

Appendix H: Public Art

Public Art

In addition to expressing a desire to improve the economic health and transportation performance of the corridor, participants in initial stakeholder meetings and the initial round of public meetings in November expressed a desire to improve the visual appearance of the corridor. A number of comments from stakeholders, public officials, and the general public indicated a hope that the revitalized corridor would include elements of public art that would distinguish their individual communities from the relatively homogeneous appearance of most suburban corridors and arterials in the St. Louis region. Public art can help to build the identity for each of the five communities along the corridor without blocking views from Manchester Road to particular shopping areas or buildings or impeding pedestrian activity along sidewalks and trails that line the corridor.

Based upon feedback from the public meetings and from stakeholder discussions, the consultant team determined the following overall goals for Manchester Road related to public art:

- Public art should strengthen the collective identity of the district, and of the individual communities, by inviting artists to create artworks for inclusion along the corridor that reflect the social, cultural, and spatial aspects of the area.
- Reinforce the Manchester Road district as a cultural destination in West County for dining, shopping, living, entertaining, and conducting business.
- Enhance and support efforts to “green” Manchester Road by commissioning artworks that reveal environmental aspects of the streetscape and of the communities.
- Create partnerships with local schools, arts organizations, and other entities in order to present high quality artworks and engage with artists.

The consultant team also recommends that a set percentage of the public improvement budget for Manchester Road should be devoted to public arts programming and artworks. A wide range of cities across the country have used a metric of one percent of the public improvement budget devoted to public art.

The master plan provides recommendations for improvements in the following areas related to public art:

- **Signage and Wayfinding:** As discussed, the master plan provides recommendations to reduce the clutter and confusion of the existing signage along Manchester Road. Creating a more logical and attractive signage program along the corridor will greatly improve the overall perception of the area’s visual quality.
- **Creating an Urban Design Plan** that guides the form and character of buildings and public spaces. The master plan outlines and provides descriptions of key districts along Manchester Road, such as town center areas, in order to guide their development over the next few decades. In addition, the recommended Form Based Code will guide the interactions and relationships between buildings and the public realm (including streets as well as gathering places and public spaces) in order to create more attractive and distinctive environments throughout the corridor.
- **Reducing the size of parking lots** and improving their aesthetic quality. By outlining potential strategies to share parking and provide maximum parking requirements, the master plan aims to reduce the supply of vacant parking along the corridor and reduce the overall size of parking lots in general. Along with design guidelines that call for the planting of trees in parking lots, these recommendations will greatly improve the current image of Manchester Road.

- **Lighting:** By providing comprehensive guidelines for improved and consistent lighting along the corridor, the corridor will appear safer, better illuminated, and more attractive to residents and visitors.
- **Landscape Plan:** The master plan provides a comprehensive landscape plan for various districts and street types along the corridor in order to provide a more consistent and attractive appearance for the Manchester Road study area. The master plan aims to increase the overall tree cover along the corridor in order to improve the aesthetic quality of the corridor.
- **Utilities:** The master plan provides recommendations for the undergrounding of utilities, or the relocation of overhead utilities to other locations away from Manchester Road, in order to improve the aesthetic quality of the corridor. As mentioned in the Utility section of the Summary Document, the public expressed support for undergrounding utilities in order to improve the aesthetic quality of the corridor.
- **Public Art:** In addition to the strategies outlined above, the communities along Manchester Road should pursue public art strategies in order to improve the visual quality of the corridor.

Public Art Recommendations

The communities may pursue several potential strategies to integrate public art into the streetscape and civic spaces along and near the Manchester Road corridor over the next few decades. The communities or local arts organizations may invite an artist or artist team to the area to develop a program of permanent, integrated artwork as part of the overall streetscape design and the design of potential town center gathering places. The communities may begin an ongoing program of temporary art installations immediately and thus very quickly integrate public art into the Manchester Road experience. Ultimately, a series of permanent sculptures or other pieces of public art would be installed along the corridor, either in concert with streetscape improvements or at a later date.

Permanent, Integrated Artwork

The communities may integrate works of art into the design of Manchester Road and other streets, including Main Streets and back streets, thereby helping to define the aesthetic quality of different parts of the Manchester Road district. Integrating planning for public art with redevelopment plans and initiatives to complete streetscape improvements will enhance the overall quality of design of the public spaces along the corridor and avoid the creation of a cluttered streetscape.

Green Street Public Art

The communities should consider enlisting an environmental artist to highlight the environmental features of the streetscape and the environmental assets along the corridor, including areas of woodland and picturesque creeks and streams. Design for town centers and other areas may integrate elements of public art with the design of rain gardens, detention facilities, and other sustainable stormwater strategies.

Permanent Sculptures

The communities should consider the installation of permanent public art sculptures at key locations along the corridor in the future, including town center areas, civic gathering places, and other nodes of community activity. These permanent sculptures may speak to the history of individual communities or reflect the vision for a particular town center. For example, the Manchester town center district may potentially include public art emphasizing the history of the Manchester area stretching back to the 1800s. Public art in Wildwood may emphasize the significant commitment the community has made to sustainability and preserving the bucolic nature of this portion of St. Louis County.

Temporary Public Art Installations

In partnership with local arts and cultural organizations, the communities should pursue the regular display of temporary public art installations along the Manchester Road corridor. Temporary art projects or displays can reflect the dynamic nature of the corridor and introduce new, exciting concepts to residents and visitors to the corridor area. Temporary displays should meet the following goals:

- Create artworks that raise the collective profile of Manchester Road as viewed by residents and outsiders.
- Build relationships with local galleries and cultural institutions by creating opportunities for the display of work in high traffic locations.
- Attract visitors to Manchester Road

