

Fact Sheet #N3

Public Art and Noise Mitigation

A. Issues:

- Noise mitigation is required for many HUD-assisted projects to make sites developable, and can take forms that are inappropriate or undesirable for residential areas.
- Public art in residential settings can provide benefits that humanize the environment and speak to residents by reflecting their history, values, culture, and vision.
- The integration of arts & culture into noise mitigation projects can take many forms, including murals, sculptural elements, site-integrated artworks, community engagement projects and more to make noise mitigation an amenity that is visually interesting and culturally relevant to the residential community.

Authority: 24 CFR Subpart B §51.101(a)(5), 51.104(a), and 51.106(f).

Application: Attenuation of noise above 65dB is required for new construction and changes in land use. HUD encourages noise mitigation for rehabilitation and modernization projects in all noise zones.

Noise exposure can be reduced by a barrier if there are assurances that the mitigation will be in place prior to occupancy.

B. Concept:

- Utilizing public art as a strategy to address noise mitigation can employ different outcomes including:
 - New perceptions of space for residents by applying artistically designed forms or elements;
 - Providing another opportunity for residents to have input in the visual design of their spaces;
 - Addressing unattractive or incompatible land uses by visually screening areas with artistically enhanced barriers; and
 - Partnering with artists as part of the noise mitigation design team to develop creative solutions that visually support and reflect the needs and culture of the residents.

C. Background

- Public art initiatives are implemented by an estimated 728 programs on the national, state and local level and are often administrated through government agencies and nonprofit organizations.
- Funding for public art projects may be provided through tax-derived funds including general funds and hotel/motel taxes. A common funding mechanism for public art is a Percent-for-Art policy or ordinance which directs appropriations from capital improvement projects or bond and levy-supported projects.
- Artist selection and project approval processes vary but usually involve public outreach and education.

D. Guidance:

- Research the states and major municipalities in your area of responsibility. Find local programs, points of contact and other details at www.AmericansfortheArts.org/PAPD, and by researching community-based artist organizations or networks in your place. Other national intermediaries focused on the intersection of art and community development (i.e. creative placemaking) include ArtPlace America and the National Endowment for the Arts among others.
- For more information or questions on public art, contact Americans for the Arts Public Art Network (PAN) at pan@artsusa.org. PAN is the only professional network in the U.S. dedicated to advancing public art through advocacy, policy, and information resources. www.AmericansfortheArts.org/PAN.
- For more information or questions on creative placemaking, contact ArtPlace America at communications@artplaceamerica.org.
- If you review a project that needs mitigation, share the public art program details with the design team and project proponents.
- Keep in mind:
 - The project sponsor/proponents are responsible for reaching out to the public art program staff.
 - The artwork must use the appropriate mitigation design criteria.
 - The public meetings for artwork approval may be opportunities to achieve other project outreach requirements such as National Environmental Policy Act outreach (scoping and alternatives analysis), Historic Preservation consultation, Environmental Justice participation, and Consolidated Plan public involvement.