



LEXINGTON PARK ART PARK

December 2023

Plan Developed by Mahan Rykiel Associates



This project is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council

LEXINGTON MANOR ART PARK PLAN

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INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

In a Southern Maryland town, on 84 serene acres of open land, narrow streets weave between trees as vestiges of the neighborhood that once stood in this place. The community of Lexington Manor—or, the “Flattops” neighborhood, so called for its distinctive architectural style of home—was developed in the 1940s as housing for workers at the adjacent Patuxent River Naval Air Station (“PAX”), but ultimately leveled in 2005 after years of deterioration. The last remaining “flattop” home was dedicated in 2014 as the United States Colored Troops (USCT) Memorial Interpretive Center, paying homage to the contributions of the St. Mary’s soldiers, particularly the United States Colored Troops, who fought during the Civil War.

In 2019, the town of Lexington Park, Maryland, completed a plan for this reclaimed greenspace, officially creating the “Lexington Manor Passive Park.” In 2023, with a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC), the St. Mary’s Arts Council retained Mahan Rykiel Associates of Baltimore to prepare a public arts plan as a phased, 5- to 10-year overlay to the Lexington Manor Passive Park Master Plan (the “Master Plan”). This Lexington Manor Passive Park Art Park Plan outlines recommendations for placing art within the northern portion of the park and for building upon the public artwork that has been completed to date, including murals and benches. This Art Park Plan is a high-level and strategic approach to future improvements. It is grounded in community engagement and incorporates the input of the residents and stakeholders regarding art themes, mediums, permanence, etc.

PLAN PURPOSE

The need for an Art Park Plan arose from the 2019 Master Plan, which quantified public support for introducing community-based/public art (e.g., murals, sculpture, artistic design details, etc.) throughout Lexington Manor Passive Park. The favored approach for doing so was dubbed an “Art-boretum”—a portmanteau combining the word “art” with the concept of an arboretum, a botanical collection of trees. This Art Park Plan arose out of that effort and serves to clarify and refine both the function and organization of the art-boretum concept.

The Lexington Manor Passive Park Art Park Plan intends to establish Lexington Manor Passive Park as a hub for the creative arts. Rather than identify specific works of art or recommend artists, however, the Art Park Plan builds upon existing art assets, identifies the themes and types of art that are desired by community members, and outlines criteria that can be used as the basis for selecting art locations, engaging artists, and developing appropriate works of art—both permanent and temporary.

PLAN SCOPE

Lexington Manor Passive Park is comprised of two main areas: a southern parcel of approximately 50 acres (which is home to the Hot Shots Disc Golf Course) and a northern parcel of approximately 34 acres. The art park will be contained primarily within the north parcel (as is shown in the illustrative plan on page 18); however, there may be opportunities to introduce artwork throughout.

PROCESS

As an overlay to the 2019 Master Plan, the Art Park Plan has the benefit of starting on a solid foundation of understood community needs and interests. Additionally, the effort was further informed by current improvement projects in and around the park.

Having established this background understanding, the Art Park team’s planning process began in earnest in the Summer of 2023. Beginning first with conversations with members of the St. Mary’s County Arts Council, the outreach process included a pop-up tent at the 2023 Juneteenth celebration, and then kicked-off broader participation at a workshop in July. This workshop invited key stakeholders to one of two roundtable discussions and included an open-to-the-public evening meeting. A summary of input is included in the next section and as an appendix.

RECENT AND CURRENT EFFORTS

LEXINGTON PARK MASTER PLAN

- Approved July 9, 2019
- Formalized Lexington Manor Park as a “passive” park
- Guides future improvements in Lexington Manor Passive Park
- Guiding Principles: *Community Health and Fitness; Community Connections; Community Voices; Multi-generational Use + Accessibility; Landscape Conservation*
- Identified opportunity to create an “art-boretum”

CURRENT PROJECTS

- Community Development Corporation Community Garden [Underway]
- UCAC Mural Arts Project [2024]
- Mural around restroom facility [Underway; Anticipated Completion Spring 2024]
- Preservation mural of soon-to-be-demolished Tulagi Place on the side of the Three Notch Theatre [2024]



Before



After

LEXINGTON MANOR

This architectural rendering of the Lexington Manor Neighborhood was provided by an attendee at the July 19th Public Workshop



150 PERMANENT DWELLING UNITS & COMMUNITY HOUSE

ELY JACQUES SAHN

ROBERT ALAN JACOBS ARCHITECTS & SITE PLANNERS

KENNETH J. HESBETS - SITE CONSULTANT - JANET DARLING - LANDSCAPE - ALFRED J. OETNER - MECHANICAL

LEXINGTON PARK

36 01 CEDAR POINT

NATIONAL HOUSING AGENCY

JOHN J. BLANDIGAD ADMINISTRATOR

FEDERAL PUBLIC HOUSING ADMINISTRATION

PETER J. EMERSON COMMISSIONER

DIRECTOR REGION II

CLEVELAND WINSTON

SUMMARY OF INPUT

Community engagement efforts for the Lexington Manor Passive Park Art Park Plan began during the June 17, 2023, Unified Committee on Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) Juneteenth Celebration in John G. Lancaster Park (adjacent to Lexington Manor Passive Park). At the festival, Lexington Park Arts Council set up a booth to distribute flyers for an upcoming public participation opportunity: the first Art Park Plan public meeting, to be held a month later on July 19. In addition to public meeting flyers, the Arts Council also handed out “Let Us Hear Your Story!” notecards, which prompted event attendees to share stories, images, inspiration, and meaningful memories that could inform the vision for the Lexington Manor Park Art Park. Rather than collect a vast series of responses, this tool functioned more as a conversation starter.

STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

The site visit on July 19th began with two back-to-back stakeholder conversations. Topics centered on important considerations for the park, existing ideas, and relevant themes, as well as programmatic and environmental considerations (e.g., concern for graffiti, maintenance, desire for youth activities, etc.).

Some major takeaways from the two conversations are as follows:

- It is important to preserve the feeling of the space as a passive park.
- The Lexington Manor Park Art Park should celebrate and honor the history of Lexington Park.

- Improvements should incorporate elements or themes that are relevant to Lexington Park’s youth.
- There’s interest in art pieces that are interactive, including art that interacts with nature/the environment and art that encourages visitors to engage with the art and with one another.

JULY 19TH PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting immediately followed the two stakeholder conversations. During this meeting, the Arts Council outlined the project impetus, objectives, and scope. The Mahan Rykiel Associates team then described, in more detail, the role of an arts master plan and defined how public participation would be used to shape the master plan. Attendee ideas, preferences, and reactions were collected as they engaged with a series of exercises (the ideas collected in these exercises are summarized in more detail beginning on page 24).



FIRST CONVERSATIONS

The 2023 UCAC Juneteenth Celebration presented the first opportunity to inform members of the community of the upcoming workshop and to seek their thoughts and stories



ADDITIONAL OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

When engaging the public, it's sometimes more effective to go to the people, rather than invite the people to a meeting. Attendance at the public workshop was limited, but the team knew it was critical to give the greater Lexington Park community a fair chance to weigh in on the Art Park effort. Thus, the same five workshop exercises were later brought to the Library during the following weekend and then to the Home Grown Farm Market on Wednesday, July 26th.

OVERALL TAKEAWAYS

1. The introduction of art into Lexington Manor Passive Park should reinforce the park's passive function as a place to escape, recharge, and enjoy the landscape. In this vein, natural art received strong support.
2. Calling for a balance with the desire to keep the park passive, the community expressed significant interest in performing arts and interactive art elements (e.g., playscapes, social art pieces, hands-on art, and art that responds to the environment).
3. Opportunities for the most impactful art elements are those that celebrate Lexington Park's identity, culture, and history and honor the stories of both important and everyday people from Lexington Park's community.
4. The art park should have something for everyone (especially for youth) and should be mindful to meet the needs of diverse populations with differing physical and cognitive abilities.
5. While there is strong desire for joyful art (and art that evokes positive emotions, generally), there is some support for and/or comfort with art that evokes a range of emotions, particularly when that art can spur conversations about important topics or events.
6. Continued involvement from the community, regarding art development and placement, or engagement with the art, will reinforce the community's connection to the art pieces in Lexington Park.

Detailed summaries of five public workshop exercises used during stakeholder conversations, public meeting, and additional outreach opportunities are included as an appendix at the end of this booklet.

LEXINGTON PARK

Lexington Manor Passive Park is located southeast of downtown Lexington Park (one of fastest growing “micropolitan” areas in the entire nation) and is part of an area that has amassed a rich history over the years, reflected in the park’s character. The population of Lexington Park is quite diverse, with 51% of residents identifying as White, 27% as Black, 10% as two or more races, 5% as Asian and/or Pacific Islander, and 5% as some other race. The land of what today is called “Lexington Park” was at one time home to the Piscataway (also known as Conoy) peoples. As the Lexington Manor neighborhood was developed, it and the areas immediately surrounding the property became a center of Lexington Park’s Black community. The diversity of people in Lexington Park now and throughout its history has become a central value to the community.



LEXINGTON PARK COMMERCIAL CENTER

Historic image of Lexington Park provided by July 19th Public Workshop attendee

Today, Lexington Manor Passive Park is home to multiple important festivals throughout the year, including the annual Juneteenth festival (which the UCAC has hosted since 2003), the Cherry Blossom Festival each March, a 5k Run, and various navy events, among other community gatherings. Throughout the year, between these large events, Lexington Manor Passive Park attracts many visitors out for a picnic, walk, jog, stroll, or bike ride.

LEXINGTON MANOR PASSIVE PARK

The park is prized for its open landscape and tall shade trees.





THEN AND NOW

The single-story, concrete block homes of Lexington Manor were distinct due to their slanted, flat roofs. This roof shape, and its resemblance to naval flattop aircraft carriers, earned the homes' their nicknames as "Flattops". Only one "flattop" home remains and currently houses the UCAC Interpretive Center. Historic Image (top) provided by attendee at the July 19th Public Workshop.

PARK CHARACTER

It is important to understand and consider the park's character in the placement of art so that it enhances—rather than detracts from—the park's passive qualities.

Overall Character

The overall character of Lexington Manor Passive Park is defined by several natural and man-made elements:

- Broad, sweeping lawns allow for gathering, flexible play, and access to sunshine;
- Woodland edges provide a natural backdrop and a strong spatial enclosure for cove-like spaces within the park;
- Tree groves—both large and small—provide shade, help define smaller spaces within the park, and add a dramatic contrast to the sunny, open lawns;
- An existing pathway network provides a variety of accessible "loop" experiences for park users out for a stroll, run, or bike ride; and,
- Sightlines are open throughout the park, even within the tree groves where tree branches have been pruned.

Key Features/Assets Within the Park

- The United States Colored Troops Memorial Statue (dedicated in 2012) is a memorial to the more than 700 African-American soldiers and sailors from St. Mary's County, Maryland, who served in the Union forces during the American Civil War.
- Centrally-located within the park and at the southern end of the park's north parcel, the United States Colored Troops Interpretive Center is housed within the last remaining "Flattop" structure. Two interpretive signs are present here and describe the history of the "Flattops" development as well as the role of the U.S. Navy in St. Mary's County. Amenities at the Interpretive Center include meeting space, interpretive displays, restrooms, and access to water and electricity.
- A covered Pavilion with picnic tables is located immediately adjacent to the Interpretive Center. Additionally, there's another covered pavilion near the new restroom building.

PATHS THROUGH TREE GROVES

The old neighborhood streets weave between trees as vestiges of the neighborhood that once stood in this place.





PERFORMANCE AREA

A paved path and concrete pad are assets in this space that can be used for events.

- A new restroom building, recently adorned with a new mural, is located at the north end of the north parcel.
- Located centrally in the park, there is an existing paved path allowing access to a potential performance area.
- Multiple accessible wellness-stations have been situated along the loop road. These stations allow for exercise and play throughout the park.
- The Lexington Park Lions Club and St. Mary's County Arts Council funded the creation of six painted benches, which are brought out seasonally.
- A new community garden is currently under construction near the Post Office at the northern edge of the park. The garden will be accessible and open to all.

Key Features/Assets Adjacent to the Park

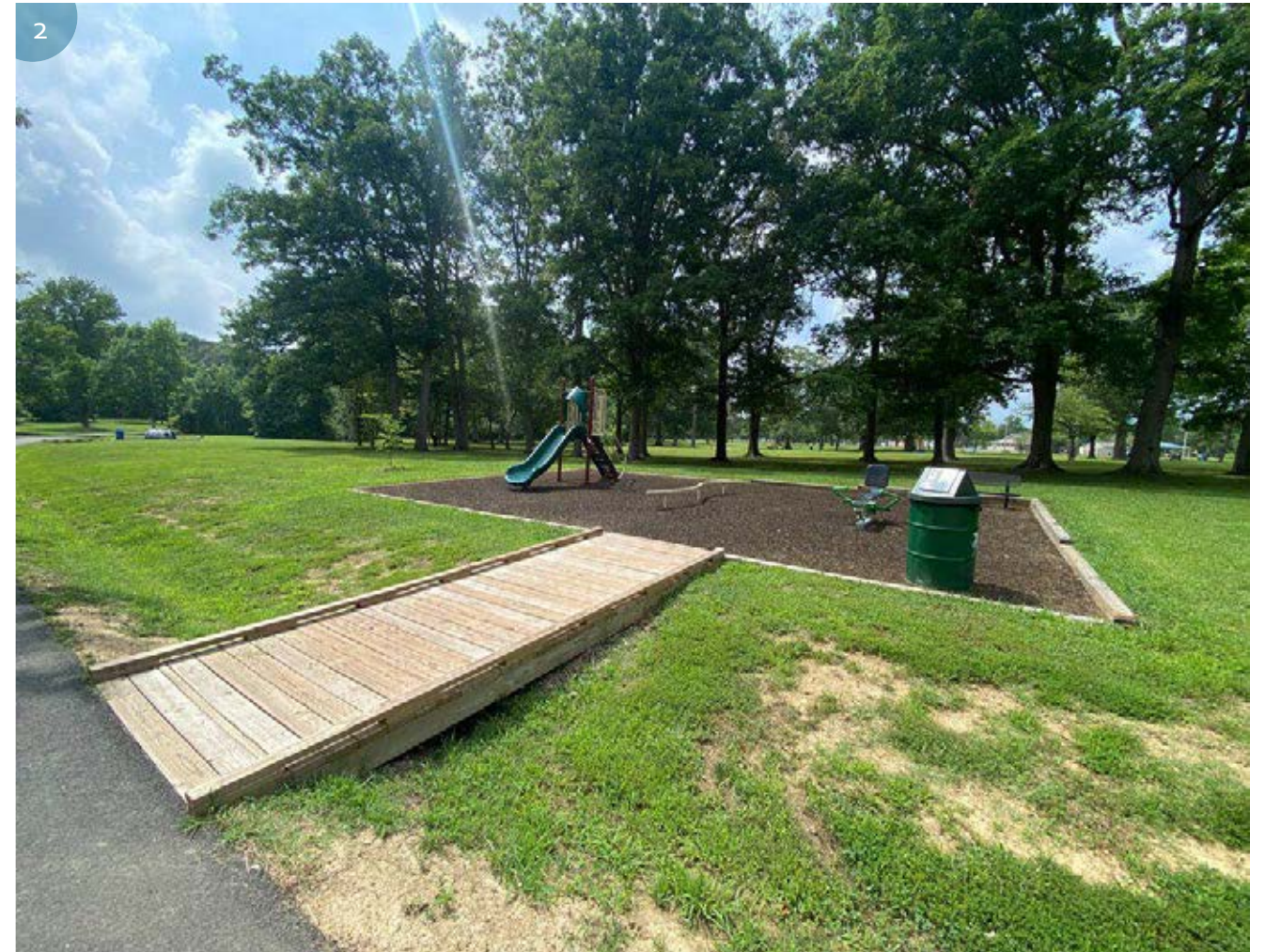
- Three Notch Theatre
- John G. Lancaster Park



PAINTED BENCHES

In a 2022 competition, artists were invited to submit ideas for whimsical park benches in an effort that was co-sponsored by the Lexington Park Lions Club and St. Mary's County Arts Council. Six completed benches have since been installed in the Park.





EARLY AND FORTHCOMING IMPROVEMENTS

Already, there have been a number of improvements to Lexington Manor Park, and more are planned or underway. Among these initial projects are [1] new restroom facilities and pavilion (including the recent restroom mural), [2] exercise stations, [3] a concrete pad for events, [4] a planned community garden, and a [5] planned mural of Tulagi Place on the nearby Three Notch Theatre.



Threats and Challenges to Park Character

While the Lexington Manor Passive Park offers a wonderful canvas upon which St. Mary's County can continue to add amenities such as public art, the following are some observations which may present challenges for Lexington Manor Passive Park:

Access to Shade

Despite the many woodlands and tree groves, most of the park's amenities (especially the wellness stations) are in full sun with little protection in the form of shade. In much of the park, the pathway network is also in full sun with few canopy shade trees located along the pathway.

Sightlines

The open site lines throughout the park are an important quality to preserve. The park Master Plan, however, recommended lining several pathways with flowering trees. The low branched canopies of flowering trees would block open sightlines. Additionally, they would provide little shade along the walkways. Instead, flowering trees are best located along woodland edges as an understory planting, or within occasional clusters along the walkway.

Cluttered Spaces

The open, sweeping lawns of Lexington Manor Passive Park are an incredible asset but there is the risk of filling them with too much "stuff". New amenities (public art, site furniture, etc.) should be carefully placed so as to help accentuate and define—rather than fill—the open spaces.

Naval Restrictions

Lexington Manor Passive Park is situated just southwest of the Patuxent River Naval Station ("PAX") and is subject to two relevant restrictions for noise and accident potential: the [Air Installation Compatible Use Zone \(AICUZ\)](#) and Aircraft Accidental Potential Zone II (APZ II), both of which are described in more detail in the original Master Plan. These restrictions sometimes limit the ability to host programs and events, and can place additional limitations that could preclude certain artistic installations, such as lighting installations that would impact visibility.



LACK OF SHADE

Though the park features many tall and beautiful canopy trees that cast shade throughout the day, many of the amenities—including picnic tables and the wellness stations—are exposed to full sun during most parts of the day.



NEED TO MAINTAIN SIGHTLINES

Existing sightlines through the mature trees help to give the park a lovely openness. When placing artwork and new plantings, care should be taken to preserve this quality.

UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC ART

PUBLIC ARTFORMS

There are many possible ways to express and celebrate Lexington Park through Art.



Creative Placemaking + Place Branding

Public art can be an expression of a place's identity. Placemaking is a process through which community members contribute to the overall philosophy which ultimately guides a project. As a result, a community can develop community-informed markers of identity, whether in the form of signage, site furnishings, murals, or another medium.



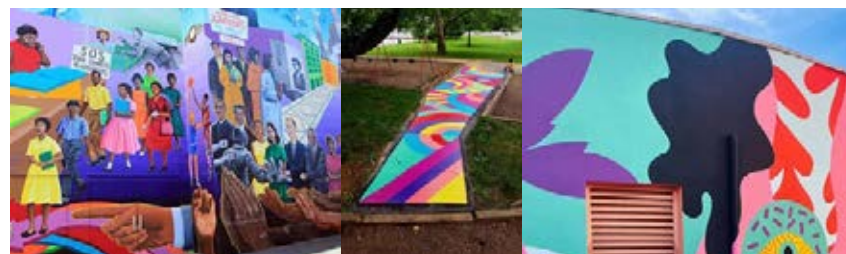
Gateways

A gateway marks a point of arrival and, oftentimes, the threshold between two spaces. Gateways can be bold and ceremonial expressions of a community's identity, but modest markers can be just as powerful at signaling "you have arrived."



Sculpture | Kinetic Art

Sculptures can be contemporary, traditional, or playful. They can be integrated into their surroundings (site-specific art) or can be in prominent locations with the intent of being the focal point for that area (signature installations).



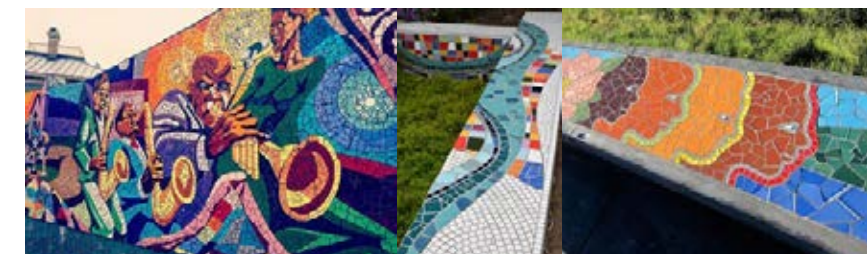
Murals

As already demonstrated at Lexington Manor Passive Park, murals can provide interest to blank walls and be used to depict history, culture, and other themes.



Light Installations

Lighting can be used effectively to make a significant impact at relatively little cost. Lighting can be used to accentuate the tree trunks in the grove, highlight a building façade, and/or create patterns on the ground plane. For a more dramatic impact, lighting can be used as an artistic installation medium—for example, in the form of projections or illuminated sculptures. At Lexington Manor Passive Park, any lighting must comply with the AICUZ.



Mosaic

Created by arranging small materials (typically tiles) into a pattern or image, mosaic artworks can often involve community members and/or their contributions of materials.



Trail-Path

To find a canvas for art, one needs only look down. The paved loop pathways can themselves present an opportunity to create a work of art, typically with paint but perhaps through mosaic work or some other medium.



Environmental/Nature Art

Artwork may be considered “environmental” either due to its message (e.g., the use of recycled/found materials to make a statement about waste) or in its construction (e.g., working with natural materials and often blending into or responding to the surrounding landscape).



Playscapes

As an alternative to a conventional playground, playscapes offer a chance to get creative with the play elements upon which kids (and adults, too!) can climb and explore. Often, playscapes become sculptural, artistic compositions that are visually attractive whether they’re in use or not.



Functional Art and Artful Furnishings

Art can be incorporated into functional elements including bike racks, bollards, benches, trash receptacles, etc. The six art benches already in place are a good example of this.



Interactive | Social Art

Interactive (or interaction) art calls for the observer to engage with the artwork, and often with others. This can be an inclusive and welcoming medium to introduce into a space, and often encourages strangers to connect with one another in playful ways.



Performing Arts

The performing arts— theatre, music, dance, etc.—can bring life and activity to a space. In Lexington Manor Passive Park, the nearby Newtowne Players are a potential resource and partner for theatrical performances.



Commemorative Art

Commemorative artworks help to re-tell important stories from a community’s history. It is often a way to remember, or memorialize, important people or events.



Exhibits and Interpretive Features

Typically in the form of educational signage, interpretive features can take on a more artistic appearance to educate observers about important topics, for example, or past or current events.



Art Programs + Multimedia

Lexington Manor Passive Park can itself be a canvas upon which art is created through programs and events. Multimedia installations may combine many art types in interesting and engaging ways. Multimedia could be particularly useful for pop-up or temporary installations.

ART APPLICATIONS

Degree of Permanency

Some public art elements are intended to last for generations, while other installations may be more fleeting. At Lexington Manor Passive Park, there are opportunities for art of all kinds, which may include some rotating, or temporary pieces situated amidst permanent installations. Depending on whether a work of art is temporary or permanent, it may require different considerations.

Permanent

Permanent works of art are meant to exist for many years. Therefore, permanent artwork should be considered most rigorously, giving thought to accessibility, compliance with local requirements, sustainability of materials, ongoing maintenance needs, how the artwork fits within the community's values, etc.

Pop-Up and Temporary Art

Not all artwork, however, is permanent. Pop-up and temporary installations allow artists to experiment and can invite excitement and novelty to a place. Temporary artworks are often more cost-friendly installations and can be incorporated into park events or community participatory projects even for short periods of time. While safety and durability are always important considerations for a potential art piece, temporary artwork is typically privileged to have somewhat more flexibility than a permanent installation.

Placement

Artwork can be set within the park in one of three ways, based upon the extent of marriage between art and landscape.

Independent, or Stand-Alone

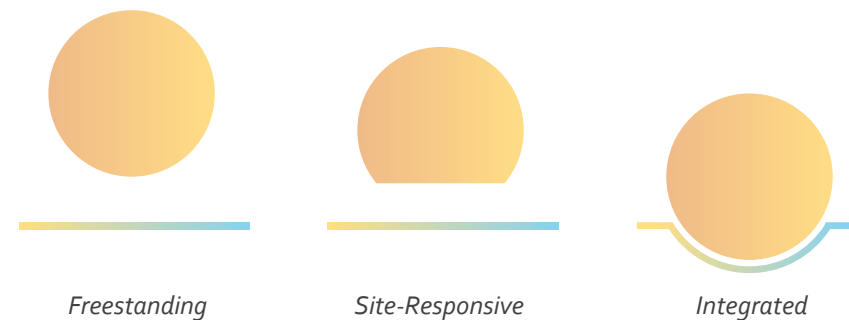
Freestanding artworks often do not interface with the surrounding site or landscape and could be easily relocated to a new home without any loss of the artwork's meaning or quality.

Site-Responsive/Site-Specific

Site-specific art responds directly to the surrounding landscape and context. These works would lose or change meaning if located in any other place. It could be nature-based art along a woodland edge, or food/culture related art near the community garden.

Integrated

These works of art are those that integrate directly into the surrounding infrastructure in such a way as to appear as though they are part of the landscape. These pieces typically cannot be separated from the space or infrastructure.



Signature Installations

Signature installations are intended to be significant works of art—most likely sculpture—with the intent of serving as a highly visible focal point. Signature installations could be set out within an open lawn, visible from multiple directions, or might be incorporated into a community gathering area or performance area. There should only be a few of these installations within the park, otherwise they begin to visually compete with one another.

RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC ART GUIDANCE

Americans for the Arts is a public art advocacy group that provides useful information for [learning about public art](#).

Americans for the Arts has also published a research paper titled [Why Public Art Matters](#)

The Trust for Public Lands has developed a [Field Guide for Creative Placemaking and Parks](#)

The National Endowment for the Arts has published their own website a [list of public art resources](#)

ARTS MASTER PLAN

VISION

With this Art Park Plan, the town of Lexington Park, Maryland, is solidifying Lexington Manor Passive Park's role as a hub for the creative arts. From this nucleus, creativity shall emanate outward, reinvigorating the broader corridor and stirring interest in bringing artwork throughout the entire community of Lexington Park. Lexington Manor Passive Park is envisioned as a place to gather and to celebrate the people of Lexington Park. It is a celebration of Black community, of the Indigenous Peoples who first inhabited this land, of the water tradespeople of Lexington Park's early days, of the soldiers and sailors who fought during the Civil War, and of all the people who have since added to the character and life of Lexington Park.

GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is important that public artwork in Lexington Manor Passive Park is guided by the following principles:

A Reflection of the Diverse Peoples of Lexington Park

First and foremost, Lexington Park residents think that artwork should reflect the local character. Opportunities for the most impactful art elements are those that celebrate Lexington Park's identity, culture, and history and that honor the stories of important people.

Tells a Story

Lexington Park residents are also interested in art with a message. This might involve celebrating and honoring Lexington Park's history, which can be shared through narratives of the navy, residential communities, important residents

(notably, medal of honor awardees), agricultural and waterfront origins, and Indigenous peoples of the area. Alternatively, it might be artwork that presents a commentary on social or political topics.

The stories told by works of art may not always be cheery, and Lexington Park residents feel that's okay. While there is strong desire for joyful art (and art that evokes positive emotions, generally), there is some support for and/or comfort with art that evokes a range of emotions.

A Marriage of Art and Landscape

Art should not be "plopped" onto the landscape without consideration for context. Whether a work of art is temporary or permanent, freestanding or integrated, its placement should be selected because that location—more than all others—is best suited to complement the work of art. Similarly, the artwork in that spot, should not detract from the surrounding scenery. Important considerations for placement include scale (how does the size of the artwork relate to the size of the space?), function (does the artwork impede the ability to use the space normally? and, are surrounding uses compatible with the artwork? and, would the artwork detract from or add to the special significance of a place?), accessibility (are people of different abilities able to engage with the art equitably?), safety (would the artwork obstruct circulation, interfere with utility infrastructure, would it be vulnerable to environmental risks, or would it in any other way create an unsafe environment?), and future uses of the space (is the site planned for a different future use that should be preserved?).

Accessible and Open-to-All

The art park should have something for everyone, including youth, and should be mindful of the needs of diverse populations with differing abilities.

Reinforces the Passive Nature of the Park

A visit to Lexington Manor Passive Park should not feel effortful or cluttered. The introduction of art into the park, therefore, should reinforce the park's passive function as a place to escape, recharge, and enjoy the landscape. In this vein, natural art becomes a prominent opportunity.

Interactive and Experiential

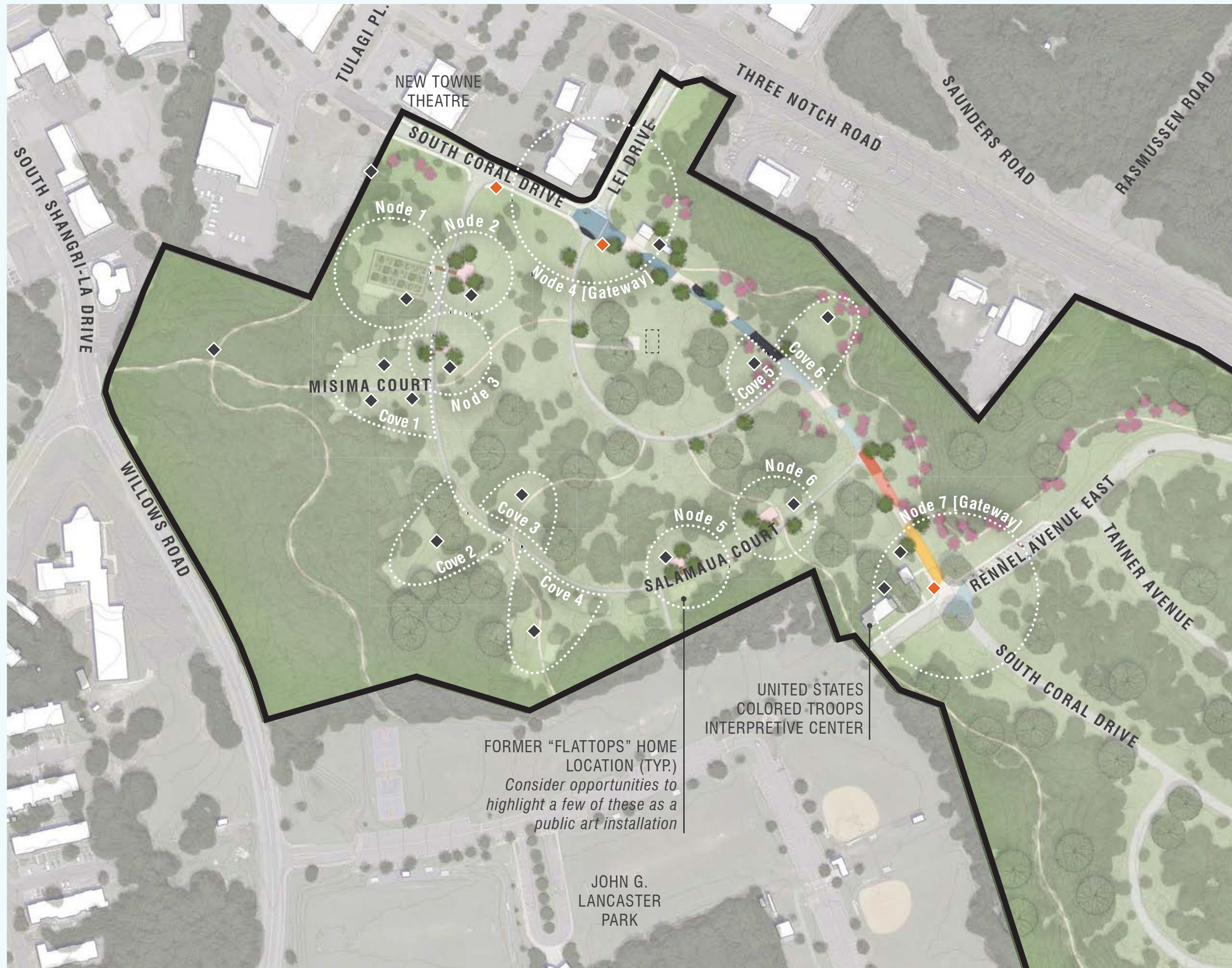
Demanding a balance with the desire to keep the park passive, the community expressed significant interest in performing arts and interactive art elements (e.g., playscapes, social art pieces, hands-on art, and art that responds to the environment).

Community-Driven

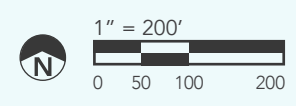
Continued involvement from the community, regarding art development and placement, or engagement with the art, will reinforce the community's connection to the art pieces in Lexington Park.

Creates Opportunities for Different Artists

When commissioning artwork, Lexington Park residents felt that it was important to give emphasis to creating opportunities for local artists, artists of Color, and artists who work with community in developing their concepts.



- Open Lawn
- Footprint of a "Flattop" Home (since demolished)
- Tree Canopy
- Existing Specimen Tree
- Proposed Canopy Tree
- Proposed Flowering Tree
- Proposed Footpath
- Existing Building/Pavilion
- Existing Asphalt Loop
- Proposed Art Promenade
- Existing Exercises/Wellness Station (with Boardwalk Access)
- Potential Performing Arts Stage
- Potential Art Opportunity
- Signature Art Installation Opportunity
- Proposed Community Garden
- Node or Cove



FORMER "FLATTOPS" HOME LOCATION (TYP.)
 Consider opportunities to highlight a few of these as a public art installation

UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS INTERPRETIVE CENTER

JOHN G. LANCASTER PARK

Fig. 1. Illustrative Plan

THE PLAN

Illustrative Plan

The Illustrative Plan, as shown in Figure 1, outlines the overall Lexington Manor Passive Park Art Park. The Illustrative Plan is supplemented by overlay diagrams that help highlight key aspects of the plan.

Thematic Areas

Three generalized, thematic zones are envisioned for the art park, as shown in Figure 2 and described below. While these are illustrated as distinct zones, the boundaries are somewhat fluid.

History/Culture/Navy/PAX

This thematic zone covers the core of the art park. Art within this zone should emphasize the Navy, the history of residential neighborhoods and the “Flattops”, and medal of honor awardees.

Land/Melting Pot/Community

This thematic zone is an overlay zone centered around the North Gateway Node (and the community garden) and the South Gateway Node. Art within this zone should emphasize agricultural and waterfront origins of the community, Indigenous peoples who once occupied the land, the coming together of people from all over, and the broad sense of community.

Nature

This thematic zone is located along the woodland perimeters of the site. Art within this zone should have a connection to nature—the forest, waterways, the ecosystem, etc.

Nodes and Coves

The Nodes, Coves, and Art Promenade, as shown on Figure 3, is the organizing framework for locating art within the art park to avoid art being “plopped down” just anywhere, which would compromise the integrity of the park as an open space.

Nodes

Nodes are places of existing activities and amenities. Nodes present opportunities to introduce art and further reinforce these areas as special places. Further, by building upon these nodes of existing activities, the open landscape character of the park can be protected by not “filling” with too many separate attractions.

Coves

Coves are naturally occurring alcoves within the woodland edge. They are well-defined individual spaces that are visible and accessible to the pathway network.

Art Promenade

The Art Promenade is envisioned to be the primary pedestrian connection between major art nodes, the North Gateway, and the South Gateway. The Art Promenade will also connect these gateway areas to the Performance Zone. In addition to art installations along the promenade, the promenade paving itself could become an artistic focal point.



SOUTH CORAL DRIVE

South Coral Drive serves as a central spine through the park.



THE NODES AND COVES OF LEXINGTON MANOR PARK

Coves are found throughout the park where trees frame little nooks. The wellness stations, meanwhile, are examples of a node, or point of activity.

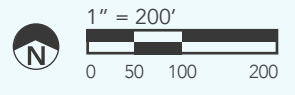
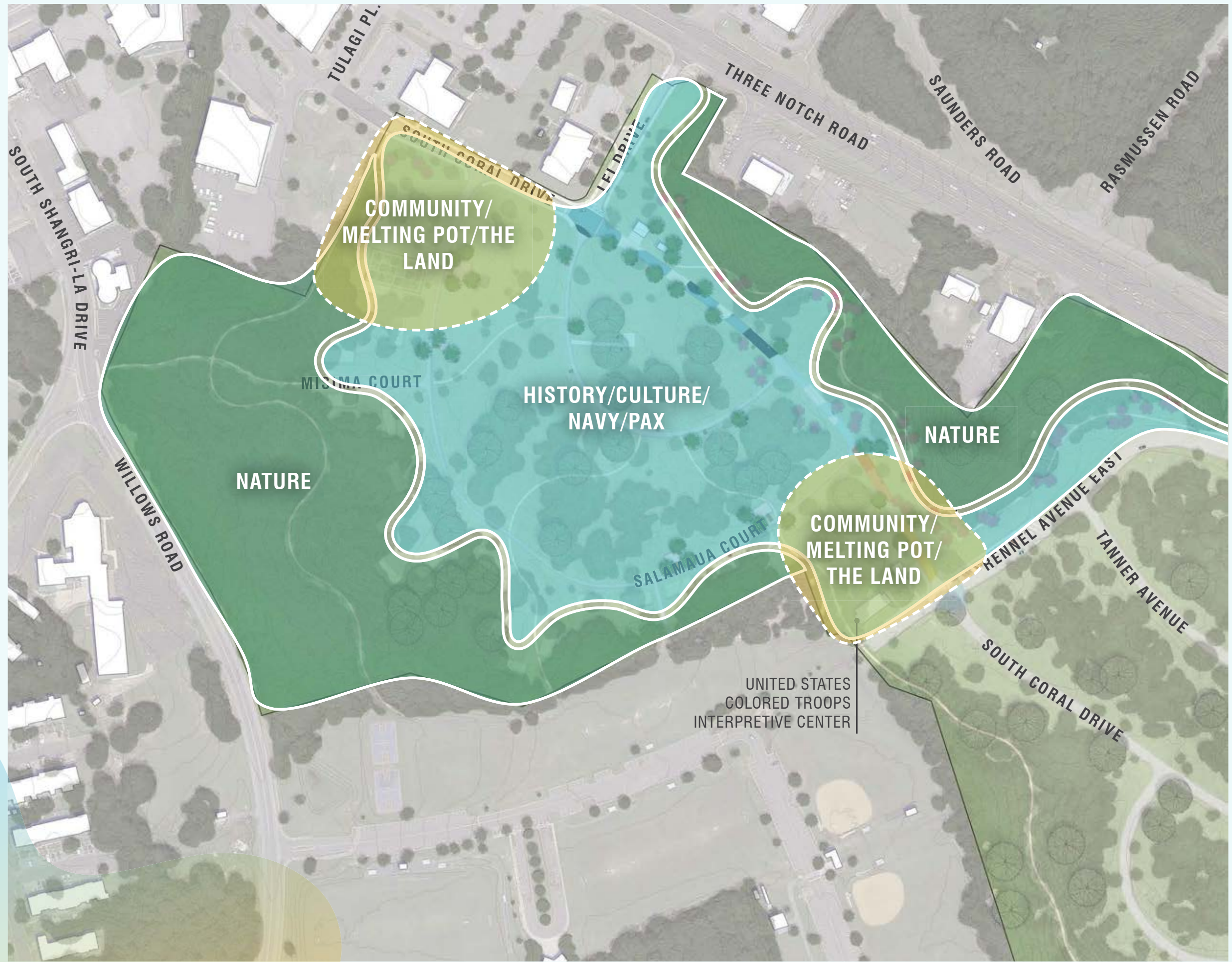


Fig. 2. Thematic Zones



*** SIGNATURE INSTALLATION**

These spaces are approximate locations for a prominent pieces of art that can take advantage of the broad setting around it. Art here is intended to call attention to itself while most art within the park should become part of the overall park context. There should only be a few signature installations within the park.

COVE

A naturally-occurring alcove in the woodland edge. These are well-defined spaces that are separate from, but visible and accessible from the pathway.

NODE

Places of existing activity and amenities. Nodes present opportunities for further reinforcing them as special places with art, but within context of other activities/amenities to avoid “filling” the open space with too many separate attractions.

ART PROMENADE

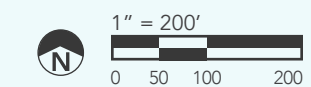


Fig. 3. Nodes, Coves, & Art Promenade



Fig. 4. Perspective Rendering Illustrating Potential for Public Art and General Improvements

IMPLEMENTATION

Introducing artwork throughout Lexington Manor Passive Park will likely occur a-little-at-a-time, in a phased approach as funding and resources become available. The following implementation tactics will help to ensure that the result of this Art Park Plan is a cohesive, organized, and easily-managed park.

Establish a Public Art Advisory Board to lead decision-making.

Build upon existing efforts and focus on the North and South Gateway Nodes, as initial priorities, and begin linking these areas along the Art Promenade

Deploy a Maintenance and Conservation Strategy

Prepare and regularly update an art map for self-guided tours and experiences.

APPENDIX: ENGAGEMENT EXERCISES

Thou Art Lexington Park

Prompt: What should future artists know about Lexington Park and its Residents? What first comes to mind when you think of the people and character of Lexington Park?

Directions: Use a post-it note to jot down the stories, qualities, features, people, and more that might inform and/or be highlighted through Public Art in Lexington Park.

Summary of Input: A few responses converged around the same or similar ideas. Three notes talked about history and culture. Another three talked about the adjacent Patuxent River Navy Base. Two notes talked about Lexington Park's relationship and history with the water. Other ideas mirrored some of what came out of the stakeholder group discussions; for instance, the area's strong community support and acceptance, the way it has become a melting pot of people from all backgrounds and walks of life, the significance of Tulagi place, the impact and influence of the UCAC, ways to honor the area's rich indigenous and ecological heritage, and opportunities for play and fun.

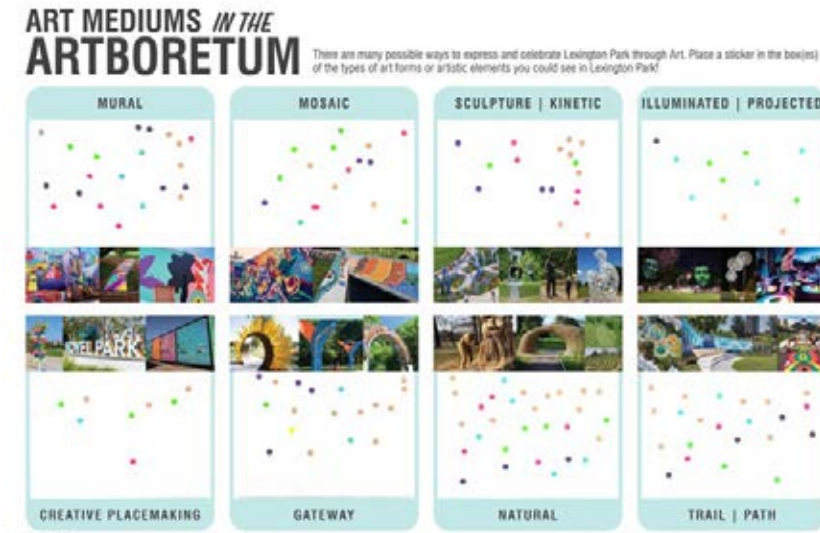
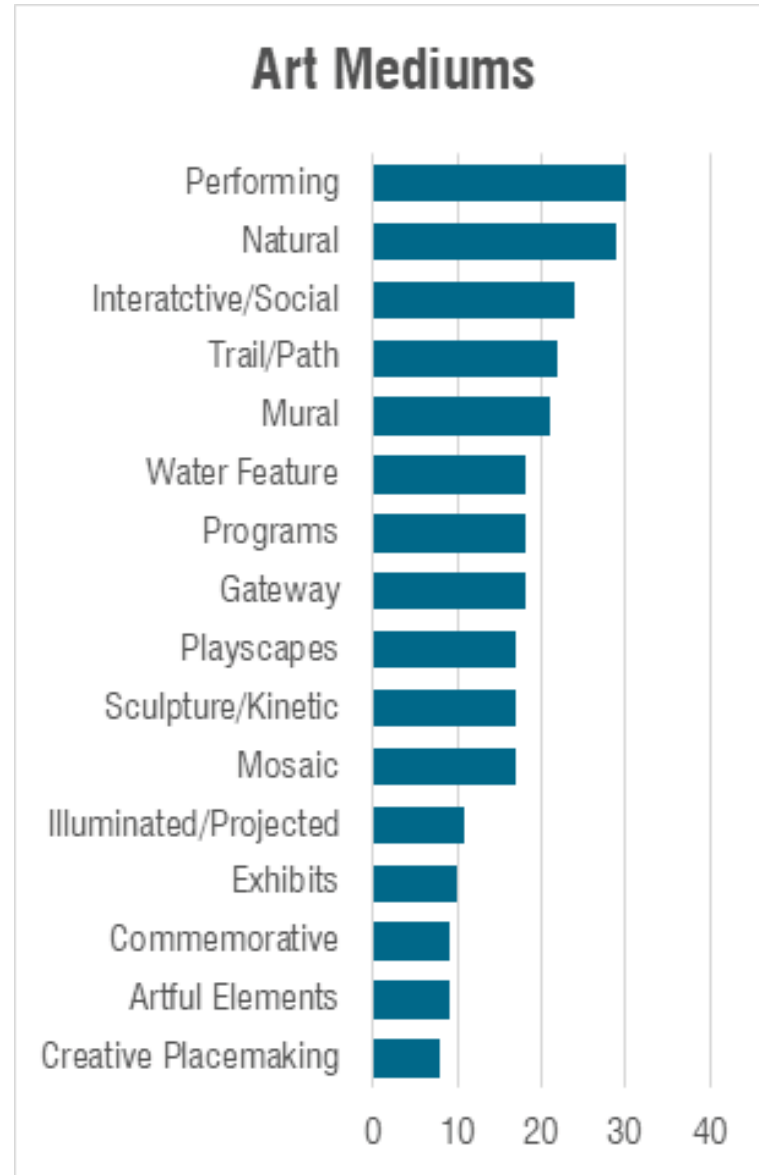


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Art Mediums in the Arboretum

Prompt: There are many possible ways to express and celebrate Lexington Park through Art.

Directions: Place a sticker in the box(es) of the types of art forms or artistic elements you could see in Lexington Park!

Summary of Input: The possibilities for different art modalities in Lexington Park are practically endless. Though the Art Master Plan will not be prescribing art in the park, it's useful to understand the types of art forms and mediums the community gravitates toward most. This exercise presented participants with 15 different art forms, and asked participants to pick a few that they were most drawn toward. The art forms included mural, mosaic, sculpture/kinetic, illuminated/projected, creative placemaking, gateway, natural, trail/path, artful elements, playscapes, interactive/social, performing, commemorative, exhibits, programs.

The most-desired art form was performing arts, which was marked by 30 participants as a form of art they'd like to see in the park. The other top five art forms included natural art (29 participants), interactive/social art (24 participants), arts trail/path (22 participants), and mural arts (21 participants). In general, there was more interest in conventional art forms over historic exhibits and commemorative pieces (10 and 9 votes, respectively), or art-like elements (artful elements and furnishings received only 9 votes, while creative placemaking received the least number of votes at 8).

Telling Our Stories

Prompt: Which of Lexington Park's stories are most important to tell?

Directions: (1) Place a sticker dot in one of the four boxes at the top to note which story you'd like to see come to life through art; and then ... (2) Write on the post-it notes to elaborate, to share a story of your own, or to suggest an alternative theme in the box at the bottom!!

Summary of Input: Based on summaries in the Lexington Manor Passive Park Master Plan and project understandings, this exercise began with four themes that hold a prominent place in the Lexington Park narrative: heritage and history, people and culture, the US Navy, and nature and ecology. In addition to seeking suggestions for additional or alternative themes, the exercise sought to understand which of the four pre-defined themes, if any of them, were relevant for the creation of art.

Heritage and history received the greatest support, with 33% of the sticker votes. People and Culture and Nature and Ecology each received support from about a quarter of the participants (26% and 23% respectively). And 10% of participants marked the US Navy as a story worthy of telling. Additional suggestions were provided, including the juxtaposition of Lexington Park as simultaneously urban and rural, old and new, and occupied by both legacy and transplant residents.



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HERITAGE + HISTORY

PEOPLE + CULTURE

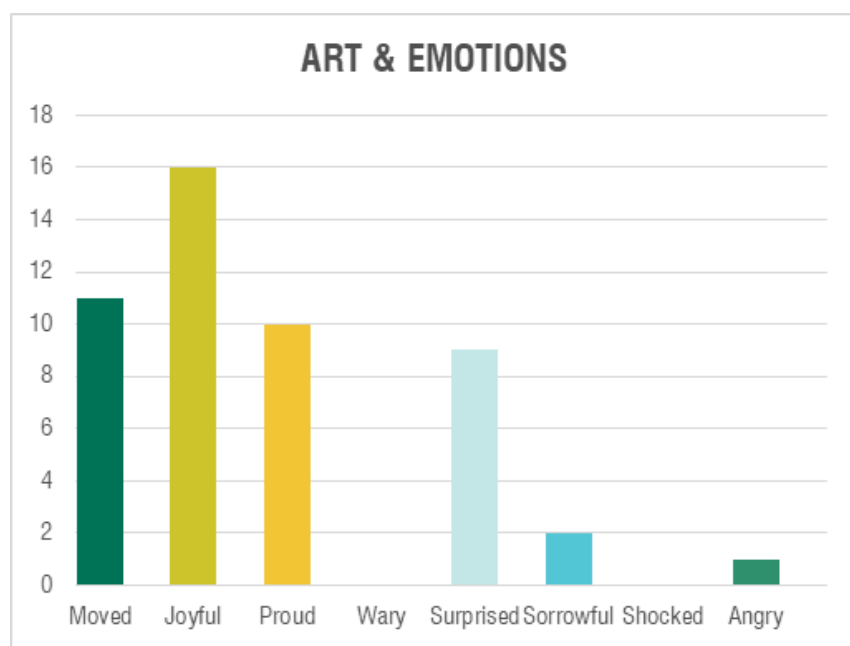
US NAVY

NATURE/ECOLOGY

OTHER THEMES (Write your suggestion!)

LEXINGTON PARK
ART PARK

Workshop | July 19, 2023



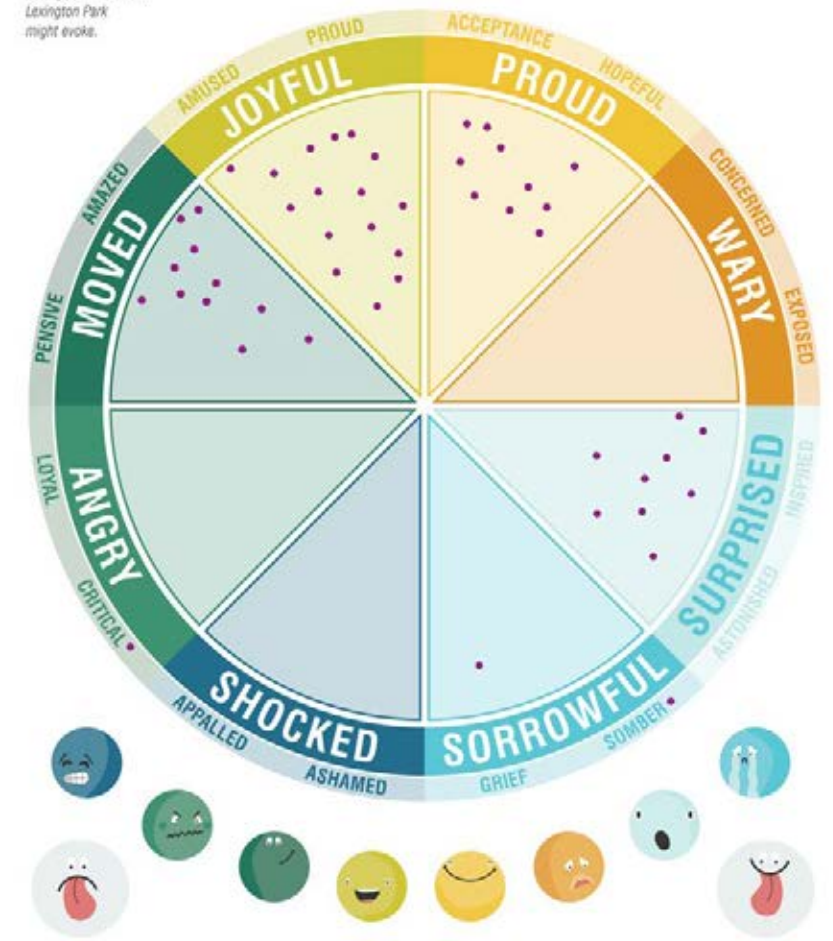
ART & EMOTIONS



How should art in public spaces make you feel?

Art can evoke strong feelings—and sometimes many feelings at once—depending on the subject, its context, the artist’s message, and your personal relationship with these things. Art may even stir “negative” emotions; yet, when done well, the artwork enables us to process these complex and occasionally difficult emotions, narratives, or histories in a constructive way.

Place a sticker dot in the wedges below to indicate which feeling(s) future art in Lexington Park might evoke.



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Directions: Place a sticker dot in the wedges below to indicate which feeling(s) future art in Lexington Park might evoke.

Summary of Input: Most participants tended toward emotional states that would more typically be considered “positive”, such as joyful (16 participants), moved (11 participants), and proud (10 participants). Some participants also indicated being drawn toward art that might evoked a sense of surprise (9 participants). Some participants believed there could be a space for art in Lexington Park that evoked feelings of sorrow (2 participants), while one participant felt that art could contribute to feelings related to anger, specifically, a critical feeling.

Our Top Priorities

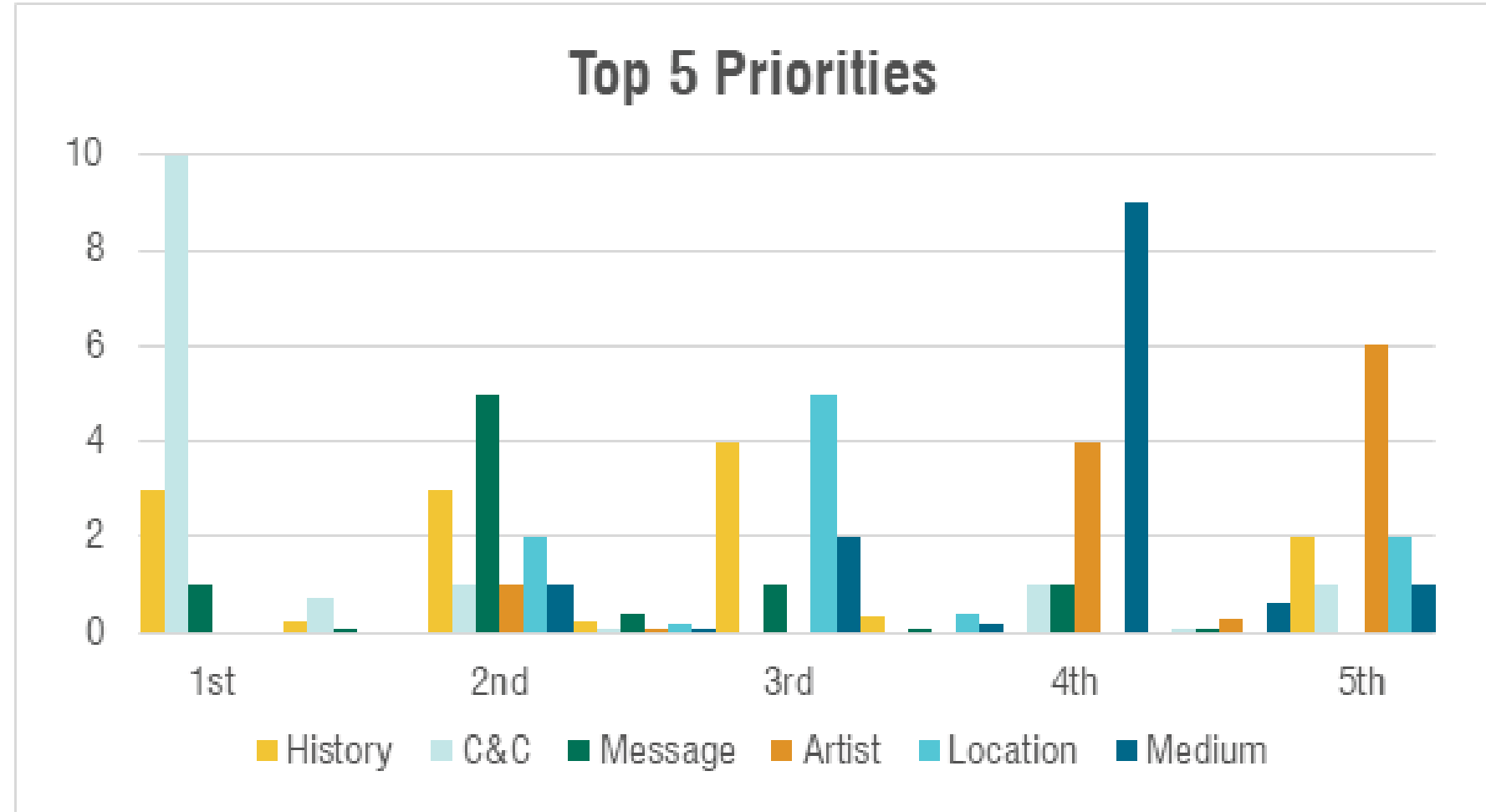
Prompt: What are the most important considerations for future art pieces in Lexington Park?

Directions: Sort the stickers according to your priorities—with your number one priority at the top!

Summary of Input: Participants were given a sheet of stickers for this exercise. Each sheet included two blank stickers for write-in options and six pre-defined priorities: Does it reflect our culture & community? Does it represent Lexington Park’s History? Where will it be located? What is the artform or medium? Who is the artist?; and What is the message?. The board presented five boxes, for participants to indicate their ranked priorities.

When considering their top priority for art in Lexington Park, most participants felt that art should reflect the area’s culture and community (10 participants, or 71%). There was less consensus regarding the remaining priorities. A total of 5 participants (38% of 2nd priority votes) put “What’s the Message?” as the second priority. As the third priority, 5 participants (accounting for 42% of 3rd priority votes) ranked location. Nine participants (60% of fourth priority votes), said that the art medium was the fourth priority, while six participants (50% of 5th priority votes), ranked artist as the fifth priority. Because votes for history were more dispersed, there was no strong indication of priority. Interestingly, however, history was not the least-included priority. Although message, location, and artist received most votes for the second, third, and fifth priorities, respectively, fewer people overall added those stickers as priorities compared to those who put history in some location across the ranks. In fact, “Does it represent Lexington Park’s History?” was the third most common priority to make an appearance on the board (12 participants believed it was a priority), following culture and community and art medium (included by 13 participants each). This could suggest that history should indeed play an important role in future art; however, there was limited agreement on the extent of that role.

Four write-in stickers were added as top priorities: Black history, kid-friendly, inclusive, beautiful/interesting. And one write-in was added as a third priority: the potential to revisit.



1st Priority Write-Ins:

- Black history
- Kid-friendly
- Inclusive
- Beautiful/interesting

3rd Priority Write-In

- Potential to revisit

