



Introduction

Eileen Gay
Water Metrics, 2025
Fivemile Creek Trailhub

Meridian, one of the fastest growing cities in Idaho, is known for its family-friendly atmosphere and robust recreational opportunities. Public art in Meridian has become an increasingly visible part of the community's cultural identity, adding creativity and character to everyday spaces. Guided by the Meridian Arts Commission (MAC) and supported through the Meridian Art in Public Spaces (MAPS) program, the city has invested in a range of public art installations, from murals to sculptures, that have become recognizable community assets throughout parks, civic buildings, and streetscapes.

To support the growth of public art, the MAPS Program was established by City Council ordinance in 2015. The ordinance allocates 50 cents per resident annually to fund public art installations in Meridian and designates the MAC to recommend and oversee program expenditures for City Council approval. Since adoption of the MAPS ordinance, over 100 pieces of public artwork have been successfully installed, including 94 traffic boxes, eight murals, two transit shelter artworks, and 19 sculptural installations.

One of the central goals in the Meridian Arts Commission 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is to create calls creating opportunities for all Meridian residents and visitors to experience public art. As part of an effort to thoughtfully and deliberately build the City's public art collection, the City of Meridian commissioned Via Partnership to develop a Public Art Master Plan.

This plan presents a comprehensive roadmap to guide the growth and sustainability of the City's public art program. Built from a foundation of research and analysis that evaluated existing policies and programs, alongside robust community engagement findings, the plan ensures the recommendations reflect local values and priorities. The plan establishes a clear vision, mission, and set of goals to direct future efforts, as well as a prioritized list of public art opportunities. In addition, the plan outlines technical recommendations, including policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities to support effective program management and long-term success. Together these components provide an actionable and cohesive strategy for Meridian's public art program.

Methodology

As part of the process to create a Public Art Master Plan for the City of Meridian, community engagement efforts were conducted to better understand the perspectives of those who live, work, and visit the city.

Questionnaire.

An online questionnaire with over 200 responses asked participants about their awareness of existing public art in Meridian, the types of art they value most, preferred locations for new installations, and what they believe public art should express or achieve.

Tabling Events.

Four in-person tabling events invited participants to engage in interactive stations designed to gather community input on favorite works in the Meridian Public Art Collection, preferred locations for art, and the kinds of projects that Meridian should aspire to in the future.

Workshop.

An interactive Imagine Art Here! workshop was attended by staff from City departments; MAC members; local artists and arts professionals, and civic stakeholders. Workshop participants brainstormed ideas for public art projects throughout the community.



The tabling event at the Meridian Art Fair engaged hundreds of visitors in sharing a vision for public art (top and center). Attendees *Imagine Art Here!* workshop participated in in-depth conversations about locations and focus areas for public art.



Mission, Vision, Goals, Strategies

Ken McCall
Illuminations, 2020
Renaissance Park

As a part of this planning process, the mission, vision, goals, and strategies for MAPS were refined to provide a clear and unified direction for public art in Meridian. Together, they establish the framework that will guide the program's future growth, decision-making, and investments. The mission defines the purpose of MAPS and its role in commissioning, preserving, and promoting public art. The vision articulates the long-term aspiration for how public art can contribute to Meridian's identity and character. The goals identify the program's primary areas of focus and the strategies build upon these goals by outlining specific actions and approaches for implementation. Collectively, the mission, vision, goals, and strategies create a roadmap for integrating public art into Meridian's ongoing development and community experience.

MAPS Mission

MAPS supports the MAC mission by:

- Commissioning and acquiring public art for Meridian's parks, facilities and public spaces.
 - Stewarding the City's public art collection, ensuring its preservation and accessibility.
 - Promoting community access to and engagement with public art.
 - Partnering with other entities, including other public agencies and developers, to create creating public art in Meridian.
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MAPS Vision

Public art in Meridian builds the city's unique identity rooted in place and community, develops Meridian as a creative and engaging city for all ages, and transforms public spaces into distinctive, engaging destinations that connect past, present, and future.



Opportunities

Key Detail
Perfect Union, 2022
unbound

Public art can take many forms, each offering different opportunities to shape public spaces, engage the community, and express Meridian’s identity. The following categories outline the primary types of public art projects that MAPS could support and commission. Together, these approaches create a flexible framework for integrating art throughout the city, ranging from permanent landmark installations to temporary projects that are responsive to community needs. Defining these categories helps clarify the range of opportunities to artists, partners, developers, and community members.

Project Types

PERMANENT PUBLIC ART

Permanent public artworks are newly commissioned works of art, occasionally developed in conjunction with capital projects. Artworks are site-specific, with artists creating work that responds to the unique aspects of each site. For each permanent work commissioned, the program develops location-specific goals that ensure the artwork reflects the program’s desires around siting, connecting to community, and audience engagement. While described as “permanent,” public artworks are intended to be long-term, but not intended to exist indefinitely. They may evolve, be relocated, or removed over time due to environmental conditions, site changes, public safety considerations, or the changing needs of the community.

Oscar Alvarado
The Rim, 2020
San Antonio, Texas

Alvarado’s sculptural mosaic benches bring color, activity and life into a new park space.

Image courtesy of the artist.



TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART

Temporary public art consists of newly commissioned, site-specific installations that respond to the unique aspects of each site. These are individual artist commissions rather than curated exhibitions and can be one-time projects or part of an ongoing series. The duration of these projects can range from ephemeral, event-based artworks to installations on display for up to two years, or the traffic box wraps, with a lifespan expectancy of 5 to 10 years. Temporary public art installations offer a way to commission work that responds in the moment to community needs and interests.

The Myth Makers
Flannery's Peacock
2021
Atlanta, Georgia

Flannery's Peacock was one of several temporary public artworks featured in the Atlanta Botanic Garden exhibition, *Wings of Wonder: Towering Works of Nature*.

Image courtesy of the artist.

