

swbid

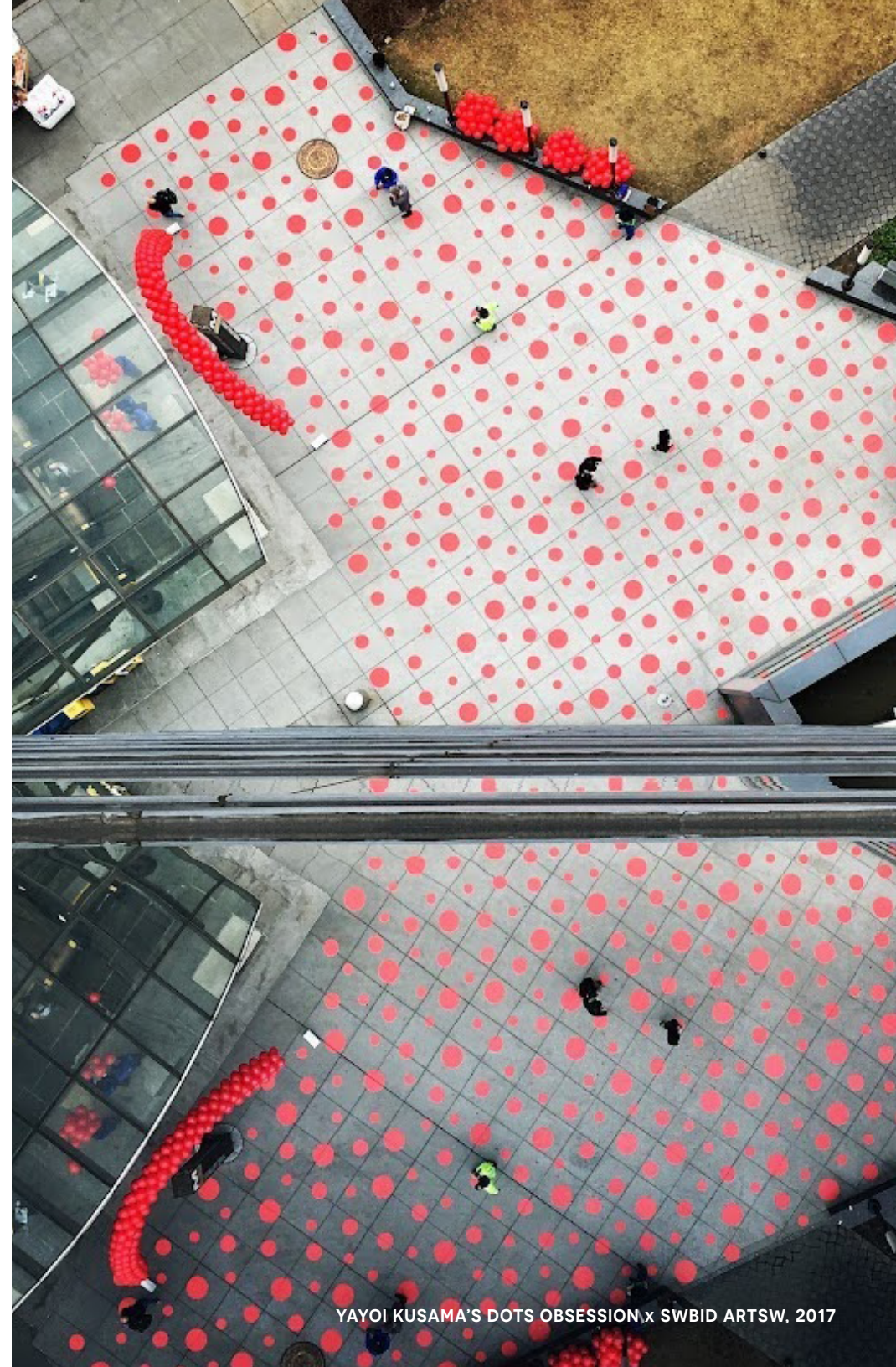
The Southwest DC

Public Art Framework

2023 ● Community-driven ● Community-inspired

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- The Southwest DC Public Art Framework: Why now and why it's important
- The Southwest DC Context: Embracing assets, meeting challenges, and building opportunity
- Public Art and Placemaking in 2023: Inspirations from an evolving field
- Community Conversations
 - » Summary of community input themes
 - » Community priorities and guiding values
- Southwest DC Public Art Framework: Four Strategic Priorities
 1. Cultivate an overall sense of belonging and wellbeing
 2. Nurture an art and cultural ecosystem
 3. Make it safer, easier, and more fun to navigate Southwest and leverage its incredible cultural assets
 4. Contribute to identity-building and neighborhood storytelling
- Conclusion
- Appendix 1: Factor Analysis
- Appendix 2: Best Practices & National Inspiration



YAYOI KUSAMA'S DOTS OBSESSION, x SWBID ARTSW, 2017

The Southwest DC Public Art Framework: Why now and why it's important

In Spring 2023, the Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID) worked with community stakeholders to create a Southwest DC Public Art Framework to guide arts and cultural programming into the future.

Embracing its roles as a facilitator and steward, SWBID created this framework to align with core purposes, including:

- Making the community it serves more vibrant and beautiful
- Serving as a catalyst for opportunities and better shared prosperity
- Improving wayfinding and connectivity
- Telling the story of Southwest to a range of audiences

Informed by its extensive track record of bringing a variety of public art initiatives to Southwest DC and its commitment to deep and ongoing community engagement, the framework will serve as a tool for the BID and its partners to guide annual planning, sustain a community-centered approach and define how it works with artists and creators.



COMMUNITY, ART ISLAND, 2020

We began by asking a fundamental question:

“What should public art in Southwest DC celebrate?” And the responses resoundingly centered around community, neighborhood history, diversity, and beauty.

WORD CLOUD FROM A SURVEY ASKING, “WHAT SHOULD PUBLIC ART IN SOUTHWEST DC CELEBRATE?”

diversity beauty
creativity
community
joy connection identity nature
waterfront history



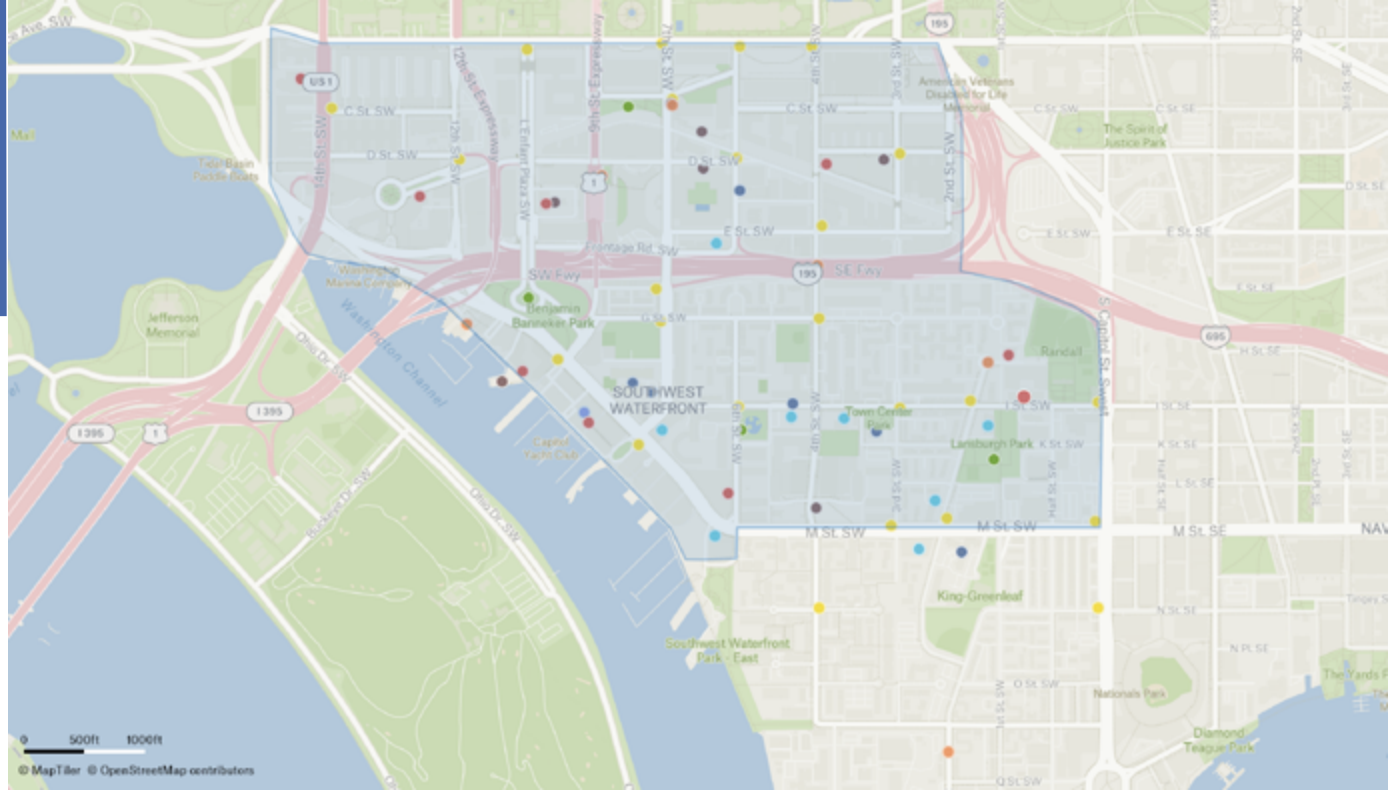
The Southwest DC Context: Embracing assets, meeting challenges, and building opportunity

Southwest DC weaves together three distinct areas in the 500 acres south of the National Mall: Federal Center South, the Southwest neighborhood, and The Wharf development.

It's a neighborhood with enormous assets, including river access, world-class cultural amenities and museums, an array of shops, parks, nightlife, and dining options, and a residential neighborhood rich in history and civic participation. Southwest DC is a major employment center with thousands of office and service jobs. It has a range of transit options and mobility connections. And while many of its qualities and assets are well known - the freeway, The International Spy Museum, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Wharf, Arena Stage, L'Enfant Plaza - many other aspects of Southwest DC's story remain less known or understood, even within DC.

Southwest DC has a complicated history marked by cycles of decline and renewal, disinvestment, and redevelopment. With a demographic profile that includes both extreme wealth and prosperity and significant poverty and disinvestment—the area is a microcosm of dramatic economic, social and racial disparities characterizing many American cities.

SWBID aims to build programming that creates a more inclusive and equitable place. Embracing this role is one of the BID's distinguishing features, and the Public Art Framework will be a critical goal of going beyond improving vibrancy to generating opportunity.



PUBLIC ART WITHIN THE BID BOUNDARIES

- Arts & Culture
- Churches
- Other Points of Interest
- Metro Stations / Transportation
- Other Public Art Installations
- Parks & Recreation
- Schools / Community Center
- Traffic Control Boxes
- SWBID Boundary

ACTIVATIONS



Public Art and Placemaking in 2023: Inspirations from an evolving field

For many years, "public art" was typically associated with large sculptural pieces that provide visual interest in urban environments. Over the past few decades, the role of public art has evolved to include more ambitious social purposes, including the cultivation of creative ecosystems, the celebration of local heritage, and the strengthening of community cohesion. There has also been a growing focus on using public art interventions to help visitors of a place mentally map key locations within a defined geography and to feel safer navigating through neighborhoods. This is known as Wayfinding.



PAINT THE STOREFRONT, 2020

Engaging in conversation & being intentional

The Southwest Public Art Framework draws inspiration from cities and neighborhoods that have stretched the definition and practice of public art to more actively engage in conversations about equity and justice and to be more intentional about building cohesion and driving opportunity.





Community Conversations

To develop this framework, the SWBID embarked on a listening tour, engaging a range of stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. We met with resident and community group representatives from organizations, including SW Action, the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), Gangplank Slipholders Association, and neighborhood churches. We connected with local artists and curators and talked to leaders of cultural institutions, including the International Spy Museum, Arena Stage, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Museum of the Bible. Further, we conducted a weekly survey shared with concertgoers at the Southwest Duck Pond and additional neighborhood events and on local listservs, gathering over 100 responses. Finally, we also incorporated feedback regularly collected by SWBID ambassadors in community interviews.

Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged from community input.



The community feedback is detailed in Appendix I.

I'M SPEAKING, LONDON KAYE, 2021



Summary of community input themes



Public art efforts should be rooted in ongoing efforts to tap into community sentiments and to understand social dynamics that shape the neighborhood.

Public art can contribute to identity building and a celebration of community in Southwest DC.

Being an artist/creator in DC is a challenge, particularly for emerging artists and those from under-resourced neighborhoods.

There is inherent value in using public art to add beauty to the public environment.

Southwest DC includes a diversity of voices and perspectives, creating the need for SWBID's work to continuously gather and analyze what it hears from neighbors and what it means for programming. It's critical to invest time and resources into ensuring artists and creators have a keen understanding of these dynamics from conception through implementation.

There is a deep sense of pride in Southwest's unique features and heritage. Southwest is "more than the Wharf" and "more than a Federal enclave." There's a genuine desire to share a more multidimensional version of Southwest DC's story and sense of community. Public art can help advance a more nuanced understanding of this unique place.

Robust and thoughtful public art programming creates opportunities for artists to make a living, grow their practice and build relationships—thus strengthening the local arts ecosystem. The Southwest Public Art Framework should be intentional about this goal.

There's a tremendous appreciation for artistic interventions that add beauty and vitality to urban landscapes. The Southwest Public Art Framework should affirm the value of creating pockets of joy and beauty within the neighborhood.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT THEMES



Public art and creative placemaking can help create welcoming and inclusive spaces for gathering and cultural exchange.

Southwest DC is often in the cross hairs when it comes to debates about who benefits and who is harmed by growth and development in DC.

Southwest DC can be difficult to navigate with many cultural assets underutilized or even disconnected from the life of the neighborhood.

Artists and creators can bring unique perspectives and skills to bear on driving key BID outcomes.

Creative interventions in parks and other public spaces can communicate messages about belonging and acceptance and encourage more people to gather in underutilized areas. The Framework should advance community and SWBID goals around creating inclusive places.

A public art strategy should help drive goals around creating opportunity and grappling with social justice and equity issues through education and coalition building. The Framework should encourage efforts to embrace these challenges.

The Southwest DC Public Art Framework should use creative visual interventions to help people explore its many great attractions more easily.

Artists and creators possess skills and can bring networks and capabilities that go beyond beautification efforts. The Southwest Public Art Framework should support initiatives that tap into the many ways artists can contribute to community problem-solving around more significant neighborhood issues.

Community Priorities & Guiding Values

As part of the community input process, we identified the fundamental values and priorities to anchor the plan. These grew out of community conversations, interviews, and an online survey. The community's response is reflected in the charts at right.

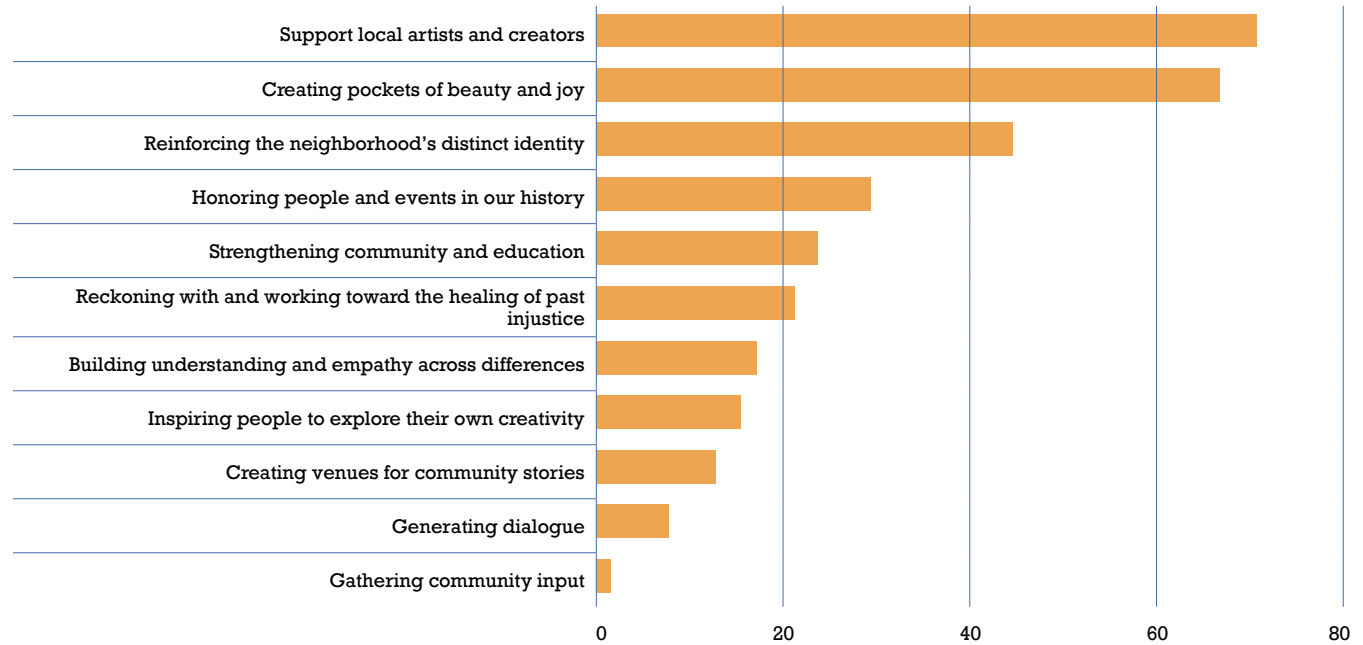


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RYAN MAXWELL PHOTOGRAPHY

TOP GUIDING VALUES FROM COMMUNITY SURVEY



TOP PRIORITIES FROM COMMUNITY SURVEY

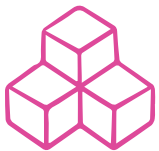


Southwest DC Public Art Framework: Four Strategic Priorities

The Framework is shaped by an understanding of the unique context in Southwest DC, grounded in feedback gathered through interviews and focus groups and inspired by the evolution of the public art field. It aligns with SWBID's mission around catalyzing opportunity, strengthening social networks, improving wayfinding, and cultivating beautiful, inclusive places.

The Framework is built around four strategic priorities that include:

- Cultivating an overall sense of belonging and wellbeing
- Nurturing an art and cultural ecosystem
- Making it safer, easier, and more fun to navigate Southwest and leverage its incredible cultural assets
- Contributing to identity-building and neighborhood storytelling



Each Building Block incorporates a set of recommended actions to help SWBID and its partners

plan, implement, and evaluate public arts programming aligned with its goal of building a more inclusive and connected neighborhood.



1

Cultivate an overall sense of belonging + wellbeing

2

Nurture an arts and cultural ecosystem

3

Make it safer, easier and more fun to navigate Southwest and to leverage its incredible cultural assets

4

Contribute to identity-building and neighborhood storytelling



1

Cultivate an overall sense of belonging + wellbeing

One of SWBID's core purposes is to create a more beautiful and connected place. Foundational to the Public Art Framework will be to develop initiatives that convey the message: "you are welcome, you matter, and you are wanted here."

Key Actions

- Form a multi-stakeholder public art advisory committee
- Ensure initiatives are spread throughout the neighborhood, including those areas that may be underutilized and less prominent
- Ensure artists have a clear understanding of community dynamics
- Incorporate an accessibility plan for all public art pieces
- Create venues for cultural exchange
- Actively involve community stakeholders who may not be typically included in traditional outreach efforts

HAPPENING IN SOUTHWEST



Our signature program, **COMMUNITY TABLES** (formerly Sunday Suppers) creates a welcoming space for neighbors from across the community to gather over a shared meal and participate in community-building performances or activities. Through this program, we strive to foster a sense of community that extends beyond geographic boundaries and encourage deeper connections to form among our neighbors over delicious food and shared experiences.

Nurture an arts and cultural ecosystem

The Southwest DC Public Art Framework will support ongoing efforts to catalyze innovation and opportunity for creatives. Beyond creating beautiful and meaningful interventions in neighborhood places, public arts initiatives in Southwest DC will seek to strengthen the local arts ecosystem and elevate the notion that “everyone is an artist.”

Key Actions

- Provide artists with the trust and freedom to respond creatively without being overly prescriptive
- Implement a clear and transparent process for all projects, no matter what the scale
- Build opportunities for artists to connect with and learn from one another at various stages of their careers
- Provide artists and curators with an overview of essential community dynamics and establish expectations around community engagement, budget, timeline, and deliverables
- Ensure that a portion of public art and creative placemaking interventions offer opportunities for people to explore their own creativity
- Enlist artists to help the SWBID and other community stakeholders to solve problems and address issues at the level of place - including those beyond neighborhood beautification
- Invest in research, site visits, and professional development for curatorial staff and other partners to spur creativity and deepen understanding of the field



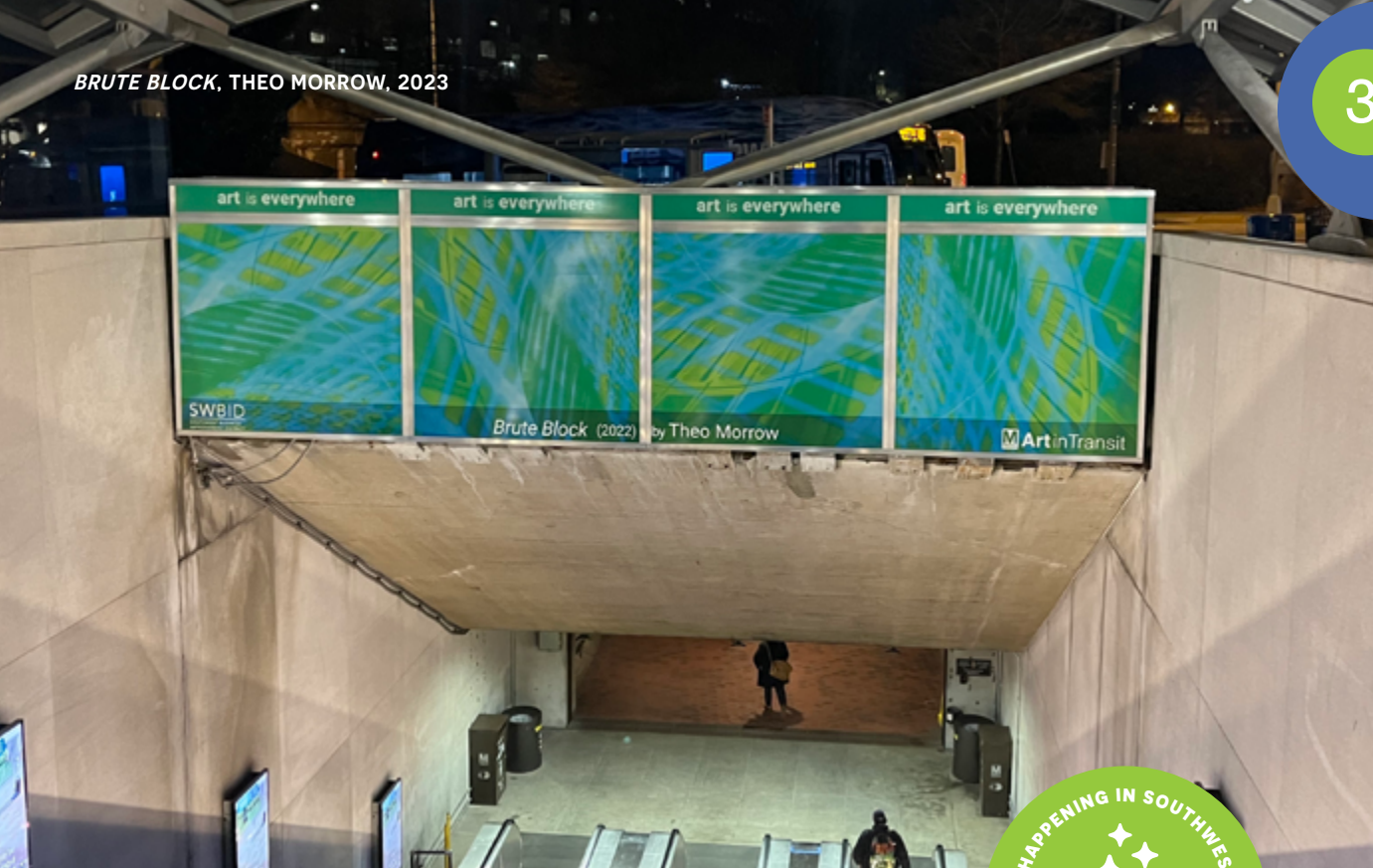
PAINT THE STOREFRONT, 2020

HAPPENING IN SOUTHWEST



THE DIVINE RIGHT OF GEESE, REEBO & JULIA, 2022

Through the **TRAFFIC BOX ART WRAP** program, SWBID offers a unique opportunity for artists of varying levels of experience to showcase their work and bring life to everyday objects. The program aims to rethink traditional infrastructure, such as traffic control boxes, by using artistic designs that transform everyday objects into eye-catching pieces of public art.



3

Make it safer, easier and more fun to navigate Southwest and to leverage its incredible cultural assets

Southwest DC's streets can be tough to navigate. And though it's replete with unique cultural assets, many residents don't access them. The Public Art Framework will serve one of SWBID's key goals of improving connectivity in the neighborhood and ensuring more people can take advantage of its varied cultural offerings.

HAPPENING IN SOUTHWEST



HIRSHHORN IN THE CITY was a partnership between the SWBID and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden to bring internationally renowned contemporary art beyond the walls of the museum and foster connections between artists and the city's creative communities. The program strives to create projects, partnerships, and installations throughout Southwest DC, sparking inspiration in people and allowing art to have a greater impact on the everyday lives of residents. The concept for this initiative is to develop an appreciation for the power of art to engage and uplift communities.

Key Actions

- Identify and prioritize primary nodes and passages that would benefit from creative wayfinding interventions
- Build a library of model initiatives on which to base a creative wayfinding system around to support planning and financing
- Document legal requirements and limitations for any site being considered for an intervention
- Convene cultural institutions to explore potential partnerships focused on connectivity and wayfinding
- Use marketing and events strategies to help people use public art installations as landmarks that help people mentally map the neighborhood

Contribute to identity building and neighborhood storytelling

One of SWBID's fundamental functions is to uncover and communicate a sense of collective identity that resonates with diverse stakeholders and conveys a promise of an experience. This not only helps attract visitors and investment to an area but can also help build a sense of community and "pride of place" among a diverse range of residents, employees, and business owners. The Southwest DC Public Arts Framework encourages projects that create opportunities to tell nuanced stories of the neighborhood and cultivate a sense of pride and connection with the neighborhood.

Key Actions

- Document key elements of neighborhood history and identity to share with artists and partners
- Use public art to create opportunities for people to share their experiences of the neighborhood
- Ensure that a portion of public art programming engages Southwest DC's history, never shying away from conflicting meanings and perceptions around its identity
- Ensure that a communication strategy for each public art piece or initiative ties in with messages and storylines about the place
- Use public art and creative placemaking programming to tap into communities whose perspectives may be overlooked and create platforms for their voices and stories
- Develop programming to unearth Southwest DC-specific stories and to explore salient features of what it means to "be a Southwester"



ALLY GRIMM, AKA A.L. GRIME, 2021

HAPPENING IN SOUTHWEST



POCKET CHANGE COMMUNITY MURAL, ERIC B. RICKS, 2018

POCKET CHANGE is a community micro-grant program that celebrates and funds ideas *from* Southwest neighbors *for* Southwest neighbors. Pocket Change aspires to empower residents, help create opportunity, allow people to establish new relationships and networks, promote action and change, foster critical dialogue, instill neighborhood pride, and provide a deeper understanding of Southwest DC. Previously funded projects include a community mural, Peace Circles, a mentorship program, and a neighborhood bike ride.



COMMUNITY MURAL, MARK GARRETT, 2019

Acknowledgments

The SWBID would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for taking the time to speak with us and helping to shape a plan:

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- Peron Williams, SWBID
- Andre Witt, SWBID
- Pamela Wolf, SWBID

Conclusion

Since its inception, the BID has embarked on a myriad of public art initiatives, transforming the public realm with vibrant and captivating projects. These endeavors have not only infused color and liveliness but have also celebrated neighborhood history while showcasing the exceptional talent of local artists and creators. These initiatives have fostered a profound sense of place and connection within the community by bringing people together.

In addition to prioritizing arts and culture, the BID places great importance on actively involving community stakeholders in shaping its core priorities and addressing their hopes and concerns. This invaluable input and feedback

have a direct impact on the programming, guiding its development and providing a foundation for continuous evaluation and refinement of projects and approaches.

The BID has collaborated with various stakeholders to co-create the Southwest DC Public Art Framework to ensure that its arts and cultural programming remains firmly rooted in the community's aspirations. This comprehensive framework not only acts as a guide but ensures that the programming aligns with a shared vision of creating a more inclusive, opportunity-rich, and visually stunning environment that reflects the collective values and dreams of the community.

Factor Analysis

Interviewees and focus group participants were asked to explore the factors that both support and undermine high-quality public art programming. Below is a summary of the input generated through the Factor Analysis activity.

What are the key factors that support great public art programming:

Artist Experience:

- When the sponsoring organization supports freedom of expression and the opportunity to push one's creativity forward.
- Having a clear sense of the budget breakdown up front, including the guaranteed payment amount for the artist (beyond materials, maintenance, and installation costs).
- Ensure that artists know how to work with the SWBID or other sponsoring organizations by being provided with clear expectations and timelines.
- It's important for artists to "know the canvas and activation points".
- Providing technical assistance and support to help artists seize more opportunities. This assistance could include grant writing support, media opportunities, and leveraging public art programming to introduce artists to other artists and organizations regionally and nationally.
- The sponsoring organization should not be overly prescriptive. However, they should

provide clear guidance and resources for artists around community values, sentiments, and even neighborhood tensions to help them understand what it means to work in Southwest.

- Flexibility is key. It can be important to let artists develop work in a studio and install at a later time.
- It's important that the artist feels connected to the piece. There's a need for both clear guidelines but also freedom.
- The Request for Proposals (RFP) process should include a clear timeline and deliverables incorporated upfront.
- Define the relationship with the community early in the process.
- The most meaningful public art pieces are created when the artist feels connected to the work.

Sponsoring Organizations:

- In cases where it's necessary to form a selection committee, the organization should include artists and ensure broad representation on the committee.
- For larger-scale projects, providing engineering and permitting support and expertise is crucial.
- Create an easy RFP process for applicants to allow them to seize new opportunities and navigate complicated bureaucracies.
- Staff should be empowered to think creatively and see how things can be done in different ways.
- It is vital to invest in opportunities for staff and practitioners to learn about what other public art practitioners are doing regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Public art programming should be grounded in community values and sensibilities and not only the tourism industry.

- SWBID can play an essential role in helping artists understand the priorities and dynamics of the community.
- It's critical to ensure that the organization builds in a sustainable and well-resourced plan to ensure artwork is maintained over time.
- Provide viewers with an accessible and high-quality opportunity to learn more about the meaning behind each piece (ie, QR codes, videos, etc.).
- Building programming around a recurrent theme or time of year can generate interest and stability to help build momentum for the artwork.
- Develop procedures that enable artist participation to contribute to programming guidelines and initiatives in an ongoing and sustainable way.
- Ensure all members of the public with differing abilities can physically access and participate in public art initiatives.
- Projects should enlist a mix of professional artists from outside of Southwest while also creating opportunities for neighborhood artists to grow.
- Project timelines should be flexible and provide one or two-day community-building installations for more long-term efforts.
- Artwork shouldn't be stagnant and organizations should consider supporting art installations that can evolve over time.
- Develop programs that inspire viewers to take action, to envision alternatives to the status quo, and to think differently.
- Encourage initiatives that engage with all cross-sections of the neighborhood, including those that may otherwise be ignored or neglected.

What factors undermine high-quality public art projects and what breaks trust with artists and creators

- Artistry and creative work that is disconnected from community dynamics and sensibilities.
- RFPs that are overly complex and guidelines that are out of touch.
- When the organization and artist fail to pay attention to accessibility.
- A lack of structure from the sponsoring organization.
- Failure to provide a code of conduct, timeline, and deliverable expectations that protect artists.
- When artistic expression is limited, resulting in artwork that feels bland and corporate.
- When the community is not involved or respected in the process.
- When the relationship/expectation between artist and community are not defined early in the process.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Participants conducted a SWOT analysis to explore the strengths and weaknesses of public art as a strategy and some of the opportunities and threats practitioners need to seize or grapple with to be successful.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaves beauty, delight, inspiration into the public realm • Provides paid opportunities and venues for artists • Improves the experience of navigating the neighborhood • Brings color into urban environments • Cultivates community and creates hubs for gathering 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artists can feel undervalued and under-appreciated • Because its public, some public art can be stale and conservative - disconnected from community sensibilities • Can never please or satisfy everyone
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can enable artists and creators to participate in community problem solving • Can strengthen creative ecosystems within a neighborhood, city or region • Can provide venues and provide paid opportunities for local artists and creators • Can stimulate conversation and learning about tough issues 	<p><u>THREATS/CHALLENGES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can leave some community members feeling excluded, alienated and offended • Can feel irrelevant and disconnected from community values • Can feel like it is something that papers over division and conflict • Without a good maintenance plan, it can deteriorate

Strengths

There was general agreement among all stakeholders about the strengths of public art as a strategy to improve the experience of navigating through a place, building a sense of place, and strengthening the local arts ecosystem. There was general agreement about the important role a high-quality public art program can play in driving key outcomes around community building, connectivity, and cultivating beauty and delight in the place.

Weaknesses

There was also general agreement about the pitfalls of public art initiatives and the importance of being mindful of these weaknesses. Two key themes emerged during conversations about potential weaknesses.

- 1) It's essential that the sponsoring organization sets clear guidelines for artists it works with, pays them fairly, and sets them up for success.
- 2) At the same time, it's important to ensure that the creative process is attuned to community dynamics. Stakeholders talked about the importance of setting up a process, from start to finish, that balances artistic freedom and creativity with a strong sense of connection with neighborhood narratives, priorities, and aspirations.

Opportunities

There was enthusiasm for embracing public art as a strategy to drive key neighborhood and SWBID

priorities around community building, improving the experience of navigating the neighborhood, and forging stronger connections with existing cultural assets. Artists, residents, cultural organizations, and community leaders talked about the potential of harnessing the enormous resources of Southwest's museums, theaters, and music venues. The need to build more and deeper collaboration with cultural institutions rose to the top of the list when it came to priorities for the BID. Another opportunity respondents pointed to was the potential role of public art and cultural programming to include residents, especially youth, from under-resourced households in creating more opportunities for people to thrive and grow.

Threats

Many shared the same sentiment regarding misunderstandings about Southwest DC as a community where public art programs could engage those misconceptions and elevate values many in the community hold dear. Some interviewees and focus group participants talked about how Southwest can be perceived from the outside as just The Wharf or just a federal enclave. They also spoke about the importance of celebrating the longstanding communities that call Southwest home and elevating the many qualities that may not be as well known, including its connection to water and nature, its diversity, and its rich and varied cultural life.

Many stakeholders talked about how the SWBID's public art strategy can play a role in countering mis-perceptions and ensuring that people navigating the neighborhood get a sense of its dynamic community.

The other theme that arose revolves around the threat of gentrification and widespread perceptions that BIDs drive displacement and deepen inequity. Public art is seen by many as papering over the harmful impacts of growth patterns on people and communities who've been left behind as the city and Southwest transform.

SWBID has grappled with both this perception and the reality of enormous economic and racial disparities within its boundaries. SWBID has been explicit about the need to focus on equity and belonging. It has centered on the goal of creating more opportunities for people to thrive. Respondents talked about the importance of ensuring that public art programming drives some of these outcomes in creative ways while not over-promising what can be delivered through cultural programming alone.

This led to another theme that emerged repeatedly during community outreach: there is no one community narrative, no singular identity, nor a unified set of tastes, aesthetics, and priorities. Southwest encompasses an incredibly diverse array of stakeholders with varied perspectives, life histories, resources, and needs. At the same time, it's critical that, organizationally, the SWBID recognizes and strives to tap into this multiplicity of perspectives.

Public art and creative placemaking can be a way of sparking conversation and creating a context to think about or experience a place in new ways. It can challenge. It can delight. It can unearth stories and concepts one may not have thought about before. It can also dismay and disappoint. There was broad agreement that the organization should ground its public art strategy in community input and that means a continual and ongoing conversation is imperative.



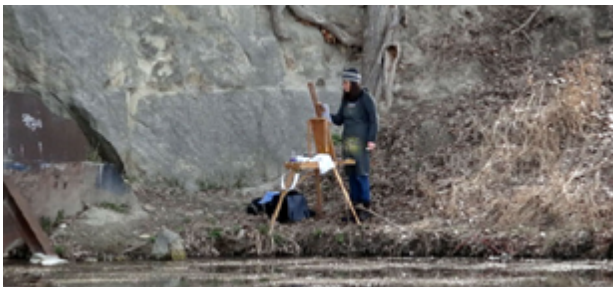
Where We Met | Greensboro, NC

“Where we Met” is a permanent sculpture fabricated from colorful netting stretched above the Carolyn & Maurice LeBauer Park in Greensboro, North Carolina, creating a welcoming point that references the interconnectedness of the natural world and community. It references six railroad lines foundational to Greensboro’s textile history and the way its location served as a meeting point for diverse populations.



Affirmation Station | Boston, MA

Affirmation Station, created by Chanel Thervil, is an interactive public art initiative designed to uplift people. Participants were given enamel pins with messages like Worthy of Love, Worthy of Joy, and Worthy of Respect and then encouraged to share written responses to questions about the various ways affirmations impact their lives.



City Art Collaboratory | St. Paul, MN

The City Art Collaboratory was Launched by Public Art Saint Paul in 2011. The goal was to create space for Artists, STEP professionals and other to critically reflect on ecologies of place and explore environmentally focused art initiatives and to focus on the way cities are built, experienced and sustained. Launched by Public Art Saint Paul in 2011, The project entailed open-ended field trip experiences, collaborative workshops and public conversations to explore places in the City of St. Paul where ecological, physical, political and social systems converge.



Art Works | Cincinnati, OH

Cincinnati based Artworks is a nonprofit that creates community-based public art providing career opportunities for artists of all ages. Committed to collaborating with community organizations and residents, businesses, governments, foundations, and nonprofits Artworks creates works of art that challenge, inspire and build community.



A Bridge, A Thread | Nashville, TN

Nashville Metro Arts commissioned artist David Dahlquist to create public art on a bridge and two transit stops along the 28th/31st Ave connector. This bridge and roadway connect two historically divided neighborhoods one white and affluent and one historically Black and lower income. The uses the metaphor of quilting to symbolize the act of re-connecting the two neighborhood and seeks to unite the community, depicting a series of knots sewn together to create quilt blocks, interpreted in large metal panels. Bent stainless steel tubing serves as thread woven across hundreds of linear feet of wall. The piece, visually ties the quilt patterns to connect both sides of the bridge.



Southeast by Southeast | Philadelphia, PA

Southeast by Southeast integrates a neighborhood arts hub with public art to cultivate a welcoming, supportive community for immigrant and refugee families. Started The initiative has evolved since its founding in 2011. The hub space offers a variety of classes targeted to immigrant families. It has spearheaded numerous public facing projects including murals, a bus wrapping and an artful free speech kiosk that offers resident an artfully designed venue for sharing their voices.



The Saint Paul City Choir | St. Paul, MN

The Saint Paul City Choir grew out of a series of workshops where they created “civic singing etudes” including ordinary people in the act of group singing. The project involved the formation of a “wellness choir” with a city agency staff and a performance at City Hall. The questions guiding the project included: How is singing a practice of civic joy and belonging? How can an innovative concept of choir be a model of inclusivity and engagement? What new singing practices will emerge from this interplay of city and choir?

