



public
art
ON CANDLER



Summary Report

March 2024

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Project Overview

Public art encompasses creative expressions displayed in public spaces, transcending traditional confines of galleries or museums. It serves as a powerful tool for cultural enrichment, fostering community identity and dialogue within the built environment. By integrating artistic interventions into public spaces, it transforms mundane surroundings into dynamic canvases that engage and inspire residents and visitors alike.

With this in mind, public art is being planned along Candler Road between I-285 and Memorial Drive in DeKalb County Commission District 3. Several catalytic possibilities are underway or are expected to begin soon in the district and specifically along the Candler Road corridor, making it the perfect location for a public art focus. Additionally, the 2050 DeKalb Unified Plan highlights the need for more art in public spaces throughout the county.

The purpose of this initiative is to:

- Educate the community on the use of art to build community, spark creativity, and further development goals.
- Identify spaces ripe for activation.
- Collect input on the type and style of art that feels reflective and authentic to the surrounding areas.

The Candler Road community is an active and engaged one, with a clear vision for the future of this major corridor. This report summarizes the public process undertaken to understand the community's needs and vision for public art and goals for implementing a public art initiative on Candler Road.

Engagement Methods

Engagement for this process began with the establishment of a project website. As the official hub for the effort, the site included pertinent project information, contacts, resources, meeting information, and interactive engagement tools.

Promotions & Outreach

A stakeholder database was collected from previous planning efforts as well as from DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability sources and was used to promote the process and engagement opportunities. Additionally, Commissioner Larry Johnson's constituent database was leveraged to promote the process. Other means of promotion utilized throughout the process included:

- Press Release distributed via Commissioner Larry Johnson's office.
- Email campaigns to a database of 250+ individuals with meeting and online engagement reminders as well as post-meeting follow up.
- Distribution of hard copy flyers via postal mail and canvassing along the corridor.
- Social media posts on Commissioner Larry Johnson's Facebook page and Instagram.
- Social media posts on panelists' Instagram accounts.
- Publicity by Commissioner Larry Johnson to constituents at district events.
- Coordination with Georgia State University Communications (Decatur Campus) to distribute email notifications to students, faculty, and staff.

Public Meeting

A “Community Conversation” was hosted at the South DeKalb Senior Center on January 22, 2024, to supplement the online engagement effort with an in person participation option. The purpose of the meeting was to educate and inform the community about the benefits and functions of public art and to collect feedback on their preferences and overall vision for public art along the Candler Road corridor. The format of the meeting was a panel discussion followed by a brief Q&A period and interactive open house. This event was very well attended with more than 70 individuals representing a wide range of age groups and organizations.



The poster features a top banner with the text "public art ON CANDLER" in a stylized font. Below this, the title "COMMUNITY CONVERSATION" is prominently displayed. The main text invites attendees to join Commissioner Johnson and a panel of experts to discuss public art and its role in enhancing the Candler Road corridor. The poster lists four participants: Larry Johnson (Sponsor, DeKalb County Government Commissioner, District 3), George F. Baker III (Panelist, Artist & Creative Director, Foster Art Collective), Derek Cook (Panelist, Decatur-Based Multidisciplinary Artist & Creator), and Roshani Thokari (Panelist, Community Engagement & Culture Program Director, ARC). The event is moderated by Rashan Ali (Multi Media Entertainer, Personality, Actress & Founder). The date and time are Monday, January 22, 2024, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. The location is the South DeKalb Senior Center at 1931 Candler Rd, Decatur, GA 30032. The poster includes the DeKalb County logo, the website URL engagedekalb.dekalbcountyga.gov/artoncandler, and a QR code.

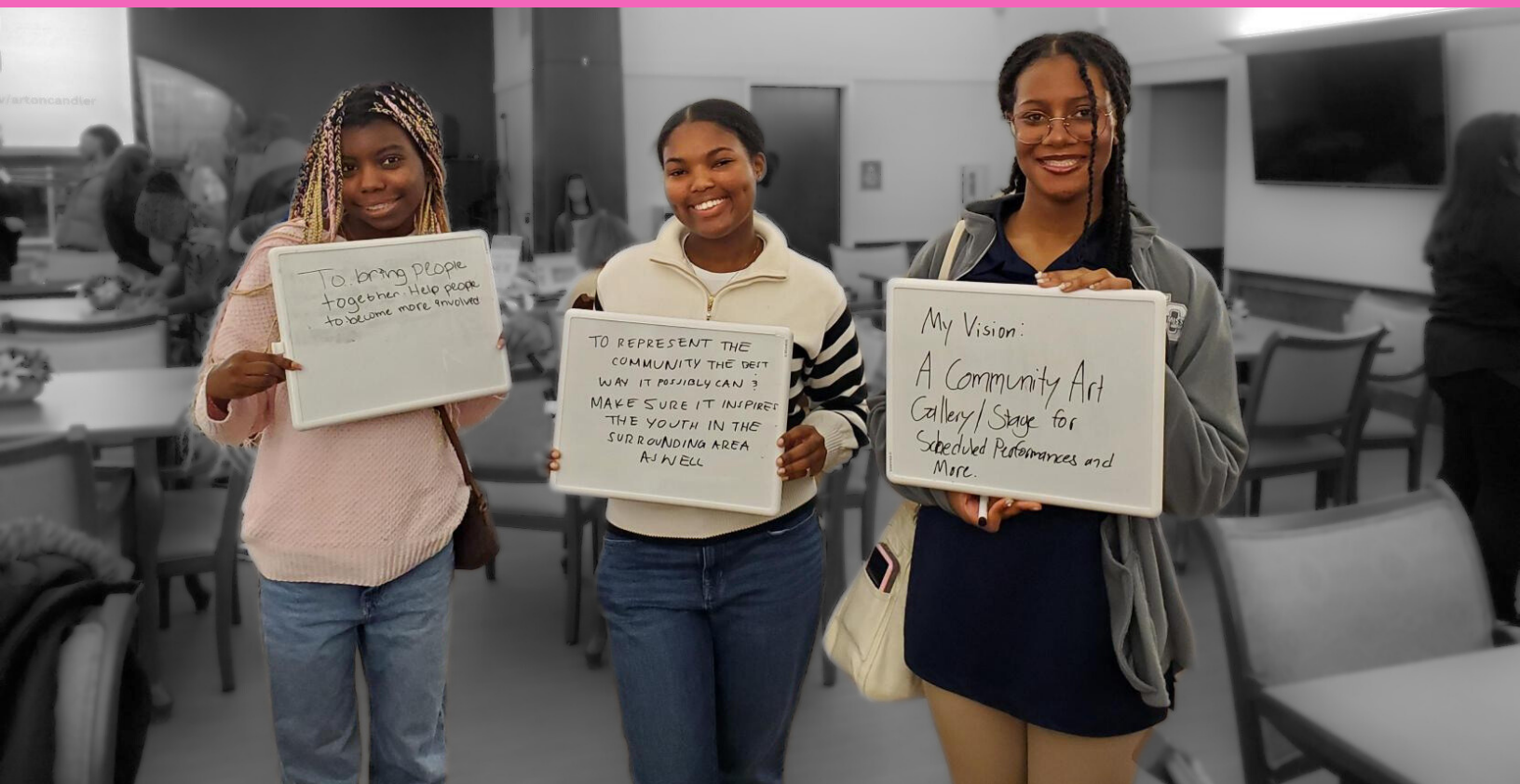
Project sponsor Commissioner Larry Johnson hosted a “Community Conversation” on January 22, 2024.

Online Engagement

The website provided an online portal for engagement and included a survey to collect input on the vision, style, and preferences for art as well as an interactive mapping tool used to identify ideal locations for art along Candler Road. There was also an open forum space for people to talk about their vision online.

A Conversation with the Community

The Community Conversation hosted on January 22, 2024 brought out stakeholders of all ages and backgrounds to talk about the importance and impact of public art on the community. Here, we capture the vision statements crafted by members of the DeKalb County Youth Commission – the future of the Candler Road Corridor.



What We Heard

It is crucial to hear from many people in the community to ensure inclusivity and representation of diverse perspectives. By engaging a wide range of voices, the initiative can better reflect the community's values, aspirations, and cultural identity, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents. Additionally, soliciting input from various stakeholders helps to identify potential concerns or conflicts early on, leading to more informed decision-making and greater overall support for the project.

Survey Results

A total of 115 survey responses were received (70 submitted at the Community Conversation, 45 submitted online via the website). The survey asked a variety of questions, captured below:

- What is your relationship with public art?
- What do you believe the role of public art should be?
- What types of places do you want to see public art?
- Do you have any specific location suggestions for public art? If so, please explain below.
- When it comes to public art, I think my community needs more...
- What styles of public art speak to you the most?
- I see economic/monetary value in installing public art within the community.
- How do you personally interact with art?
- What is your Zip Code?
- Please share any other thoughts you have about public art below.
- Optional demographics questions (age, gender, race and ethnicity).

Survey results show that, overall, the concept of public art was very positively received. The majority of survey respondents (87 of 115) replied that they are lovers of public art.



Survey respondents feel that there are many purposes of public art, but most importantly, believe its purpose is beautification, to bring delight to everyday spaces, to create neighborhood/community identity, and to support artists.

But where should public art go? According to the community, the ideal locations for public art are places of high visibility, prominent intersections, and destinations. The least popular location is within residential neighborhoods or off the Candler Road corridor.

When asked about specific locations, the most popular responses were at prominent intersections, popular destinations, on buildings, or incorporated into infrastructure.

Prominent Intersections:

- Candler Road at Rainbow
- Candler Road at McAfee
- Candler Road at Glenwood Road
- Candler Road at Memorial Drive

Popular Destinations:

- Georgia State University Decatur Campus
- The Gallery at South DeKalb & other shopping centers
- Schools
- Parks and public spaces
- Libraries

Buildings and Infrastructure:

- Building façades and underutilized/vacant properties
- All the business houses/buildings
- Candler Rd Bridges
- On bridges and overpasses (e.g., at Candler and I-285, Candler at I-20)
- Convert trash cans on Candler and at MARTA stations into art.

When it comes to public art, people think their community needs more community art projects (student collaboration, volunteer group project, etc.) and murals.

The next set of questions sought to understand community preferences when it comes to art. The visual preference portion of the survey presented the community with eight different style descriptions and examples of public art. Survey takers were asked to react to the style of art with one of three reactions: “I like this style”, “I am neutral about this style”, or “I do not like this style”.

The eight art styles shown are as follows:

- Abstract: uses shapes, colors, forms to achieve its effect
- Figurative/Portraiture: features human faces or figures
- Geometric: uses straight and curved lines and color to form shapes, patterns, and designs
- Historical: draws inspiration from historic events, styles or imitates the work of historic artists
- Minimalist: an extreme type of abstract art that usually is depicted through simplistic shapes and hard edges
- Pop: based on modern popular culture and mass media
- Street: any art that is done in and for a public space that covers walls, freeway overpasses, and the landscape
- Whimsical: vibrant, playful, fanciful artwork

The three most desired styles of art are Geometric Art (88.7%), Street Art (86.5%), and Historical Art (82.8%).

1

Geometric Art



2

Street Art



3

Historical Art



The least desired style of art is Minimalist (26.9%).



Minimalist Art



Nearly half (45.7%) of survey respondents believe that there is economic/monetary value in installing public art within the community.

The survey asked how people personally interact with art. While most (98 of 107 respondents) personally interact with art by simply enjoying it, a significant number of survey respondents store art (56 of 107 respondents) and love to learn about art (52 of 107 respondents). A quarter (27 of 107 respondents) make or perform art themselves.

Finally, survey respondents were given the opportunity to offer any final thoughts on public art along Candler Road. Many comments were received, but several common themes arose from the responses.

Use local artists, school art programs and students in the community to plan and execute public art projects.

Be sure to include funding for ongoing upkeep and maintenance.

Ensure that public art represents the uniqueness of the Candler Road community.

Public art will greatly benefit the community.

A few optional demographic questions were asked at the conclusion of the survey. Most respondents are from the 30032 zip code and 71.7% identify as female.

A wide range of ages are represented by the survey takers:

- 17 or younger (7.5%)
- 18-20 (0.0%)
- 21-29 (6.6%)
- 30-39 (17.0%)
- 40-49 (20.8%)
- 50-59 (20.8%)
- 60-69 (11.3%)
- 70+ (14.2%)
- I prefer not to answer (1.9%)

People representing a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds participated in the survey:

- Black or African American (72.4%)
- White / Caucasian (17.1%)
- Hispanic or Latino (3.8%)
- Multiple ethnicity / Other (3.8%)
- I prefer not to answer (1.9%)
- Asian / Pacific Islander (1.0%)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.0%)

Interactive Map Results

Input was also gathered via the interactive mapping tool, which presented the entire Candler Road corridor under consideration and allowed users to use pins to identify locations ideal for public art. Pictures were also allowed to be uploaded to further supplement the pins placed on the map. A total of 29 pins were placed on the interactive map.

The comments received on the map closely mimic the input received in the survey and include suggestions for public art at prominent intersections, popular destinations, and on building facades or infrastructure. Specific input on ideal locations for public art include:

Prominent Intersections:

- Pedestrian crossings throughout corridor
- Candler Road at Panthersville Road
- Candler Road at Whites Mill Drive
- Candler Road at McAfee
- Candler Road at Glenwood Road
- Candler Road at Hillside Ave
- Candler Road at Alston Drive
- Candler Road at Memorial Drive

Popular Destinations:

- Scott Candler Library
- Commercial locations (U-Haul, Dunkin Donuts, Advanced Auto Parts, Shell Gas Station)
- Shopping Plazas

Buildings and Infrastructure:

- I-20 and I-285 bridges and overpasses
- Painted electrical/utility boxes along corridor
- Sidewalks and stairs (Candler Road at McAfee Road)
- Façade of commercial locations (Food Value grocery store, vacant Hodges BBQ building, Cash America Pawn building)
- Façade of the gym at Toney Elementary School

Vision & Goals

Vision Statement

A vision statement provides a clear and aspirational roadmap for a public art initiative, guiding stakeholders towards a common goal and purpose. It ensures that the initiative remains focused, cohesive, and aligned with the values and objectives of the community it serves.

The many comments received during the Community Conversation, via the online survey, and the interactive map have contributed to the following vision statement for the public art initiative on the Candler Road corridor:



The Candler Road public art initiative will harness the creativity and talent of the community to transform the Candler Road corridor into a vibrant cultural hub. By leveraging residents, business owners, and local artists this initiative will create unique and sustainable artworks that reflect the diversity and heritage of the community, while enhancing community pride and fostering a sense of belonging. Through innovative and inclusive approaches, we aspire to revitalize Candler Road, stimulate economic growth, and create enduring landmarks that will inspire future generations.

Public Art Goals

Setting goals for a public art program is crucial as it provides a clear direction and purpose for the initiative, guiding the selection, creation, and placement of artworks. These goals ensure that the art serves the specific needs and aspirations of the community, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents. Additionally, having well-defined goals enables effective evaluation and measurement of the program's success, allowing for adjustments and improvements to be made over time.



01. Empower Local Artistic Talent

Provide opportunities for local artists, school art programs, and students in the Candler Road community to showcase their creativity and skills through public art projects, ensuring that the artwork authentically reflects the cultural richness and diversity of the community.



02. Establish a Sustainable Maintenance Plan

Allocate funding and resources for the ongoing upkeep and preservation of public art installations, prioritizing the longevity and integrity of the artwork to ensure that it remains a source of pride and inspiration for years to come.



03. Celebrate Community Identity

Encourage artists to draw inspiration from the unique history, culture, and stories of the Candler Road community, creating artwork that celebrates its distinctive identity and fosters a sense of belonging among residents.



04. Promote Innovative & Diverse Artist Expression

Encourage artists to think outside the box and explore unconventional mediums and spaces for public art, such as incorporating found objects, recycled materials, and interactive elements into their creations, while also exploring the integration of music and performing arts into the public art landscape.



05. Foster Community Engagement & Ownership

Engage residents in the public art initiative through participatory workshops, community forums, and events, allowing them to contribute their ideas and perspectives to the artistic process and fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the artwork and the overall beautification of Candler Road.

Estimated Project Costs

Projecting the cost of public art projects involves a comprehensive assessment of various factors, including materials, labor, installation, maintenance, and administrative expenses. However, general costs for sample public art types are included below:



Painted Utility Boxes

\$500 each



Murals

**\$25 - \$50
per sq ft**



Sculpture

Unlimited*

*Pricing for sculptural artwork is based on several factors:

- Size & scale of the sculpture
- Experience & labor of the sculptor
- Material cost of the sculpture
- Details & complexity of the request

By conducting thorough research and consultations with artists, contractors, and relevant stakeholders, an accurate budget can be developed to ensure the feasibility and sustainability of public art pieces. Additionally, considering potential funding sources such as government grants, private donations, and partnerships with local businesses can help offset costs and maximize resources for the successful implementation of the public art initiative.

Next Steps

Following are proposed next steps for launching the Candler Road public art initiative, involving tasks for DeKalb County, local artists, and the community:

- **Task Force** - Form a task force comprised of local government officials, community leaders, artists, and stakeholders to oversee the initiative.
- **Funding** - Secure funding through grants, public-private partnerships, or allocations from the local government budget to support the project's implementation and maintenance.
- **Proposals** - Issue a call for proposals inviting artists to submit their concepts for public art installations along Candler Road.
- **Artist Selection** - Organize a transparent selection process involving community members, artists, and stakeholders to review and select proposals based on artistic merit, relevance to the community, and feasibility.
- **Community Engagement** - Facilitate community engagement events such as town hall meetings, workshops, and art showcases to involve residents in the decision-making process and foster a sense of ownership and pride in the project.
- **Installation** - Collaborate with selected artists, local businesses, and community volunteers to implement the approved public art installations along Candler Road.
- **Maintenance** - Develop a maintenance plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of the artworks, including regular inspections, repairs, and cleaning schedules, with involvement from the community and local authorities.

By following these next steps, the Candler Road public art initiative can effectively leverage the resources and expertise of DeKalb County, artists, and community members to create vibrant and meaningful public art that enhances the cultural identity and aesthetic appeal of the area.



Plan prepared by Sycamore Consulting, Inc.
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