

# PUBLIC ART & PLACEMAKING MASTER PLAN *at a glance*



The Public Art and Placemaking Master Plan is unique to Merriam and will guide how the City develops meaningful public art projects that enhance Merriam's vibrancy and quality of life.

## What is Public Art?

Public art is inclusive of literature, performance, events, and experimental works in addition to visual arts. Public art is self-expression in any media that is created for the benefit of the general public.

Merriam's public art program should focus on public art projects that celebrate the city's history and engage its residents, draw attention to and beautify public space, and position Merriam as a vibrant community supportive of, and supported by, arts and culture.

## Plan Goals



Foster place-based pride



Rejuvenate and enliven public spaces



Create a more engaged community through public art.

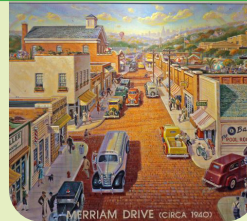
## HOW CAN PUBLIC ART TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY?

Future Public Art projects should be linked to placemaking outcomes.

### Placemaking Outcomes

#### Creative Placemaking

- ▶ **City Identity:** Merriam is known as a small, affordable, suburb with beautiful tree filled neighborhoods and a strong commercial center. Public art can reflect, elevate, or shift this identity.
- ▶ **Wayfinding:** Public art can serve as eye-catching, memorable landmarks that create new associations with Merriam while representing the city's unique character.
- ▶ **Neighborhood Identity:** Public art incorporated into neighborhood signage, streetscaping, or within the parks, can both communicate and enhance a neighborhood's unique character.
- ▶ **Gathering Place:** Public art can foster interaction, accessibility, and connectivity, which are critical parts of a community gathering place.
- ▶ **History:** Merriam has been a transportation hub since its origins, and the community holds great pride for the early desegregation efforts. Public art can celebrate and bring awareness to this incredible history.



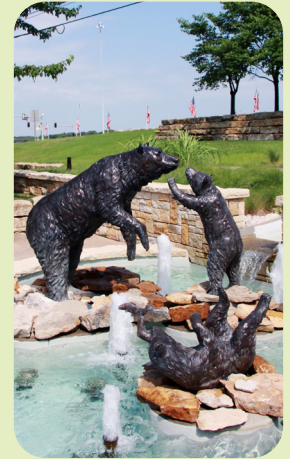
#### Community Development

- ▶ **Health and Safety:** Painted crosswalks or bump outs can create safer streets. Functional artworks such as artist-designed bus shelters, bike racks, benches, water fountains, and trash baskets can encourage people to traverse the city and engage in recreational activities.
- ▶ **Engagement:** Pop-up events engage people as customers, educational art engages people as learners, interactive art engages people as collaborators, community-made art engages people as creators, and art in unconventional places engages people as explorers.
- ▶ **Inclusion:** Intentional awareness and engagement can help ensure public art shines a spotlight on underserved or underrepresented communities.

# HOW CAN PUBLIC ART TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY?

## Economic Development

- ▶ **Tourism:** Public art can attract cultural tourists to Merriam by installing work by well known artists, a concentration of artwork, or promoting existing public art.
- ▶ **Property Redevelopment:** Public art can enhance the uniqueness, liveliness, and desirability of a district or neighborhood, spurring private investment in that area. It can infuse underutilized, vacant, or blighted properties with new value.
- ▶ **Business Development:** Business can enhance the area with striking, colorful, or conspicuous public art, spurring social activity, and increased patronage.
- ▶ **Creative Class:** The presence of public art communicates certain values—creativity, originality, authenticity, diversity, innovation—which can attract more involvement of those working in creative professions.



## COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

### Where do people want to see public art?

Along our streets, gateways to our community, downtown Merriam, gathering places, and unexpected places.

### What themes interest people?

Nature and environment, functional artwork, aesthetics, history and culture, whimsical, and interactive, community created artwork.

### What else is important to the community?

- ▶ Businesses contributing to the city's vibrancy, cultural identity, and sense of place by erecting their own public artworks.
- ▶ Community engagement programs and activities
- ▶ Artwork that reflects our history
- ▶ Murals and other small scale artwork
- ▶ Increasing the visibility of public artwork in Merriam

## PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

The Public Art Committee (PAC) serves as the primary decision-making body for Merriam's public art program. The committee develops public art projects and recommends proposals to City Council. The PAC is happy to provide feedback for public artwork in development on private property.



**Second Thursdays**  
5:30 p.m.  
Merriam Community Center

### Mission

To participate with Merriam residents, visitors, and artists to facilitate connections that generate opportunities to appreciate the community in new ways.

### Vision

A future in which Merriam is identified by arts and culture

### Values

Engagement - Community - Beautification.

Find the complete Public Art and Placemaking Master Plan at [merriam.org/publicart](http://merriam.org/publicart).