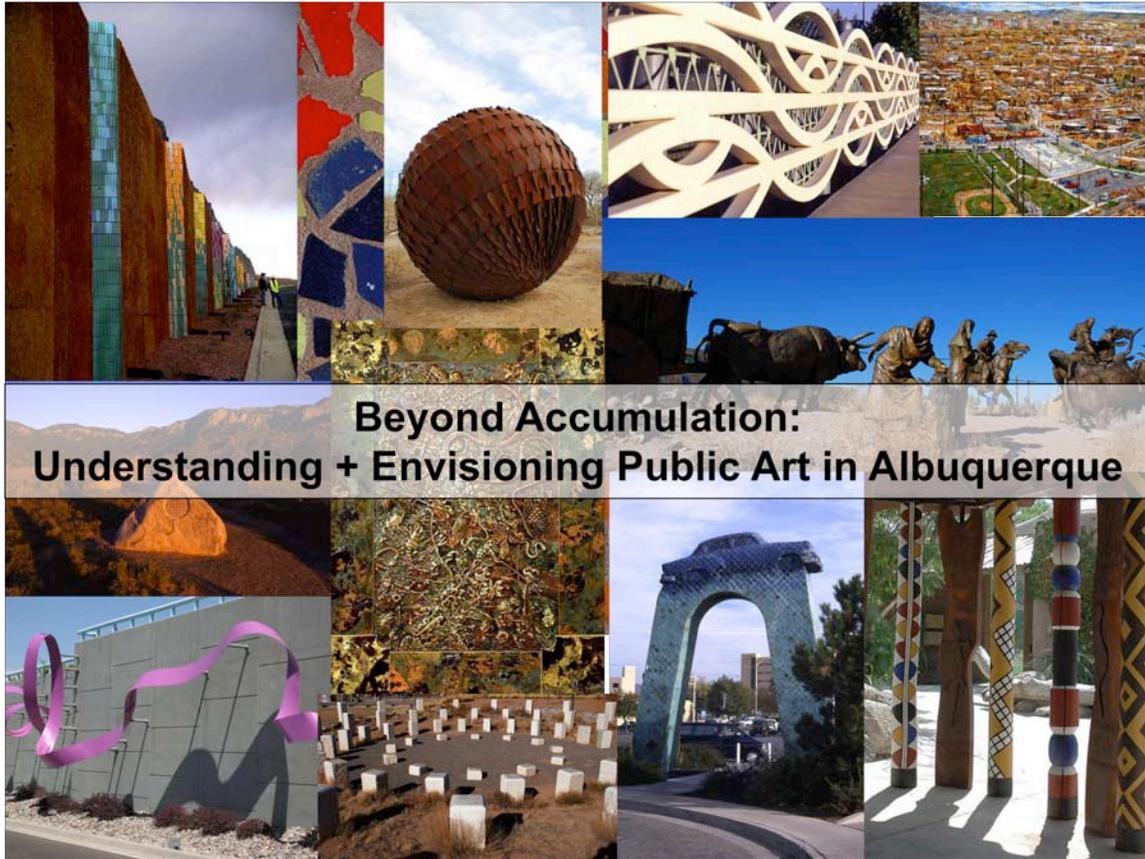


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I. INTRODUCTION

This Report is titled *Beyond Accumulation: Understanding + Envisioning Public Art in Albuquerque* because the impetus behind this research project was to think about how the City of Albuquerque's Public Art Program could move forward—at this age in its lifecycle (now in its third decade)—beyond merely accumulating public artworks but rather towards re-envisioning its role in the city. This research accomplished three key things:

1. The act of conducting the research—interviewing people and talking with various stakeholders—raised awareness of the program;
2. This document (as well as the conversations I have had with staff and the presentation to the Arts Board (February 2011) provides an assessment of the current state of the program, in terms of: knowledge, understanding, perceptions, and larger ideas about public art in Albuquerque;
3. This document provides recommendations for how to improve the program as it moves into (and beyond!) its 30th decade.

This report is the result of a **Local Context Assessment**. I interviewed local stakeholders; that is, those people who are (and could be) involved in making public art happen in Albuquerque. The idea was to not only speak with those who are currently involved and have interests in public art but, more importantly, was a means by which to meet potential actors or players who might not already be involved or who might be crucial people/organizations/department to invite into the process. From the beginning of this conversation we recognized that there are multiple ways someone might participate in the process, for example: informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, coordinating, empowering, supporting, acting, and implementing. However, we did not have a sense of how people perceived these roles and actions. This research allowed me to dig deeper into stakeholder's concerns about, issues with, and ideals of the public art in Albuquerque.

Organization of the Report

This report is composed of five sections. The first is this introduction, which provides some material by which to position the city of Albuquerque within a national conversation about public art programs. The second section provides an overview of the research methods (interviews): those methods employed to gather the data used to develop recommendations for the public art program's future. Section three outlines the major findings of the research. Section four outlines recommendations and includes some final thoughts about this research and the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program. The final section of the report is a set of appendices, which include the following: the list of those who were interviewed, the interview questions, a full listing of responses to the interview questions, and the PowerPoint Presentation I gave to the Arts Board on 9 February 2011. The appendices are extensive (in terms of number of pages) but definitely worth reading, particularly the responses to the interview questions. Section three of this report only outlines major findings; it is well-worth the effort of looking through the individual responses to get a sense of the range of responses as well as the vocabulary of those responses.

Albuquerque and Its Peers

How does Albuquerque compare with its peers, in terms of arts and cultural offerings, and, in particular, public art? Comparisons of city public art programs are common practice these

days, yet I don't think ranking or comparing at-large is the best way to advance the conversation about public art in the United States. Because, what typically results is the comparison of apples to oranges, or, in the vernacular of public art, comparing yuccas and teddy bears. It is not a very productive exercise to compare public art in Albuquerque with public art in New York City. Not only are these two cities vastly different in terms of population size/demographics, but also in terms of the logistics of public art, and much more. Therefore, it is not the best way to elevate the conversation nationally, nor is it a productive means by which we can envision the future of public art in Albuquerque.

We can, though, as a first step, look at the data/information about public art programs in the United States, as a means by which to historically and programmatically understand our place in a national conversation. The following questions can help us to obtain a clearer sense of what is happening around the country (historically, programmatically, logistically, etc.) and then determine which cities we might best learn from:

- How long has the program been in existence?
- How was the program established?
- How is public art funded? e.g. percent-for-art, and how much is allocated?
- What is the size of collection?
- What is the current budget, and how does this compare to past budgets?
- Where is the program located in the city structure (e.g., Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Cultural Services)?
- How many staff are employed (full-time, part-time, consultants, interns)?

Pursuing these questions does tell us a good deal. For a starting point, Philadelphia was the first percent-for-art program in the country (1959). It is known for its murals and iconic pieces of public art works. San Francisco followed, yet it is not known for murals and iconic downtown pieces but rather, it is known for its public art installations, projects and programs in urban neighborhoods that respond to diverse needs and communities. Seattle, another substantial and early program, is best known for its edginess, technological savvy, and its commitment to ecology and environment. Other programs that are worth looking at are Calgary's (Canada) program, which recently developed a watershed-based, neighborhood-focused, place-based, multi-scalar master plan. Denver, our nearest peer city, has a program that relies on big pieces, mainly by internationally known artists; it is, though, struggling to determine its direction and vision. What makes Albuquerque unique amidst all of these programs (not just its peer cities) is the fact that arts and culture here (and in New Mexico) is landscape-based, and it is a unique combination of the local and the regional.

There is a wide variety of public art programs in this country. It is important to gain an understanding of what different programs are comprised of, how they operate, and the larger message of the program in relation to their city. But, what I believe will help us to move this program forward is by having a conversation with other cities about the following:

1. How the program is **enacted**: by its staff, advisory board, selection panels?
2. How do people—the community + visitors—**perceive and receive/experience** the program?

As well, we should be talking about **peer cities**; those cities that are in some way meaningfully comparable. For example: size of city (S, M, L, XL), geographic location of city (East Coast, West Coast, Mid-West, Mid-Atlantic, Rocky Mountain Region, SouthEast,

Pacific NorthWest), location of the public art program within the city structure (e.g., Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Cultural Services, etc.), and type of ordinance (percent allocated to public art, other allowable funding mechanisms, definitions of terms, etc.).

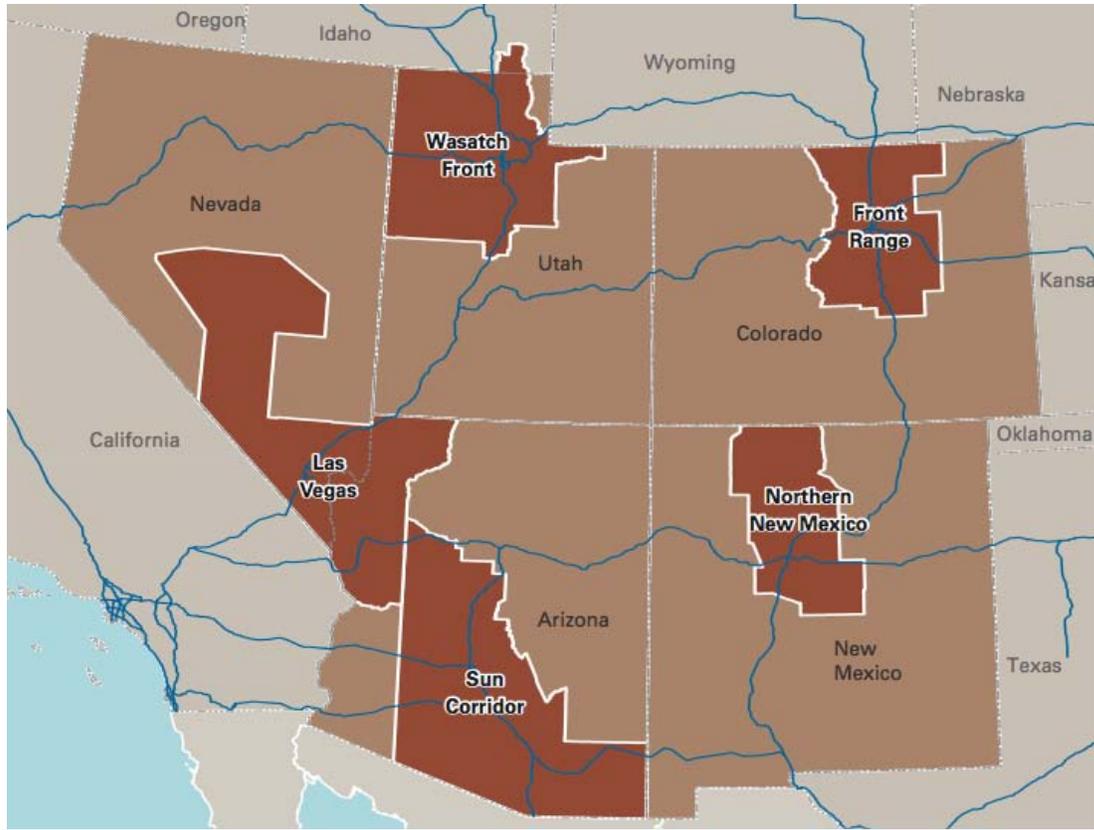
Who, then, are our peer cities? If we focus this conversation in terms of size of cities, we are talking about mid-size cities: Denver, Las Vegas, Dallas-Fort Worth, Minneapolis, El Paso, and Sacramento.

- **Mid-size cities grew the fastest** in the United States in the last decade; as well, the fastest growing cities were largely in the South and West (this proves to be true in both the 2000 and 2010 Census).
- These cities are the sites of growth in the service sector as well as in technology and tourism, much of this due to a largely **college-educated and highly skilled population**.
- **Public-private collaborative investment in downtowns** of mid-size cities has contributed to these cities' prosperity, primarily in the realm of sports stadiums, waterfront development and university expansion.
- In addition, these mid-size cities **have international airports** that are the hubs for major airlines, thus making them connection and distribution centers.
- Finally, these **cities have the amenities, labor pool, and a lower cost of living than their large city counterparts**, which translates, for many economists, into the places where businesses can start up, grow and survive (if not thrive).

Another way to further focus this conversation is at the regional-geographical scale: The Intermountain West. There are five urban agglomerations that are being watched nationally in the Intermountain West: Sun Corridor, Front Range, Wasatch Front, Greater Las Vegas, and Northern New Mexico.

And, why is it important at this juncture to even be talking about peer cities? In order for Albuquerque to continue to grow its program (not just in size of collection or in stature, but in terms of what is appropriate here) it is important to understand what makes this city, and this program, unique. It is from this point of departure that we can look to specific cities for inspiration and from which to learn pointed lessons.

The map below shows this agglomeration of cities/metropolitan as specific areas that the Brookings Institution calls the Intermountain West and The Rocky Mountain Megacities. These *megapolitan* areas share definitive **growth and increasing economic prosperity**, which pose many challenges, but also suggests a new era for these cities, in terms of improving and building upon existing infrastructure, innovation, human capital, and quality places. All of the major cities in this Intermountain West are **peer cities competing for attention**. An emerging trend in these mid-sized American cities is the **pursuit of the "image" that appropriately communicates its urbanity**, that it is: a cosmopolitan city.



Five Megapolitan Areas emerging in the Intermountain West¹.

The key to urban futures, though, is not to think in terms of competition but in terms of **relationships**, which I believe particularly applies in the Intermountain West in the 21st century. The strength in the Intermountain West is that these cities offer very different climates, economically, socially, culturally, and physiographically. They do, of course, share some traits in common, which gather them as a unique region, The American Intermountain West.

Albuquerque is a unique city regionally and nationally, because of its location, history, cultural heritage, and also because it is one of just a handful of urban areas in New Mexico. I hope that this report helps the city (staff and others involved in public art in Albuquerque) better understand and envision the possibilities for the future of public art in this city.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

In this section I discuss how this research was conducted. The reason for spending time describing the research methods is so that anyone who reads this report will understand some of the decisions made when designing this research. As well, this section provides the information by which another researcher might replicate this study, or pursue further questions prompted by this research.

¹ Metropolitan Policy Program. *Mountain Megs. America's Newest Metropolitan Places and a Federal Partnership to Help Them Prosper*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2008

Collecting Data: Interviews

Objective of the interviews:

The interviews will enable me to understand how decision-makers, creators (of public art) and stakeholders understand and envision public art in Albuquerque.

The aim of these interviews: threefold:

1. to understand stakeholder's knowledge, perceptions and experience of, and involvement in public art, public art planning in Albuquerque.
2. to understand how different people involved in public art in Albuquerque envision the future of public art(s) in the city, and
3. to understand the types and extent of communication and interactions amongst decision-makers, creators, and stakeholders with regard to public art and public art planning in Albuquerque.

In order to accomplish the above objective and aims, I developed interview questions (for semi-structured interviews) that would help me to delve into some of the perceptions, misconceptions, knowledges, experience, questions, and possible future scenarios for public art in Albuquerque. I conducted the interviews during the fall of 2009-winter of 2010.

When I began my fieldwork, Sherri Brueggemann was the Manager of the City of Albuquerque's Public Art Program, located under the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) within the Department of Municipal Development (DMD). The program had been under the auspices of DMD since its inception (by Gordon Church). The program has since moved, as of Summer 2010; Sherri is now the Manager of the newly formulated Public Art Urban Enhancement Program located within the Cultural Services Department.

All of the interviewees were first contacted by email or telephone to explain the study and request and schedule an interview. The interviews lasted approximately one hour, and took place in person (in the place of employment of the interviewee or in a convenient location for the interviewee), by phone, or via Skype. The questionnaire used for the interviews included a mix of open-ended and closed questions (See Appendix B: Interview Questions).

I did not guarantee anonymity, though several people did ask to speak "off the record." I could not guarantee anonymity because I wanted to as fully as possible explore the ways different actors defined terms, perceived the role of public art, and interacted with one another. It was difficult to guarantee anonymity because of the size of the community involved in public art in Albuquerque. That is, it is most likely that it will be readily apparent to people who the individual interviewees are. I have, though, made every attempt to maintain any confidentiality requested.

The findings (see section III) are the result of the copious notes I took during the interviews.

Participants in the Study: Selection of Participants

- 1) city officials and staff
- 2) civic and business stakeholders
- 3) creative professionals

Public art in Albuquerque is the result of the actions of a wide-range of people, in both the public realm (e.g., elected officials, city staff) and the private realm (e.g., business people, individual artists). I selected people to interview based on the various relationships people had with one another. Indeed, the selection of participants was not random: my initial list was the result of a brainstorming session between Sherri and myself. We wanted to compose a list that would allow me to have a conversation with a wide variety of people involved, directly or indirectly, with public art in Albuquerque. The list was also composed in terms of initiating a longer-term conversation about public art; that is, Who did we want to be involved in “the conversation”? Some people were obvious choices, and others were chosen based on suggestions by other staff, advisors, and people I interviewed early in the process.

In order to obtain a relatively broad range of views and perspectives, I created a sample size of 50-60 individuals, representing a variety of perspectives/positions. I identified three categories of people to interview: 1) city officials and staff, 2) civic stakeholders and 3) creative professionals. I interviewed 47 people during the course of this research. Forty-six of the interviews were individuals only. I did, though, interview four people, members of the Arts Board, in one interview in order to have a focus group-type situation and because of difficulty scheduling times to meet. I was not able to interview everyone on the original list of 50-60 people due to difficulties in scheduling, people being out of town, and, in only a few cases, people unwilling to be interviewed. For a full listing of the people who participated in this research, please see Appendix A.

The interviews were organized into three tiers. The first tier included those people in key/top decision-making positions; that is, the public art program staff, the director of CIP, and the director of DMD. Second tier interviewees were people I was referred to by the first tier people. The third tier individuals were those people I had difficulty contacting (for reason of travel, interest, and making contacts through second tier interviewees).

I did not interview “the public.” Rather, these interviews were with those people involved in decision-making about and production of public art in Albuquerque: Individuals, who are involved in (directly or indirectly) decision-making and creation of public art, were invited to participate. As well, stakeholders—civic stakeholders and business people (e.g. NGO’s, non profits, arts organizations, as well as developers)—were asked to participate.

The Interview Questions

I asked interview participants a total of 20 questions. These questions were divided into 4 sections in order to focus the conversation on one particular set of questions at a time.

- 1) demographics: information about the interviewee
- 2) definitions and valuations of public art
- 3) the public art program: knowledge and interactions
- 4) public art and urban planning in Albuquerque.

The first set of questions was focused on obtaining information about the interviewee. This demographic data allowed me to gain a better sense of *who* I was interviewing (their role and responsibilities within the larger network of people working on public art in Albuquerque) and it helped me to see some patterns in the larger group of interviewees.

- 1) Gender
- 2) Professional Position / Title
- 3) What is the scope of your responsibilities in this position?
- 4) How many years have you been in this position?
- 5) Age: 22-34 35-44 45-59 60+
- 6) Educational background?
- 7) Area of study

I interviewed 24 men and 23 women. I/we did not develop the list of potential interviewees based on gender but rather on roles in decision-making about public art. It is just a rather “happy accident” that the total was a balance between men and women.

In terms of professional positions/titles and scope of responsibilities, the listing of responsibilities below shows that the people interviewed were, indeed, people involved in the decision-making and action-oriented positions. In addition, this list of roles and responsibilities suggests some of the myriad ways people are involved in making public art happen in Albuquerque. It is not just a fact of the job description but, in fact, what it is that people “do” on a daily and weekly basis. As well, from this list we can learn about potential ways to engage people in the work of public art. This list suggests many different activities that may not initially, or explicitly, be considered ways by which people participate in and contribute to the production of public art in Albuquerque.

Position Responsibilities: implementing, managing, inspecting, reporting, marketing, planning, directing, grant writing, fund raising, administration, tracking, project management, support, advisory, overseeing, project coordinator, liaison, education, outreach, programming, design, planning, curating, enabling (others to do their jobs), telling stories, facilitate, construction administration, strategic planning, design and construction management, artist

The majority of people interviewed had been in their job for 1 – 5 years. Four people had been in their position for less than 1 year. As such, more than half were relatively new to their positions, which suggests that they were an important part of infusing fresh views and ideas into the organizations they worked for or in the work they were involved in on an individual basis. Eight people had been at their jobs for 6-10 years. And 3 people had been in their particular positions for 11-15 years. Significantly, 7 people had been at work in the

role they listed as their job title for 30 or more years. Those we had been in their jobs for 11 plus years (10 people) shows how these people have a great deal of experience in public art, and much of it in New Mexico or Albuquerque.

The participants in this research were an educated population, which is consistent with how Albuquerque is nationally ranked and how it is commonly characterized in the popular press. 17 people had attended a four-year college and received a bachelor's degree. 22 people had attended graduated school and received a master's degree. And, 2 people were Ph.D.'s. The listing of areas of study show that this is a multi-disciplinary population. Many of these individuals had a background in the arts, which is consistent with the areas of study for people involved in decision-making about public art in cities across the country.

Areas of Study: architecture, landscape architecture, community and regional planning Anthropology, political science, psychology, American studies, Latin American studies, romance languages, folklore, Women's studies, history, public administration, interdisciplinary studies, environmental science, museum studies, art education, art therapy, studio arts and fine arts: ceramics, sculpture, print-making, photography; art history; business, economics, accounting, CPA; Engineering, civil engineering, structural physics, Newtonian physics

Combined with age² and education, we have a lot of experience and talent here; as well, we have a significant number of people in decision-making roles who are bringing fresh ideas and energy to this city's arts and culture scene.

III. INTERVIEW FINDINGS

"...it's not my job to like it, but it is my job to support it."

City of Albuquerque Staff Member

What is revealed here, in these findings, range from basic ("we thought this was the case but had no evidence") to profound ("we had no idea that people had such perceptions of how public art is created in Albuquerque") revelations that can inform the staff about potential improvements/changes to the program. Much of the impetus behind this research was to help the Public Art Program staff learn about what their colleagues know and don't know about the program, as well as what these people think of the Public Art Program as it exists, and how might be/work/operate in the future. As such, I am confident that these revelations will help the Public Art Program staff more effectively and creatively grow the program into the 21st century. It must be said that for each question there are a majority of responses that confirm each other, but the outlier responses are equally important. I highly recommend that staff read through Appendix C (The Full Listing of Responses to Interview Questions) to better understand the range of responses to individual questions. The outlier responses are often quite provocative statements (or questions) that put the majority of responses into a more realistic context.

² Age of interviewees: 22-34: 4; 35-44: 15; 45-59: 18; 60+: 10

In addition, it is very important to think about *who is answering* each of the interview questions. I found that disciplinary/occupational biases were strong; that is, the scope of someone's work (their job responsibilities) greatly informed their responses. This may seem an obvious point but, more importantly, it is clearly evidenced in the interview responses. The responses by individuals within each of the categories of respondents—city officials and staff; civic and business stakeholders; and creative professionals—very often hewed to a common consensus. This is meaningful because it shows how important it is to know the types/categories (i.e., their job titles and responsibilities, as well as their educational and occupational background) of people the Public Art Program staff are working with so that staff can respond in ways that best meet these constituent needs. Yes, there will be anomalies but for the most part one can gain a fairly good sense of what people know and how they operate, with regard to public art, based on their work role and background.

This section of the report is organized into three parts, according to the interview question format. Each section provides a brief overview of the findings for that particular set of interview questions. The first section covers *Definitions + Valuation*. In this set of questions I was looking for how various people defined public art, and then, more specifically, the benefits of, rationale for, and potential projects for the city of Albuquerque. In the second section I queried people about their *knowledge of the public art program and the interactions* they were involved in regarding the production of public art in Albuquerque. Lastly, I discuss the findings of the set of questions concerning *the role of urban public arts and public art planning in the planning and design of downtowns*. It is within this last set of questions that I ask interview participants about the need for/logic of a public art master plan for the city.

1. Definitions + Valuation

Interview Questions:

- In your everyday work world, how do you define public art?
- Who is the audience for public art in Albuquerque?
- Who benefits from public art?
- What do you consider to be a successful example of public art in Albuquerque?
- What do you consider to be an unsuccessful example of public art in Albuquerque?
- What does public art contribute to/"do" for Albuquerque as: a city, a community, a place to visit, a place to live?
- What do you think is the strongest rationale for (the) public art (program) in Albuquerque?
- What kind of public art project would you like to see happen in Albuquerque?

Question 1. The first question elicited a wide range of responses. Many people had not (ever) formulated or articulated a **definition of public art**. Yet, from these many definitions there appears to be 3 ways that people define public art: philosophically, prosaically, and administratively.

- A philosophical approach is one that focuses on the possibilities of how art might be public. Philosophical definitions struggle with the relationship between art and public, and question the quality of art by consensus.

- Prosaic definitions are reliant upon a general sense of what art is and how it operates in public space. These definitions are generated by the ordinary circumstances of our lives.
- Finally, ordinances for percent-for-art programs provide a means by which to define public art in an administrative, and thus (somewhat) objective manner.

There are, of course, some overlapping of these approaches to defining public art. Yet for the most part one finds that creative professionals are working with definitions that are philosophical and prosaic. The administrative definition is something they don't feel constricts them (though a couple artists felt that it had the potential of "dumbing-down" the work) but is something they mildly take into account as they refine the design of the piece towards installation.

Civic and business stakeholders are for the most part thinking about the prosaic and administrative issues and attributes of public art. Many of these people are concerned about the why and the how of public art. Responses often revolved around accessibility and peripherally relied on the formal or technical aspects of public art (the ordinance). I found that people, in all categories, did not feel restricted by the ordinance but rather, for the civic and business stakeholders and city officials and staff the ordinance was a benchmark, a framework within which to work and possibly to push against (quietly and with intent).

The city staff I interviewed can be divided into technical staff (those working in the realms of public works, water and sewer, infrastructure, etc.) and, for want of a better phrase, staff that are involved in work/projects that involve arts, culture, and creativity in some way or another. Interestingly, this division amongst the staff was evidenced in all responses to questions. This is not about good/bad or appropriate/inappropriate but rather about the skills set and disciplinary attitude of city staff and officials. There were, necessarily, those staff working in technical arenas that were well-educated in and knowledgeable about the arts, and had great interest in arts and culture. It is these staff that provide some of the outlier responses that prompted me to think about how it is staff can be engaged in public art in a myriad of ways.

Question 2. When I asked people who was the **audience for public art** in Albuquerque, there was a resounding response that it was for *everyone / every body*. Some people further stated, and this cuts across all categories of respondents, that *everyone* includes residents and visitors. There were a significant number of people who said that residents come first, because these are the people (the audience) that experiences public art on a daily basis, in their own city. But, equally, many people talked about the importance of tourist/visitor perceptions of the city. This population, to many respondents, are a critical part of the audience because we do rely a great deal on tourism in this city and in New Mexico. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and in some way respond to (and think about) how visitors encounter public art in Albuquerque.

Question 3. The responses to—**Who benefits from public art?**—also focused on *everyone / every body*. Again, for this question, people talked about the fact that residents and visitors both benefited. And, people benefited in different ways, according to how it is they experienced public art. For some people, public art is something that people can happen

upon, and these are (often) “happy accidents” that brighten their days. For others, they seek out public art for the piece itself (a beloved piece) or they seek out places that are exciting and beautiful places (because public art enhances/beautifies them). A few people mentioned that the benefits can be educational or the benefits are made possible because the pieces are provocative. A handful of people talked about the many people who benefit from public art, not just as experience /encounter but in terms of making a living. Such beneficiaries are the artists themselves, the fabricators, and the people who construct and install, amongst other who are involved in the literal/physical production of public art. Some of these benefits are monetary while others are about building a reputation or improving skills. A final point that summarizes how public art benefits people: It is about opportunities! Public art provides opportunities for people to meet each other, it also offers opportunities for civic engagement, and it provides educational opportunities (for people to learn about this landscape, this city, and even themselves). And, for artists, public art offers an opportunity for artists to work with communities, develop their body of work, and potentially collaborate with other artists and fabricators to realize projects they had never before imagined.

Questions 4 + 5. With regard to **successful and/versus unsuccessful public art**, people were of many minds. One of the initial concerns prompted by this question was the use of the terms *successful* and *unsuccessful*. What makes public art successful for some people meant that they liked it, or it was a favorite. For others, it meant that it “worked”: it was viable and durable. And yet others talked about how people responded to it: were they emotionally or intellectually engaged? A few of the consistently mentioned successful pieces were “The Yucca on I-40,” “Chevy on a Stick,” and “the ribbon at the airport.” A majority of people said that a piece/installation does not have to be liked to be successful but rather that it has to have an impact. Most people mentioned that liking a piece is a very subjective matter and it is not possible to satisfy everyone. When I further queried people about *how they knew* a piece was successful I received the following responses:

- when I see people taking a picture of a piece of public art with friends or family;
- when I hear people telling stories about an installation;
- when it is being used in the educational system (for example, in class assignments and student work).

For many people, successful public art, it appears, is about engaging people and instilling a sense of pride.

In terms of being successful, the general outcome of the responses were the following (not in any particular order):

- **Context Sensitive:** public art is site specific; that is, it is physically well-suited to the location in terms of scale, materials, and positioning (such that it can be viewed and enjoyed/experienced). As well, it tells you about where it is located, for example: it celebrates your history/culture and reminds you where you are and the history of that place and your city.
- **Enhances + Engages Area/Neighborhood:** To be successful public art needs to have had community involvement in the process, which more often than not results in it being embraced by the community. It becomes a part of community identity and helps a community think about how it wants to be defined. These kinds of

pieces are often used as community landmarks or way-finding devices, and even become a part of the sense of place/place-making of significant community sites. A common sentiment is that people want the artist to spend time with the community, agency, maintenance crew such that they gain a more complete understanding of the people and the place.

- **Craftsmanship, Quality of Construction:** A handful of people brought up this issue with regard to durability and the costs of maintenance. Such concerns were raised by all three categories of respondents. City staff was concerned with costs (\$, time, labor) of poorly constructed pieces. Artists were concerned with craftsmanship and an enduring, positive image. Other responses were based on concerns about the image of the Public Art Program (too many failed pieces give a program a poor reputation) and the image of the neighborhood (disintegrating or neglected pieces do not present a positive image of a neighborhood, rather it suggest a tenor or attitude, regardless of the residents “true” values). Additionally, a couple people mentioned that the combination of a piece being well-constructed and strong conceptually made for a particularly robust piece of public art (e.g. Yucca on I-40).
- **Stimulates Discussion + Communication:** According to a significant number of respondents, public art that inspires people to think, creates a sense of place, and prompts them to go see it (again and again) are the pieces that become memorable and enduring parts of the fabric of the city. If it stops someone and makes them think; If it gets people talking (even if it spurs controversy); If it changes awareness or reveals something to someone—all of these are considered markers of successful public art. Successful public art makes an impression (positive or negative). When a piece keeps someone interested to the point that they will come back to it (time and again), then it just might become destination public art. Some people mentioned the desire to have a dialogue with the artist, but said that many times there isn’t enough information at the piece/in place such that they might learn more about it and the artist.
- **Access: visual and physical, as well as emotional and/or intellectual:** The majority of respondents mentioned some aspect of accessibility as crucial to a piece being successful. Access, according to many respondents, was first and foremost visual and then physical. People need to be able to see it and then encounter it. Also, public art must be in spaces where they feel free to enter, no matter race, gender, class, ethnicity. And, it must be free (\$). As well, public art must appeal to a wide range of people, despite socioeconomic status or educational level.

Ideally, public art has educational components. For quite a few people an example of this is “Chevy on a Stick”/”Cruising San Mateo.” They believe it is successful because of the history of the piece and the story it tells about Albuquerque.

Finally, for a few people the bottom line for success is that a project gets completed. It doesn’t matter if there is controversy or if it is poorly constructed, it is a matter that the process (a public process) was enacted and the piece was realized. According to these

people you have to follow the process, as noted by the ordinance: the completion of the project is a profound physical manifestation of that public process.

The problem for many artists, as well as civic stakeholders, is that public art ends up being “consensus art;” that is, it ends up, through the public process, being mere decoration or prettying up. This was a concern mainly raised by artists. They feared that the technical or administrative aspects of public art would outweigh the philosophical and prosaic. But then again, peoples’ responses to public art are very subjective. And, as several city staff noted: There is a place for everything and, over time, people’s tastes change.

Unsuccessful public art is partly just the *flip-side* of what is successful. But, there are a few points worth mentioning. Not only is site selection key but, more importantly it is about whether the artist responds “appropriately” to the site, in terms of history, materials, scale, positioning. This also ties into issues of construction and maintenance. Does the artist understand the site conditions at both the city and site scale (e.g., sun, wind, weather)? Is the piece sited such that people can experience it (e.g., see, touch, interact) at the scale it is intended (e.g., pedestrian versus vehicular)? Another way that a piece can be unsuccessful is if, according to one respondent, it is “shoved down peoples’ throats.” That is, the selection and development of the pieces is politically driven. Such pieces never become a part of the community’s psyche and there are usually lots of hurt feelings. Most notably, though, is the point that public art is not (and cannot be) successful if it does not follow the public process, as outlined by the ordinance. Public art is public because of public involvement in the process of constructing the RFQ/RFP, selecting the artist, and refining the work with the artist. It is also public because it is in the public realm, for all to know about and experience at all stages of the process.

Question 6. What does public art contribute to/”do” for Albuquerque? The overall response to this question is that public art makes Albuquerque a more appealing place to live, work, and play. Several people noted that Albuquerque is a city that is in growing up, maturing, becoming more sophisticated. There is history here, of multiple cultures. And, we have some big issues, such as concerns about urbanization in an arid environment. How might we use public art to talk about water issues, and do this in a provocative and beautiful manner? A few people said that public art is just “icing on the cake,” that it is something a little extra, but something that differentiates us from our peer cities. I’ve organized the responses to this question into 3 categories of responses: public art contributes to quality of life, city image, and economics. What appears to be critical at this point in the program’s life is that there is a need to educate people about public art: what it is, what it contributes to this community/city, the benefits of public art, and the economic value of public art. Public art can be a draw for people to come to a city, as it suggests a tone or an attitude about arts and culture.

- **Quality of Life:** Public art contributes to the quality of life in Albuquerque in both tangible and intangible ways. A term that I have not heard many people mention in other cities is the notion of “pride of place.” Public art makes people proud of this city, and it generates, at multiple scales, a sense of community. As mentioned previously, in the definitions and valuation of public art, public art elevates individual’s quality of life by providing them with opportunities to look outside themselves and connect to a larger world. For many, this is a way that they can

encounter art, and for some this daily encounter is the only encounter they may have with art. Which necessitates our thinking about the multiple populations who can be impacted by public art, for example: young children, teenagers, families, and the elderly. Not only does public art have the potential to give character and texture to public spaces but it also makes them memorable, and thus makes people feel a sense of ownership of city spaces.

- **City Image:** Several people mentioned how, "...when you visit a city it is nice to see art (well maintained) where ever you are; it makes you want to be there and stay a bit longer." Public art is increasingly a part of city image campaigns, a means by which to "sell" the city to individuals, families, and businesses who are thinking about locating or relocating. Significant pieces can put a city "on the map." Peer cities have gained notoriety for large pieces by internationally-known artists: for example, in Denver "The Blue Bear" (officially named "I See What You Mean") and the "Mustang" at DIA were covered in popular press and well as by international news. "The Blue Bear" is a landmark in downtown, and is now used by Visit Denver to market the city. You can buy a 4" or 8" tall replica! The controversy about the "Mustang" made people aware of public art in Denver, and suggested the city was not afraid of risks. Many participants in this survey said that public art shows people (citizens and visitors) that the city believes in and is committed to art (even when times are hard). Robust pieces cannot only beautify the city but can tell a story (e.g., the Harry Kinney mayoral statue on Civic Plaza) that will be told to multiple generations. For many people in Albuquerque, much of our public art is fun, exhibits our sense of humor (that we don't take ourselves too seriously). So, not only does public art tell people things about this place, it also makes people proud to be citizens. People and businesses look at a multitude of factors when considering where to move: educational system, job market, sports and outdoor activities, and, of course, arts and culture. Public art is one of those everyday (in the sense that this work is in the public realm) physical manifestations of support for artists and cultural entities. Ultimately, public art can make a city an attractive place to be, and it can both encourage and foster forward-thinking about the city's design and planning future.
- **Economics:** In the last 5 years research has shown that arts and culture are an important segment of the urban economy. Public art, it seems, is not just about art in public spaces but also is about the money that public art "puts into economy." Respondents discuss how it is that public art brings attention to the arts in Albuquerque (and that public art might just become another destination for visitors, similar to museums and galleries). Drawing people downtown, because it is a vibrant and attractive place to be, brings money downtown and stimulates a broad-based creative economy. But, as several respondents noted, those people making decisions about the city's present and future need to be more aware of what the arts (and public art in particular) can do for the economy, especially in these difficult financial times. Such investments beget businesses moving downtown and to other attractive sites in the city, as well as resident monies, and tourist dollars. But the key, according to both stakeholders and artists, is not to think about public art as ornament but

essential to the economic workings of the city: providing opportunities for artists to make a living, as well as all others involved in the production of public art.

Public art contributes a great deal to the city, including multi-scalar contributions that are often subtle, unnoticed and even disregarded. The process (of the production) of public art, so several respondents stated, is just as important as the product. This process engages people in ownership of sites, it helps people to recognize the roles they might play in the present and future of this city, and... it can be transformative for city spaces (e.g., 4th Street Mall). “Art,” as one stakeholder noted, “is one of the landmarks of a healthy community.”

Question 7. What do you think is the **strongest rationale for having a public art program** in Albuquerque? Or, more pointedly, what argument would you make to fight for the program’s existence? The responses to this question reiterate what was stated above but in terms of why it is important to have (and keep) a public art program in Albuquerque. The rationales for having a public art program here were equally distributed amongst quality of life, city image (selling the city and making people proud), as well as economic justifications. A few comments are worth noting. Many mid-size U.S. cities have begun to focus on the value of having an artful city because it inspires people to take better care of *our city* and invest in planning for *its* future. So, not only is it an economically viable investment but it is also about investing in social and human capital. Unique, though, to each city, is its cultural heritage. And this is something New Mexicans are very proud of. Stakeholders and artists alike noted that it is *our* responsibility to keep the arts and culture of this place alive and growing. Another point to bolster this argument is to make people aware that the funding source is a small percentage of CIP that has been approved and voted on by the public. This program has been in existence for 30 years and is still going strong. There is no reason to discontinue a program that has had continued support and continues to make Albuquerque a better place to live. Finally, because of the increased attention (nationwide) to the creative class, public art makes a place attractive to the creative class. These people are (according to Richard Florida) well-educated, well-travelled, well-paid, tolerant, and technologically-savvy. They are a population mid-size cities are intent on attracting. It behooves this city to make as many efforts as possible to draw them here.

This research suggests that we may need to make different arguments to different people, organizations, and departments, but ultimately public art can do multiple things for the city and for its citizens. It is investment worth making to court businesses, to instill pride in citizens, and to convince people that Albuquerque is a place to visit for many reasons.

Question 8. What **kind of public art project** would you like to see happen in Albuquerque? The responses to this question ran along a continuum from lots of small, inexpensive pieces in neighborhoods to a monumental piece in a significant city space. People mentioned various genres of art: permanent, temporary, community art, performance-based, monumental, memorial, digital, sound, light, land art. It seems important that the public art staff educate “the public” and its Arts Board about this vast range—in order to help people become acquainted with the possibilities. Also, it is not just genres that people need to be educated about but also important are in-depth discussions about size and scale, location and position, “pricing” and costs of works (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$, \$\$\$\$), medium, artists, etc. City staff noted that they did not know much about public art, and it is not only the city process they are perplexed about but what they have no idea what is “out there”/possible. Artists stated

concerns about selection committees that were conservative due to being uneducated/uninformed. Trying to appeal to a selection panel that is unaware of genres, materials, costs, etc. is very frustrating for artists.

Temporary projects were cited as appropriate and beneficial because: 1) they can have a strong educational component (providing an opportunity to introduce an issue to the community); 2) they can be contemporary/risky but people know they won't have to live with forever!; 3) they have lower maintenance costs (if any, based on the length of time they will be in existence); 4) they give artists an opportunity to experiment; 5) they provide emerging artists with a chance at a project without the worry of permanence; and 6) they can be small enough amounts of money that failure won't be such a big issue (e.g. NM Arts' Time Projects). Additionally, as one staff person remarked, (I am paraphrasing here): Art means something when it is here one day and gone the next. Event-based public art is art that is here for a short time and goes away, but it lasts in someone's memory forever.

A monumental piece. Quite a few people, across all categories claimed that Albuquerque needs a "Millennium Park." Instead of pieces everywhere, we need a concentration of large pieces (a sculpture park) in a location that is highly visible (e.g. The Walker Sculpture Garden in Minneapolis). Or, a "Central Park for Albuquerque", a public art gallery that showcases works from the indoor and outdoor collection (a rotating exhibit). Such a park could also house the public art program such that it is out in the public realm, offices people could visit, unlike where it currently exists in City Hall. Another suggestion was for "A Bean." For many people too many small amounts of money were going out and did not accumulate into something significant. As such, Albuquerque needs art that has an impact. The issue, though, is where would such a piece or park or garden would be located? Even though many people thought that we need a large-scale piece (by an internationally-known artist), they also had no idea where it would be placed. A significant point here is the definition of monumental. People were not clearly defining the multiple characteristics of a monumental piece. Some people meant a "big" piece, an "expensive piece," a piece created by an internationally-known artist, or monumental in terms of site. In order to have intelligent, well-informed conversations about the type of public art Albuquerque needs, the staff and Arts Board need to define (genre) terms. I believe this will help move the conversation forward and allow for others to participate in meaningful ways.

Lots of small pieces. As one person said: "anything; everywhere." The people who wanted more small pieces distributed amongst the city's neighborhoods were concerned about the lack of pieces in certain places. This raises the issue of education. The community needs to know how public art is funded. There are multiple ways to fund public art in this city, but the majority comes from CIP percent-for-art. This needs to be made clear to people so that they might participate in other ways of planning for, creating and funding public art. Another way, several city staff mentioned as ways to distribute public art, is through infrastructure. "The Big I" is an example for many people of how landscape and landscape architecture are elevated to art through the integration of public art. A few people advocated for putting artists to work through lots of small projects of ~\$20,000 each. In this economy it would help the arts community, and such pieces could brighten and enlighten many communities.

Integrated into public buildings. Only a couple people mentioned this idea but it seems worth mentioning because of the number of people who were adamant about artists being integral parts of design teams (from the very conception of the project) for new buildings and facilities. Such works would not necessarily be freestanding objects. Rather, they would be part and parcel of the construction (columns, floors, ceilings, walls, etc.)

In summary, interviewees talked about projects that would contribute to the quality of life, city image, and economic vitality of Albuquerque. Whether they were talking about public art to enliven public space, big public art that “made a place,” or projects that bridged concerns (environmental, social, cultural, political), ultimately most people were making clear that the issue is location not necessarily type. Where should public art occur seems to be the question on most peoples’ minds. But also, the need to embrace new approaches, media, and mediums seems critical to the future of public art. One such suggestion (though not new in some cities but would be new to Albuquerque) is to have a public artist in residence, in one of the city departments or agencies. This sort of position has been in existence in many cities (e.g. New York, Seattle, Austin) and has proven successful in spreading the word about public art and educating people about the potential roles and responsibilities of public art.

2. The CABQ Public Art Program: Knowledge of + Interactions

Interview Questions:

- What is your role in either the creation of or planning for public art in Albuquerque?
- What do you know about the City of Albuquerque’s Public Art Program?
- Strengths + Weaknesses of the public art program?
- What role might public art play in your agency?
- What obstacles or challenges do you see in integrating public art into your organization/department work?
- Where does the public art program ‘belong’ within the city structure?

Question 1. What is **your role in either the creation of or planning for public art** in Albuquerque? Interviewees responded to this question in a variety of ways, ranging from not involved to involved on a daily basis. Artists’ responses were not only that their role was to create art but also to advocate for public art and to support local artists. Significantly, such advocacy and support was mentioned only by those people directly involved in making public art happen in Albuquerque. Many staff and stakeholders mentioned that they supported the arts. This, too, is important. But, they were not advocating for nor directly involving themselves in public art in Albuquerque. There are, though, many ways that people can be involved in public art, from the indirect (supporting) to the direct (e.g., energetic advocacy, working with PA staff on projects, creating pieces, and installation). What was surprising to me was how this question genuinely prompted people to think about what their role *might* be. Quite a few staff said that they wanted to know more about the program and be more involved in making public art happen. Such people just needed to be shown the opportunity and encouraged/supported in imagining a role and enacting it. This suggests that people are interested in participating but many people just don’t have a sense of how they might contribute. The onus, according to city staff in several departments, was

on the Public Art staff to approach them. They were willing and able but needed to know more and be guided through the process.

Question 2. What do you know about the City of Albuquerque's Public Art Program?

More than half of the people interviewed fell on the low side of knowledge about the Public Art Program. A significant number ranked themselves as having knowledge in the 2-3 range (0 being no knowledge). These people knew of the program but did not know much more. Those who ranked themselves from 4-6 knew of the program, and knew certain components of the program (e.g., they knew a staff member, had a favorite piece, knew there was an Arts Board). Ranking oneself in the 7-8 range meant that someone had had some interaction with the process. But, they did not know details about the program (e.g. how it was funded, how pieces were selected). There were a substantial number of people who ranked themselves in the 8-10 range. These people were, though, directly involved in making public art happen in Albuquerque. Some of these people ranked themselves an 8 because they had been involved at one point but were no longer as involved. Those who ranked themselves a 10 were public art staff or former staff. What is important about *how people know* about the program is that typically they had to have been involved in the process or knew someone who was a participating artist or a staff member. The majority of people felt that the public either did not know the public art program existed or knew very little, particularly about how it was funded and how pieces were selected. This appears to be very problematic, because there is a great deal of room for misinformation and misconceptions. Even some people who ranked themselves between a 7 and an 8 still did not understand the funding mechanisms.

Question 3. What are the Strengths + Weaknesses of the public art program?

Overwhelmingly people said that the strength of the program was the leadership and the support staff. Sherri was noted, many times, as being critical to the current successes of the program. Why?: People trust her because they believe she is knowledgeable, experienced, proactive, honest, genuine, open-minded, a good listener, has a good sense of humor and is someone who reaches out to work *with* people. The staff, too, are held in high esteem by their colleagues and by others in this community. They are all perceived to be a working team composed of intelligent, creative, innovative, approachable, open, collaborative individuals. In addition, people felt other strengths included the diversity of the collection, the adherence to a public process, and the fact that the program has been around for 30 years. Another reason for its success, stated by people who know the history of the program, is the role and vision of the founder, Gordon Church. These people felt that without his leadership (and his mentoring of Sherri) the program could not have survived to this day.

As far as summarizing weaknesses, the comments can be sorted into three arenas: promotion, education and outreach. Many staff and stakeholders said that the program does not advertise itself well enough, nor celebrate its activities. All categories agreed that not enough people know about the program. Promotion was mentioned with regard to promoting collaboration within city departments, as well as educating staff involved in projects. Promotion was also about celebrating installations (e.g., dedications), artists, and the collection. Education was felt to be necessary for everyone in the community: adults, teenagers, children, city staff, business leaders, elected officials, etc. As well, (public) arts education is sorely needed in K-12. People felt that APS is a good place to start, in order to

reach as many people as possible. Outreach involves providing information and access to people. Outreach can be to artists: educating them about the process and inviting them to be a part of the program. It also includes developing, as one person stated, a sexier, navigable website; as well as other means by which people can gain access to information about public art in Albuquerque.

One final “weakness,” stated mostly by city staff who were involved departmentally with public art, was the issue of timeliness and integration. There were concerns about: 1) public art being brought into the process far too late and disrupting the design schedule; 2) public art installation delaying construction schedules; and 3) public art monies taking time and funds away from other more critical aspects of the project. Staff believed that if public art were more integrated (into the larger scheme of a project) that there would not be the disruption, delays, frustration, and money concerns.

Question 4. What role might public art play in your agency/work? This question, too, prompted people to think about the role they might play in the production of public art. Many city staff said that they are involved when projects happen in their department. They do not seek out a role, it just happens by virtue of CIP or UETF. Some of these staff said that they now realized that they needed to make more contact with and forge a better relationship with the public art staff so that they could play a more integrated role. These relationships, several staff suggested, start at a personal level; that is, staff getting to know each other before of a public project comes down the pipeline. As people get to know each other interdepartmentally they find ways to think across disciplinary boundaries and potentially collaborate on projects (e.g. How can environmental department projects be a part of public art projects?). Relationships, partnerships, collaborations were the key words in the conversation when people spoke about potential roles they might play in or that public art might play in their work. Not mentioned as often as the above internal (to the city) partnerships, were public-private ventures. More and more city public art programs are in discussions with developers, non-profits, and other organizations about expanding the opportunities for making public art happen in the city.

Question 5. The **obstacles or challenges** people saw in integrating public art into their work focused mainly on staff, time, money, and rules/regulations. A few people noted how the city’s public art ordinance was an obstacle to expanding the types of public art that might occur in the city (e.g. temporary art, in particular). Funding was raised as a challenge to creating public art in certain circumstances. And, of course, limited staff and time. A few of the artists said that they were often dissuaded from submitting proposals because public art is too time consuming: the process can be filled with red-tape and it can take months just to get approval.

Question 6. **Where does the public art program ‘belong’** within the city structure? This question is not longer an issue at the time of the writing of this report, but still... it is worth noting some of the interviewees’ responses. For the record, 7 people said that they just had not thought much about this and didn’t have enough information to make comments; 4 people said that it was seemed to be working just fine (so why mess with it?). The majority of respondents said that a big advantage of having the program in DMD was that it is in a department that things get built, and, as stated earlier in this report, public art (aside from the portable pieces) *gets built*. Being so close to the nuts and bolts, as well as the money

(CIP), seemed critical to Gordon Church, as well as to many people involved in public art today. But, many artists and staff believed that the public art program was not well enough understood or respected in DMD, and therefore it was not a productive situation for the public art staff. Another option for the program was to make it its own department or agency directly under the Mayor. This situation, some people felt, would give the public art program the autonomy it needed but still have it closely related to CIP. The other option was Cultural Services, where the Public Art Program is currently located. People did have reservations, though. They felt that public art would be subsumed by museums, the BioPark and the zoo. Yet, there were stated advantages: Doesn't public art have a greater affinity with the arts and cultural services of the city? As well, many people felt that Cultural Services might help the program with its promotion, education and outreach issues, given that the museum, BioPark and zoo are heavily invested in these areas. Finally, a strong sentiment expressed by a couple of people was that it is: "About the WHO not the WHERE." Is the director supportive? Will the staff be supported in the work they need to do on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis? This relates not only to this question but also to others: it became clear to me by the end of the interviews that people need to have a sense of how public art differs from museum and gallery art: Public art is *built* in places, it doesn't *just arrive*. The public art process is much more extensive than the final product, an installation. Therefore, the public art program needs to be located in a department where it is understood, and can be fully supported.

3. The role of urban public arts and public art planning in the planning and design of downtowns.

Interview Questions:

- What do you consider to be the role and place of public art in urban planning and design for cities?
- What do you think a public art master plan would "do" for the city?
- What would you want to see in a public art plan, in order to attend to the needs of your office/department?

Question 1. What do you consider to be **the role and place of public art in urban planning** and design for cities? There were, of course, a handful of people who said that there were more important things than public art in the making of a city. They felt that public art was an enhancement, not a necessary element of the city; therefore, it was not a priority. Yet the remainder of people said that public art absolutely needs to "be at the table" for any kind of urban planning and design to have an impact (e.g., quality of life, image of the city) on this community. Public art, according to most of the respondents, is what makes a city (at all scales) interesting and livable (safety issues come into the conversation here). As such, public art is a major component in urban design, if well integrated. It becomes part of place making and community building (e.g. Seattle: public art and urban design: landmarks, wayfinding, educational, etc.). But this demands that departments work much more closely with one another, in order for public art to not be a piecemeal project (which it often is) that is inserted (and thus often disruptive, as mentioned earlier in this report) as an afterthought. It does, though, raise questions about zoning, and other city regulations. In order to think more broadly about public art (beyond the individual pieces), artists need to be brought into the process at the beginnings of the

project. Recent urban planning research is noting the successes of urban planning and design projects that have artists as key members of design and planning teams. If Albuquerque is indeed maturing, then it is essential that the city think about *who* needs to be involved in creating an environment that is attractive to people, businesses and institutions (looking for a place to visit and/or relocate). Again, it comes down to relationships: interdisciplinary partnerships and collaborations.

Question 2. Does the city need a public art master plan? If so, what do you think a **public art master plan would “do”** for the city? The first phase of my research helped convince us (myself and the staff) that a physical master plan would not necessarily serve the city or the public art program well. Why? Because of the changing/dynamic nature of politics and funding for public art. A plan could be deleterious to what one of the staff said was essential to running a public art program: Being light on your feet, flexible and adaptable: knowing what’s on other department/agency plates as it is happening and responding, not reacting. But still, this question is worth asking in order to think about ways to plan for public art in Albuquerque.

Several people said that a public art master plan would be worth discussing, in order to assess existing conditions and begin a dialogue about the future of public art within a larger city/departmental context. The problem is, several staff member noted (from experience), master plans typically benefit the user department, but end up sitting on a shelf because it is not implementable. Additionally, who would create the master plan and how would it be paid for? And, if a master plan were developed as a long-range plan (10+ years) there would have to be a strong core of supporters in order for it to survive.

Most people did *not* see a plan for public art as a physical plan: they thought that it needed to be more organic, an ongoing conceptual plan that leverages benefits for the various parties and stakeholders involved. Such a plan would be a working document, or a framework, for raising awareness (making more visible and prominent the role of public art in planning the city), setting a direction, and getting people to work together. Implicit in these comments is the fact that such a plan would need to be inter-departmental. As one person remarked, it could be a roadmap for how to proceed in creating a better city. It could be a guide to keeping people on track as to what our goals are as a community. A framework plan, or a working document plan, would allow the city to look at the public art collection as a whole (assessing what, where, why, how) in the short, medium and long term. It would be an opportunity to look at deficiencies and problems (e.g. maintenance, relationships with other departments) as well as successes and near-misses. Such a plan would be strategic, dynamic, and synergistic; that is, it would mainly be about process.

Question 3. What would you **want to see in a public art plan**, in order to attend to the needs of your office/department? The best way to represent the responses to this question is by listing the common comments, most of which are in the form of questions:

- How would it impact (maybe even benefit) our department?
- We would need to be trained/educated about public art: the process, how it functions, our roles and responsibilities, etc.
- If such a plan stimulated further involvement by other departments, how would we manage this?

- We would like to see opportunities to collaborate.
- How would you coordinate, for example, with the open space plan so that we can deal with public art, parks, and streetscapes in a comprehensive way?
- There would need to be a human scale/urban experience component, such as a focus on pedestrian aspects of the city.
- How would you incorporate the needs of historic sites and other such sensitive areas?
- It would be necessary to have a core committee that is a mix of stakeholders: education, government, private developers, as well as artists and others.
- How would you incorporate economic development?
- How would you involve the local community; that is, not just city staff and business leaders?

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS + Some Final Thoughts...

Something I learned from this research is that compared to other cities, Albuquerque residents, when talking about public art, mention: landscape, place, neighborhoods, New Mexico (arts, culture, heritage), and pride. These are not a typical set of terms often used when people talk about public art in U.S. in cities. That people in Albuquerque use terms that so firmly *ground* them here seems significant to how this city imagines itself into the 21st century. This city imagination, as evidenced by this research, includes public art. In this final section of the report I will put forth my recommendations for the Public Art Program staff. I start by talking about some foundational actions; things that can be done now and consistently into the future. Next, I will discuss short- and medium-term recommendations. Followed by long-term recommendations. And, finally, some final thoughts I think you might find useful to continuing this conversation.

1. Foundational Actions

- It is important to engage the various people who are involved in decision-making (directly + indirectly, aware or unaware) for several reasons, to:
 - Inform + educate
 - Raise awareness
 - Get them ‘on board’
- It is critical to find out how various people (as well as departments and agencies) define public art, and how they believe they can contribute to the program and collaborate with staff and artists.
- Articulate public art’s role at multiple levels: Philosophical, Prosaic, Administrative, in order to understand how different people approach public art as a part of their work and as a part of what they experience on a daily basis:
 - city-level: city image
 - staff level: daily operations
 - physical urban fabric: e.g. neighborhoods
 - construction: schedules and timelines
 - citizens: everyday lives
- Explore possible areas/realms/projects that might involve public art
- Identify who is involved in the “production” of public art, as well as who might want to be involved.

- All of this is intended to help you to develop partnerships and allies in the work of public art.

2. Short- + Medium-Term Recommendations

These short- and medium-term recommendations are about advancing the potential of the program's future: How can you strengthen the Public Art Program given the existing framework? That is: What needs to be done (e.g., types of projects, updating guidelines, etc.) to continue the program moving forward in a productive, and—even—"cutting edge?" manner?

- Now that you have a supportive Mayor ... what to do to maintain his support and to keep him informed and inspired?
- Developing a public presence:
 - Create public interest pieces in local print and web venues
 - Make public art coverage part of the everyday
e.g., a column in *Albuquerque Journal*, and in local free presses
 - Develop annual themes in order to build and maintain an ongoing conversation with residents of the city:
 - themes should be informed by intelligent, provocative, thoughtful questions
 - themes might depend on current issues and big/controversial projects occurring in a given year:
 - public art and infrastructure
 - public art and water
 - public art and food
 - Develop a relationship with New Mexico cultural tourism:
 - public art tours and circuits
 - destination art
 - Partner with UNM to host a mini-symposium on public art
- Evaluation + Assessment: staff, arts board, program, projects, and relationships
 - evaluate impact of public art: surveys at facilities and compare survey responses: e.g., locations: libraries, schools, fire stations, parks
 - evaluate decision-makers' assessments of program and projects
 - annual internal assessment: assessing relationships with different departments, organizations, and other individuals/groups
 - develop a database summary of the ratio of the collection (including budget and time spent) that is percent-for-art, or funded through other mechanisms
 - evaluation of projects after 1 year, 5 years, etc. in order to understand how people are responding to the piece, how (well) it is functions, and, of course, to raise awareness about pieces
- Updated, detailed (enough) city organization structure: Identify where public art *is*: that is, not just in Cultural Services but where occurs/has an impact in a variety of locations (physically) and departments

- Articulate and make public (on the program website) the roles, powers and responsibilities, as well as professional backgrounds of: Program staff, Arts Board members (chair, co-chair, members), and Selection Panels
 - “Map” peoples’ roles + responsibilities in relation to one another: this would be a means by which to help people understand that they are not working in a vacuum, but rather ... in relation to another
e.g. Mayor < >
Cultural Services < >
staff < > arts board < > selection panels
 - Outline how one becomes a member of the Arts Board or a selection panel:
 - In order to get more people interested in being on the Arts Board and selection panels they need to be informed about the process
 - How to get qualified people (and what does ‘qualified’ mean)?
- Simplify + Clarify Selection Process, and → develop > use > evaluate
- Take best advantage of Website: Use the website as a means to provide a history of the program, detailed information about staff and arts board, program information, and data, announcements, etc.
 - While working within confines of city requirements for websites
 - Based on an evaluation of other Public Art Program sites
- Exploring new technologies + venues: Becky’s outreach and education work and Tony’s audience work has expanded and tested the use of new technologies and venues. It is important to → develop > use > evaluate
 - The new newsletter: How to keep it fresh?: e.g., annual themes, different definitions of public art, artist bios, mapping public art
 - Who are you reaching out to?: Expanding your base: e.g. Neighborhood Associations

3. Long-Term Recommendations

- Strategic Planning: A Strategic Plan for Public Art
 - Developing guidelines not changes to the ordinance
 - NOT A Physical Public Art Master Plan: see comments to the set of responses to the questions about *The role of urban public arts and public art planning in the planning and design of downtowns.*
 - Begins with Critical Mapping: beyond the where/placement of public art = Mapping relationships: to arts and cultural/cultural plan, district by district, department projects, etc.
- Define + Explore + Educate: Genres of public art, and the associated costs, issues, as well as examples, media, mediums, etc. For example:
 - Monumental
 - Memorial
 - Digital
 - Community
 - Land art

- Temporary
 - Event-based
 - Performance-based
 - Destination
- Airport Collection: Should the Public Art Program become the steward of the airport collection, or How might the Public Art Program work with the airport in a mutually beneficial way?
 - There are concerns about such a large collection languishing, and issues associated with it being separate from the City’s Public Art Program
 - Currently, the airport collection appears totally autonomous; people don’t necessarily think about it as part of city program
 - What is the Arts Board’s role in this?
 - Does the Public Art Program want to engage in regional issues; that is, expand its coverage/reach? What are the consequences of expanding coverage? How might this be beneficial to the city and to other regional entities?
 - e.g. RailRunner
 - e.g. Water agency
 - A written history of the program: Many public art programs in the U.S. are recognizing the importance of having a written history of their program in order to promote the program, celebrate the program, and in some cases, take advantage of sources and resources that might soon disappear. Since Albuquerque is one of the early public art programs in this country, it seems important to situate the city’s program historically and in relation to other programs. You can build on the momentum of both Tony’s (video history and GOV_TV interviews) and Becky’s (interviews of local artists) work. This history could be comprised of a written history, video history, and a graphic timeline (e.g., organizing the history according to eras of the program, noting key sites and people, as well as geographic extents)

4. Some Final Thoughts...

Continuing efforts towards strengthening the Public Art Program, as shown in this report, revolve around maintaining visibility and activity, as well as developing new means by which to make public art meaningful to the city. Therefore, education and outreach (both internal to the city/departments + external/the public) are important to keeping people informed and inspiring them to get involved. As well, nurturing existing partnerships and forging new relationships are important to *growing* the program.

Some questions that will help to continue the dialogue and increase the level of engagement in public art:

- How would you characterize Albuquerque’s Public Art Program?
 - How do you want people—inside the community + those visiting—to characterize the program?
 - How would you compare it to other public art programs around the country?
- How does public art add value to the community?

- What is your role in making public art happen in Albuquerque
 - What is your role and the attendant responsibilities?
- How do we continue to engage all members of the community, from the elderly to teenagers and young children?
- What partnerships and alliances does the program need to make?

The answers to these questions will change over time, and the phrasing of the questions may need to be massaged to fit a particular time/circumstance. But what seems clear after all of the conversations I have had with city staff, civic and business leaders, and creative professionals is that these people believe that public art is important to this city. Continuing the dialogue is essential to keeping people involved, and gaining further involvement, in the future of the program.