



CITY OF
FORT LAUDERDALE

Securing the Future of Public Art in Fort Lauderdale

September 16, 2025

I. Introduction

- We have an opportunity to realign our Public Art and Placemaking Program with the ambitious, forward-thinking identity of Fort Lauderdale.
- Staff seeks Commission feedback on funding mechanisms in the revised ordinance to ensure long-term viability of the program.

II. Why Public Art and Placemaking Matters

- **Cultural Identity**
Reflects Fort Lauderdale's culture, rich history, and coastal character.
- **Community Engagement**
Involves residents in shaping the city's visual landscape and builds civic pride.
- **Beautification**
Transforms ordinary public spaces into vibrant landmarks.
- **Education & Inspiration**
Offers accessible moments of reflection and learning in everyday public spaces.
- **Economic Development**
Drives tourism, supports local artists, and increases foot traffic to businesses.
- **Public Safety**
Activates underused areas, deters vandalism, and creates a greater sense of care and visibility in public spaces.

III. The Current Ordinance – Background and Limitations

- Established in 2020, the current ordinance **requires 2% of eligible City Community Investment Projects (CIPs)** to be set aside for public art.
- The ordinance and financing methods have limitations on what projects may qualify as contributors to the public art, including:
 - Infrastructure and utility projects
 - Projects funded by grants or loans with expenditure restrictions
 - Emergency repairs or reconstructions
 - Interior renovations
- Art in public places has been achieved largely through outreach, private donations, and art installations on public facilities outside of what the ordinance requires.

IV. Goals of the Proposed Revisions

- Establish a sustainable and enforceable funding mechanism for public art and placemaking.
- Realign the ordinance to ensure compliance with funding source restrictions.
- Align with other cities that use capital investments and private development to support cultural infrastructure.
- Reinforce Fort Lauderdale's identity as a creative, innovative, and inclusive city.



V. Proposed Funding Options

Each of the following mechanisms would expand the scope of the program and ensure dedicated, diverse revenue streams.

Proposed Funding Options

Option 1: Ensure that new public buildings, parks, civic plazas, and major renovations incorporate public art—unless legally prohibited by the bond or loan covenant.

- Establish consistency with how other Florida cities apply their public art ordinances. Rationale: If public money is used to build a space, it should reflect public identity, culture, and creativity.
- Recommend a Resolution be considered by the City Commission to direct City staff to include a public art or sense of place component (for example: water feature, sculpture, architectural treatment, etc.) in future new construction or major renovation of City facilities.
- Building a public art or sense of place element into the project budget will overcome limitations faced by the existing public art ordinance.
- City projects constructed through P3s would be included.

Proposed Funding Options

Option 2: Dedicate an ongoing funding program for public art and cultural activities.

- Provides a reliable funding source for the public art and cultural affairs program.
- Funds may be used for arts and culture sponsorships, art activations, art events, temporary art installations, as well as marketing for activations and installations.
- The Fiscal Year 2026 proposed budget includes \$315,028 towards implementation of this option.

Proposed Funding Options

Option 3: Allow Design Flexibility in Exchange for On-Site Public Art

Develop a policy that allows applicants to obtain exemptions from certain ULDR (Unified Land Development Regulations) requirements if their projects include public art.

- Establish art integration as a permissible alternative when deviations are requested. For example, if a developer seeks a reduction in open space, the policy could allow for a defined percentage reduction in exchange for incorporating public art into the project.
- This option creates a link between private benefit and public contribution.
- Incentivizes thoughtful, community-minded design when developers seek added flexibility.

Proposed Funding Options

Option 4: Require Sense of Place Elements for Development within Planning Initiative Areas

- For development not captured above, require the incorporation of Sense of Place elements—creative design that has both aesthetic and community value.
- The applicability of the regulations should be based on both private and public aspects within three (3) categories that focus on: (1) areas in the City identified as a planning initiative such as Downtown, Northwest, South Andrews, Central Beach, and Uptown; (2) public spaces throughout the City; and (3) neighborhoods, individual projects, and promotion of diversity.
- This design-based approach activates spaces without requiring a financial contribution and ensures every project adds value to the public realm.

Proposed Funding Options

Examples of Sense of Place Elements integrated into the Unified Land Development Regulations

- Sculptural seating
- Interactive lighting
- Iconic building entrances
- Artistic garage screening
- Murals and illuminated signage

Illumination of Structures



Signage



Public plazas



Proposed Funding Options

Option 5: Accept Gifts, Grants, and Philanthropic Donations

- Continue to welcome contributions from:
 - Foundations
 - Private donors
 - Corporate sponsors
 - Artists Organizations
- This option would streamline artistic partnerships through an updated donation policy and naming guidelines.



VI. Eligible Uses for the Funds

To continue to expand the reach of the arts, the redeveloped Public Art Fund could be utilized as a Public Benefit Fund

Eligible Uses for the Funds

Funds collected will directly support:

- **Public Art Installations** – permanent and temporary works throughout the City
- **Maintenance & Conservation** – protecting and preserving the City's collection
- **Marketing and Advertising** – promote City initiatives, art installations, and art activities
- **Administration & Planning** – Support for the Public Art and Placemaking Board and Cultural Affairs Office

***The City Commission would be able to waive any project's allocation to the Public Benefit Fund**

VII. Oversight and Accountability

The adoption of concrete policies and procedures to formalize the public art process



Oversight and Accountability

- Continued Commission oversight and direction
- Continued guidance by the Public Art and Placemaking Advisory Board
- Adoption of specific guidelines, policies, and procedures to implement funding options and incentives
- Cultural Affairs Office administers projects, sponsorships/grants, and reporting
- Transparent guidelines for:
 - Funding
 - Artist selection
 - Site selection
 - Maintenance
 - Donations
 - Intellectual Property

VIII. Conclusion and Request for Direction

Public art and creative placemaking are essential to Fort Lauderdale's future—not as amenities, but as infrastructure that builds identity, belonging, and vibrancy.

The revised program reflects:

- What we've learned from four years of implementation
- The realities of development and budgetary limitations
- A desire for more sustainability, more creativity, and more community presence

Requesting the City Commission's direction on:

- Expanding funding mechanisms
- Which options should be included in the new ordinance
- Supporting the "Sense of Place" approach for design-based placemaking
- Moving the revised ordinance forward



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Thank You