

## Office of Arts + Culture Public Art Program: Accessible Signage Framework Abbreviated Summary

The City of Boulder Office of Arts + Culture Public Art Program's Accessible Signage Framework is rooted in the Community Cultural Plan, which calls for "Interpretation, Communications, and Legacy Initiatives – a set of tools for staff to promote the public art collection as an important part of daily life in Boulder including tours, signs, online programs, and continuing relationships with artists" (p.22).

Overall Recommendations for the Accessible Signage Framework:

- A uniform approach to signage makes it easier for viewers to access works of public art in Boulder by identifying pieces as part of the community's collection, providing consistent fundamental information, and including storytelling to heighten the meaning and relevancy of works.
- Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion: Public Art Signage needs to be physically and conceptually accessible. People with differing abilities must be able to tangibly approach and use it. They should find content relevant to their own lives and experiences that will resonate and make their encounter with public art memorable.
- The environmental and graphic design of signage will meet (and often exceed) [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) minimal requirements for visibility and readability; people approaching on foot and in wheelchairs, for example, will be able to easily find and view signage. Graphic considerations—font size, style, and contrast—prioritize legibility.
- Signage for the overall, city-wide collection will be considered in addition to specific informational signs at individual artworks.

The Framework offers recommendations for levels of written interpretation—a classification of signage types—and general storytelling-approach ideas, including:

- Specific strategies to make overall messaging as consistent, recognizable, and engaging as possible, yet flexible to apply to a variety of works and settings
- Standardization of minimal content, options for additional information, and variations on storytelling techniques to share details and invite involvement with public art
- Options for increased accessibility including consideration of ways to further interpret permanent works through platforms and resources other than physical signage

What we're borrowing from other communities:

- "Use jargon-free language. Be clear, concise, and direct." - Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's [Public Art Signage](#)
  - "Encourage signs in English and a designated language of the artist's choice (this can be their mother language), ...with the artist providing the translation materials." – Arts and Culture Program [Art on the Atlanta Beltline](#)
  - Signage systems, as a layer of interpretation, can build relevance and relationships among individuals, communities, and works of public art. Methods for creating meaningful messages and connecting to users can be found in the realm of [heritage interpretation](#) and the original principles developed by Freeman Tilden for [nature interpretation](#) widely used by national and state parks.
  - "Consider alternative means of telling histories that have been missing from the conventional histories of the dominant culture—document, record, and share stories told by a range of people whose experiences contribute to the development of a community but which may be concealed by a dominant culture narrative." (p.17) – Monumental Considerations: Addressing Problematic\* Artworks, Memorials, and Monuments, Suggestions for Public Art Programs
  - "Planning centered community in three ways: by listening deeply in early planning, by testing interpretation with visitors and iterating based on their feedback throughout the process, and by integrating community voices as expertise that enriches and expands art historical content." - [Delaware Art Museum](#)
-

## Fundamental Elements of Accessible Signage

All signs will include standard, always-available identifying content. Potential languages for physical signage and audio descriptions include the major languages used for communication in Boulder--English, Spanish, Nepali, and/or the artist's preferred language. Additional considerations towards audio, tactile, and Braille are encouraged. Physical placement for accessibility encourages installing signs at 48 inches height at a 20-degree angle to best serve people with differing mobilities.

The signage should include the following information:

### **EXHIBIT E** **CITY PLAQUE SPECIFICATIONS**

# ***Title/Título***

## **Artist Name/Nombre del Artista**

Material, Year/Año

## **Narrative/Narrativa (Optional)**

---



[www.boulderarts.org/public-art](http://www.boulderarts.org/public-art)

1. Scale: Proportional to project
2. Size: Not less than four inches high, nor more than seven inches high.
3. Font: Preferred Avenir LT Standard 45 Book or Calibri if not available
4. Material: Subject to Work: Bronze, Aluminum, or material relevant to Work. Smooth surface on raised areas; field area enameled. Provide stud anchors at back to secure plaque to substrate, or provide alternate mounting acceptable to City.

## Short Story

In addition to the fundamental information, narrative content may include:

- Short Story A—Brief to Middling: one or two copy blocks, usually 15–70 words
- Short Story B—Longer: two copy blocks, not more than 120 words total

The following are considerations towards Short Story content:

- Include relevant story content that relates to a work's physical setting and the experience people have there;
  - An invitation to the public to interact with the work;
  - Temporary signage may be appropriate at times. For permanent works, temporary signage can be used for research (to gather data on what resonates with viewers) or to share a theme throughout the public art collection that may be implemented throughout the city for a season.
-