



To: Meridian Arts Commission
From: Meridith McKinley, Via Partnership
Re: Draft Public Art Materials for Review
Date: March 30, 2026

We are looking forward to joining you again at the MAC Meeting on April 9. At that meeting we will review 1) artist selection processes, 2) roles and responsibilities, and 3) guidelines for portable works. The draft copy of these sections is below. We will walk through each topic at the meeting as well. If you have any questions or comments ahead of time, please let us know.

STANDARD PUBLIC ART PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

New public art projects will, with rare exceptions, be site-specific commissions where an artist is selected to develop a project for the City of Meridian that is informed by the context of the site. The Standard Public Art Project Management Process will serve as a starting point for how to commission artwork, with the exact details outlined in each Project Plan.

Step 1: Develop a Project Plan and Convene a Public Art Project Task Force

The Arts and Culture Coordinator develops a Public Art Project Plan, described above. This plan includes the project goals, location, timeline, and budget; the artist selection process; and a list of internal and external stakeholders.

Once the Project Plan has been developed, a Public Art Project Task Force is appointed specifically for that project. The Arts and Culture Coordinator provides an orientation to the Task Force that provides context about the public art project and site, describes the role of the Task Force in the selection process, and gives an overview of the Project Plan.

Step 2: Develop the Artist Pool

Based upon the Project Plan, the Arts and Culture Coordinator develops and issues a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), sometimes referred to as a Call-to-Artists. Artist qualifications can include a cover letter from the artist expressing their interest in the project, a resume, and examples from the artist's portfolio with a corresponding description of each project.

The RFQ can be an Open Call, where any artist can apply who meets project eligibility, or an Invitational, where the RFQ is only sent to a short list of artists. In rare situations the MAPS Program may opt for Direct Selection of an artist for a project. Methods for developing the artist pool are described below.

Step 3: Select the Finalists

The Public Art Project Task Force reviews artist qualifications based on criteria outlined in the approved Project Plan and selects 3-5 finalists.



Step 4: Select the Final Artist and Concept

At the finalist stage, there are two options for selecting the artist. The Public Art Project Task Force can interview finalists and select an artist based on qualifications and an interview. Or the Panel can ask finalists to each develop a Concept Proposal and base the selection on qualifications and the Proposal.

A. Concept Proposal-Based Selection

In a Concept Proposal-based selection, finalists are paid a stipend to develop renderings, concept description, description of materials and fabrication, initial budget, and timeline and present that proposal to the Public Art Project Task Force.

Prior to the finalists presenting their proposal to the Panel, their draft proposal should be reviewed by the Arts and Culture Coordinator and other relevant City staff to flag potential technical concerns. The finalists should be given time to address any concerns raised in the review.

The Public Art Project Task Force recommends selection of an artist to the MAC based upon the favored Concept Proposal. For projects in Parks, the Concept Proposal is also shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission for their recommendation.

The artist agreement, along with the recommendations of the MAC and the Parks and Recreation Commission, are then submitted to the Mayor and City Council for final approval either via a formal presentation to Council, or an agreement approval on the consent agenda depending on the scope and budget of the project.

B. Interview-Based Selection

In an Interview-based selection, rather than develop a Concept Proposal, finalists are invited to interview with the Public Art Project Task Force. Questions focus on the artist's approach to developing a concept and executing the artwork and other skills that are considered desirable for that project, such as conducting research and community engagement or working collaboratively with a design team.

The Public Art Project Task Force recommends an artist based on their qualifications and interview to the MAC. Once approved by the MAC, the selected artist is then contracted to develop a Concept Design.

To develop the concept, the selected artist should conduct a site visit and meet stakeholders. Depending on the artist's practice and the nature of the project, the artist may conduct additional research, outreach, and community engagement at this time.

Prior to the artist presenting their proposal to the Panel, their draft proposal should be reviewed by the Arts and Culture Coordinator and other City staff, as needed, to flag potential technical concerns. The artist should be given time to address any concerns raised in the technical review.

The Public Art Project Task Force recommends approval of the concept to the MAC. For projects in Parks, the recommendation is also shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission for their recommendation.



The artist agreement, along with the recommendations of the MAC and the Parks and Recreation Commission, are then submitted to the Mayor and City Council for final approval either via a formal presentation to Council, or an agreement approval on the consent agenda depending on the scope and budget of the project.

Step 5: Approve the Final Design

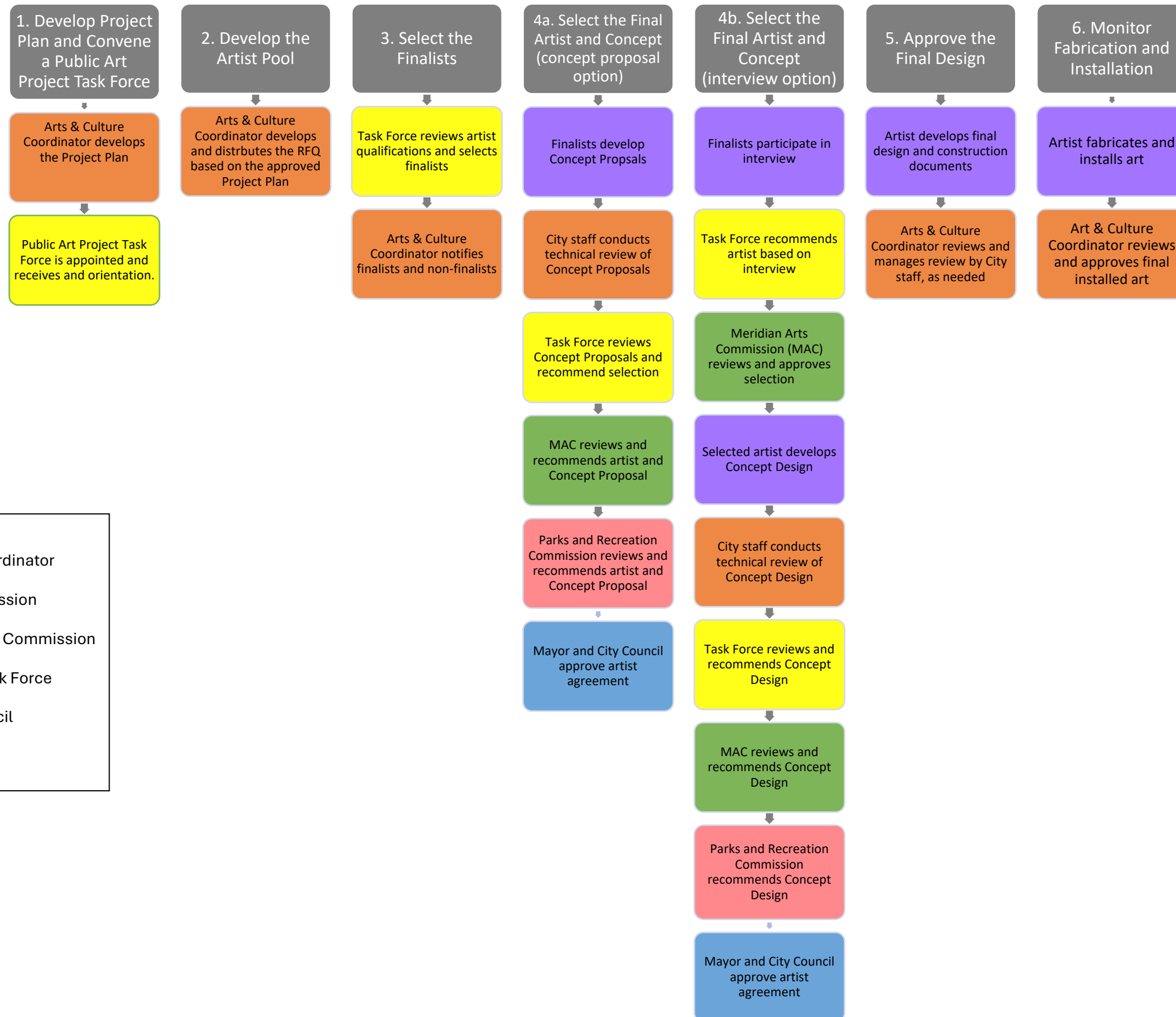
The artist then takes the concept through Final Design and Construction Documents, further refining the design, fabrication techniques, materials, and budget. The artist will submit the Final Design and Construction Documents to Arts and Culture Coordinator for review. The City of Meridian may require that elements of their design reviewed and stamped by a licensed engineer in the State of Idaho. The artist will not proceed with fabrication until receiving approval of the final design from the Arts and Culture Coordinator.

Step 6: Monitor Fabrication and Installation

In most cases, the artist is responsible for fabrication. The Arts and Culture Coordinator monitors fabrication to ensure it is on schedule and in conformity with the approved design. The Arts and Culture Coordinator should inspect the work, through photographs or in-person, prior to the work being shipped.

The Arts and Culture Coordinator works with the artist, relevant City staff, and other stakeholders to schedule and facilitate installation.

In some cases, the Arts and Culture Coordinator and other City staff may play a more direct role in overseeing the fabrication of artwork and/or installation, with the artist acting in an advisory role. In these cases, the City would contract directly with the fabricator and/or installer, who would work under the direction of both the City and the artist.



KEY

- Arts and Culture Coordinator
- Meridian Arts Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Public Art Project Task Force
- Mayor and City Council
- Artist



Community Engagement in the Artist Selection & Concept Development Process

Interview-Based Selections and Concept Proposal-Based Selections both allow for community engagement in the selection process. Finalists who are asked to participate in interviews or develop proposals can participate in an orientation to the site prior to developing their proposals; this orientation can include a tour of the site and surrounding area and could be joined by key stakeholders. Finalist proposals can also be put on view for public comment, which can be taken into consideration by the Public Art Project Task Force.

In addition, artists who are selected based on their qualifications and interviews can engage with the community prior to developing their concept proposal through artist meet and greets, artist talks, or other activities designed to gather information or develop an understanding of the community in ways that may be part of the artist's practice.

Variations to the Standard Commissioning Process

Smaller Budget Projects

For public art projects with a budget of \$5,000 or less, the Standard Commissioning Process should be followed, but the MAC should provide final approval of the artist and concept.

For certain small-scale temporary projects, the MAPS Program could consider selecting artists through a design competition, where applicants would be invited to submit a design as part of their initial submission. While it is generally best practice to only request designs from finalists who are paid a stipend to compensate them for their creative work, design competitions for lower budget projects can open the door to artists who have never done a public art project and can greatly streamline the selection process.

Other Variations

There may be instances in which City and the MAC decide it is appropriate to alter the Standard Commissioning Process for permanent projects or for larger budget temporary projects. Generally, these variations would be intended to streamline the process and could be appropriate when a project needs to be fast-tracked. This would be outlined in the Project Plan and approved by the Public Art Panel. Options for altering the solicitation and selection processes include having the MAC serve as the review body rather than convening a separate Public Art Project Task Force or having the Arts and Culture Coordinator recommend an artist for approval by the MAC. Selections made by the MAC or by the Coordinator could be based on interviews or concept proposals. Variations would need to comply with the City's procurement policy. Once the artist or concept is selected, the Standard Commissioning Process would be followed.

Developing the Artist Pool

In the Standard Artist Selection Process, there are a variety of methods for developing the pool of artists for consideration by the Public Art Project Task Force. The Arts and Culture Coordinator will identify the method in the Project Plan that best meets the needs of the project.



Open Competition

In an open competition a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is issued for a specific project and artists are asked to submit evidence of their past work. Any artist may submit qualifications subject to any limitations established in the RFQ. An open competition allows for the broadest range of possibilities and can bring in new, otherwise unknown, and emerging artists. However, an open competition can sometimes generate hundreds of responses, consuming a large amount of staff resources, as well as volunteer time.

Invitational Competition

In an Invitational Competition, an RFQ or RFP is issued to a limited number of artists. If an RFP is issued, Artists would be paid a stipend for their proposals. Artists are invited, based on their past work and demonstrated ability to successfully respond to the conditions posed by the particular project or based on other non-aesthetic MAPS Program goals. Artists can be identified through research conducted by the Arts and Culture Coordinator, consulting with the Public Art Project Task Force, consulting an Artist Roster, or working with a contracted curator or consultant to identify candidates. A limited competition is useful when looking for a small group of experienced artists, when there is a limited time frame, or if the project requirements are so specialized that only a limited number of already identified artists would be eligible. It is also less time-consuming and more likely to attract experienced artists.

Direct Selection

At times Arts and Culture Coordinator may elect to recommend a direct selection in which it contracts with a specific artist for a particular project without looking at a broader pool of candidates. Such an election may occur for any reason but will generally occur when circumstances surrounding the project make either an Open or Invitational Competition unfeasible (for example: project timeline, community or social considerations, etc.).

Artist Roster

The Parks and Recreation Department has historically developed an Artist Roster as a tool for developing a pool of artists for consideration for multiple public art opportunities. An Artist Roster is developed based on a comprehensive review of qualifications from artists who respond to an open RFQ. A Roster can be focused on a specific set of opportunities or could be used broadly for a range of commissions. If the list is meant to be used for several years, it should be updated regularly.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Mayor, City Council, Meridian Arts Commission, Public Art Project Task Forces, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Arts and Culture Coordinator all play important roles in the activities of *the MAPS program* and ensuring the success of projects. The following lists each entity's roles and responsibilities, as they pertain to MAPS.

Mayor

The Mayor of Meridian is elected to a four-year term. The mayor's responsibilities include supervising all City departments and agencies, preparing and implementing the City budget.

MAPS Program Responsibilities

- Appoints members of the Meridian Arts Commission for approval by City Council.
- Reviews the Annual Work Plan.
- With council approval, signs agreements over certain thresholds according to Finance policies.

City Council

The Meridian City Council is the six-member legislative body of the City of Meridian. City Council members are elected by district to four-year terms.

MAPS Program Responsibilities

- Approves members of the Meridian Arts Commission appointed by the Mayor.
- Approves the annual Parks and Recreation Department budget, which includes MAPS funding.
- Approves agreements over certain thresholds according to Finance policies.
- Approve donations of permanent artwork.
- Approve de-accession of permanent artwork.
- Approve ordinances that pertain to public art.

Meridian Arts Commission

The Meridian Arts Commission (MAC) is composed of 9 members, appointed by the Mayor and Approved by City Council. MAC members have an interest, competence, or knowledge in the arts. The MAC advises the Mayor, City Council, and City staff on matters regarding Meridian's arts and cultural resources, the City's aesthetic environment, and the development of economic, educational, recreation, and tourism opportunities within Meridian through the advancement of publicly accessible arts and cultural enrichment.

MAPS Program Responsibilities

- Review and recommend the MAPS Public Art's Annual Public Art Work Plan.
- Participate on Public Art Project Task Forces.
- Review and recommend Concept Designs for Public Art projects for approval.



- Make recommendations regarding acceptance of gifts of permanent artwork on City property.
- Review and recommend de-accession of public art from the Meridian Public Art Collection.
- Make recommendations regarding proposed revisions to public art policies and procedures.
- Serve as an advocate for public art in Meridian.

Public Art Project Task Force

A Public Art Project Task Force is an ad-hoc Task Force of the MAPS Program that reviews artist qualifications and artist Concept Designs for public art projects.

Each Public Art Project Task Force should include the following representation:

- A member of the Meridian Arts Commission.
- At least one member with experience/expertise in the arts (artists, curators, administrators, educators)
- At least one member with experience/expertise in design (architects, landscape architects, etc.)
- At least one member with specific knowledge and experience about the site, including site/facility staff
- At least one member with specific knowledge and experience with the subject matter/ ideas being addressed, if applicable.
- A member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, if applicable.
- The architect or landscape architect of the related capital project, if applicable.

MAPS Program Responsibilities

- Review artist qualifications and select finalists.
- Review artist concepts/interview artists and recommend final selection.
- Review and recommend approval of artist Concept Design.

Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission is a nine-member body that advises the Mayor and the City Council on matters regarding the City parks system and recreational programming.

MAPS Program Responsibilities

- Appoint a member to sit on Public Art Project Task Forces for public art projects in parks.
- Review and recommend approval of artist concept designs for public art projects in parks.



Arts and Culture Coordinator

The Arts and Culture Coordinator works within the Parks and Recreation Department and is responsible for all program and project administration for activities related to the Meridian Historic Preservation Commission and the Meridian Arts Commission, including: overseeing monthly rotating gallery exhibits at City Hall, coordination of special event related to the commissions such as concerts, art events, preservation month events, publishing meeting agendas and minutes, and management of the MAPS program.

MAPS Program Responsibilities

- Work with the Meridian Arts Commission and other City staff to develop and implement the Annual Public Art Work Plan.
- Oversee the commissioning and installation of new works of art for the Meridian Public Art Collection, including:
 - Developing Project Plans in collaboration with City departments and community partners.
 - Developing artist solicitation materials.
 - Organizing and facilitating artist selection processes.
 - Preparing and negotiating artist contracts.
 - Facilitating technical review of artist designs.
 - Inspecting the final work and coordinating and scheduling installation with artist.
 - Documenting the work as a part of collection management.
- Ensure that the City's adopted public art policies and procedures are followed.
- Ensure that the Meridian Public Art Collection is properly documented, maintained and conserved.
- Pursue potential collaborations.
- Develop materials and programs to inform and engage the public about the Meridian Public Art Collection.
- Oversee the review of permanent public art donations to the City.
- Oversee the review of works of art being considered for de-accession.



PORTABLE WORKS COLLECTION

The Meridian Arts Commission (MAC) established its portable works collection between 2008 and 2010. This initial effort was spearheaded by the Arts Commission and the Mayor's office and focused on acquiring permanent artworks for display within City Hall. Through annual calls to artists living or working in the Treasure Valley, the City successfully purchased ten foundation pieces for their collection.

The City of Meridian recognizes that a portable works collection is a vital civic asset. It serves to invest in local artists and bolster the creative community, build and strengthen Meridian's unique identity, and to creatively engage the community while enhancing public spaces.

Portable Works Collection Goals

- **Invest in Our Local Art Community:** Providing support to Idaho artists through fair-market purchases and recognition through the collection.
- **Strengthen Community Identity:** Strengthening Meridian's distinct identity by building a visual record of its heritage, landscape, community character, and the diverse cultures that shape the region.
- **Enhance Civic Spaces:** Culturally enhance the environment of City Hall and other municipal buildings, by offering staff, elected officials, community leadership, and visitors access to and engagement with fine art in public spaces.

Acquisition Strategy & Budget

To ensure the steady growth and quality of the collection, a budget of up to \$5,000 should be allocated annually from MAPS funds. All purchase prices should reflect the artist's fair market value in accordance with their regular sales history. Acquisitions should follow the city's Acquisition and Deacquisition Policy and can be made through the following three primary pathways.

1. **Annual/Periodic Call-to-Artists :** MAC may issue a formal "Call for Portable Works." This call will define specific themes, mediums, or size requirements. This is the preferred method for large-scale collection growth and ensures a competitive, transparent selection process open to a wide pool of artists.
2. **Purchase Awards:** Acquisitions may be made as "Purchase Awards" from curated exhibitions at the Initial Point Gallery. These works are chosen by MAC or appointed jurors to recognize excellence in currently exhibiting artists.
3. **Direct Recommendations (Staff/MAC):** MAC members or City staff may suggest specific works for acquisition. To ensure professional integrity, all suggestions should be accompanied by a formal acquisition Memo addressing the work's merit, quality, and alignment with collection goals before being presented for a formal MAC vote.



Selection Criteria

All acquisitions will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Artistic Quality and Technical Mastery:** Selected works should be examples of exemplary skill, professional execution, and add value to the City's collection.
- **Representation and Geographic Focus:** Priority will be given to artists from the Treasure Valley and the State of Idaho. While the focus of the collection is local and regional, it will remain open to works from outside these areas if they provide significant cultural or thematic value to the City. The collection shall prioritize works that represent diverse voices, varied cultural perspectives, and a wide range of artistic mediums to ensure the collection reflects the modern identity of Meridian and a variety of voices, themes, and mediums. To maintain a broad representation of the creative community, the Commission will prioritize acquiring works from artists not yet represented in the collection and will generally limit acquisitions to no more than three pieces per artist.
- **Narrative & Cultural Relevance:** Selected works should represent diverse voices, local heritage, landscape, and/or reflect community culture.
- **Durability:** Preference will be given to works made of archival, high-quality materials capable of withstanding public display.
- **Portability and Spatial Versatility:** Works must be non-site-specific and easily reinstalled in various city-owned environments (City Hall, community centers, police and fire stations, etc.). This includes framed 2D media (paintings, prints, photography, textiles) and small-scale 3D works (sculpture) that are display-ready.