

Portland Monuments Project 2024 Symposium

Report of Findings



**Portland
Monuments
Project**



Portland State
UNIVERSITY
Regional Research Institute

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Submitted

January 24, 2025

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their significant contributions to this project:

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Executive Summary

The public engagement phase of the Portland Monuments Project commenced with a Symposium, offering an opportunity for community members to attend panel presentations hosted by experts in the public art domain and to build dialogue centered around guiding questions. This two-day event, held at Portland Community College Cascade campus on October 11 and 12, 2024, engaged participants from the community in four discussion sessions. Portland State University's Regional Research Institute partnered with the City of Portland's Office of Arts and Culture, Converge 45, and Portland Community College, supporting data collection during the discussion sessions. The data gathered was analyzed qualitatively, with the key themes summarized throughout this report.

Symposium participants shared a variety of opinions regarding monuments and offered many considerations for developing a public art approach and plan that centers the people of Portland and their diverse experiences and histories. A brief overview of these frequently identified ideas is outlined below; however, each component received varying degrees of support and dissent from Symposium participants and should be considered within the context of the full narrative of the report.

Community engagement and subsequent involvement in the monuments decision-making process was frequently highlighted as conducive to an effective approach to public art. Proposed ideas ranged from conducting further listening sessions throughout the community, to going to places within Portland that would bolster diverse engagement and thought partnership, to building relationships with affinity-based community organizations to delegate the development of public art to members of the community. Additionally, the community could be more closely involved with the monument selection and accession process through the implementation of ranked-choice voting regarding the pieces in question and establishing a rotating collection of time-bound, culturally-specific art that reflects the lived history and current experiences of diverse groups throughout Portland.

The **impact of monuments** was discussed by participants, who shared a variety of conceptualizations of these public pieces ranging from them perpetuating harm caused through settler-colonialism to retaining them as an opportunity to venerate people involved in U.S. history. Although there was both support and dissent regarding their removal or reaccession, there was a prevailing call to examine whose history and perspective was being honored, with participants noting that this framing of public monuments often supports a focus on the dominant culture in lieu of telling the whole story.

Ambiguity of the definitions of monuments and public art was a central component of discussions across Symposium sessions, with participants frequently noting the conflation of these terms in the discussion prompts and language surrounding this effort as detrimental to generative conversations. This was underscored by participants expressing that the inherent purpose and subsequent impact of pieces vary on the basis of being framed as either monuments or public art, with some participants expressing difficulty responding to the prompts based on this ambiguity.

Considerations for creating monuments were additionally identified by Symposium participants, who noted accessibility, diversity in representation, and an honest presentation of the historical and present-day implications of those venerated in Portland's monument collection as salient components of the City's plan. These considerations were accompanied by calls for the monument process to be community-led rather than City-led through the prioritization of local histories and artists. This centering of local lived experiences was framed as possible through the monumentalizing of nature, maintaining specificity based on location and the community in which the monument stands, and moving away from the veneration of individuals towards honoring communities as a whole. To this end, some participants identified partnerships with local community organizations and a transfer of monument development from the City to these groups as conducive to a more effective representation of Portland's diverse communities.

Introduction

The Portland Monuments Project (PMP) emerged as a response to the national conversation regarding public art and representation during 2020. The City of Portland public art collection County currently holds approximately 180 outdoor sculptures and approximately 1,700 works of art. The Portland City Code currently defines *monument* as “three-dimensional works that are publicly accessible, and commemorate a person, place or event.” However, the City of Portland realizes that dialogue around these pieces is not static, and through the PMP seeks to expand this definition through the incorporation of community voice and perspective. With support from the Mellon Foundation, this public engagement project seeks to (1) engage the community in creating policies about Portland’s public art collection; (2) foster new conversations about the purpose of monuments and memorials in Portland; and (3) finalize recommendations for new monuments, updated interpretations, and the future of monuments that were damaged or removed in 2020 and 2021¹. While the PMP involves community engagement regarding all City of Portland public art, seven monuments that are currently in various stages of returning to display or removal from the collection are centered in the Project’s community engagement: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, Promised Land, Harvey Scott, York, and the Elk.

As the PMP continues to invite community voices in the monument decision-making process, four guiding questions lead public engagement around these project goals:

- How can Portland adapt and be open to change with its use of public art to hold memory and history?
- What do Portlanders think about the current collection of monuments in the City’s Public Art Collection?
- How can monuments support the City of Portland’s core values of equity, anti-racism, collaboration, communication, transparency, and fiscal responsibility?
- The City of Portland has decisions to make about monuments and public art. These decisions include how to think about our history and how to educate the public about our monuments. What principles and practices should guide these decisions?

The public engagement phase of the PMP commenced with the Portland Monuments Symposium, offering an opportunity for community members to convene and build dialogue centered upon the guiding questions while attending panel presentations hosted by experts in the public art domain. This two-day event, held at Portland Community College Cascade campus on October 11 and 12, 2024, engaged participants from the community in four discussion sessions based on the guiding questions.

¹ <https://www.portland.gov/arts/monuments>

Methodology

Working closely with PMP collaborators within the City of Portland and Converge 45, with additional consultation and project management support from Nancy Davis, a Portland-based thought partner, facilitator, and strategist, Portland State University’s Regional Research Institute for Human Services (RRI) sought to develop a data collection methodology that both prioritized inclusion and maintained the overarching goals of the project. To this end, both in-person and virtual attendance options were offered for each discussion session, ensuring that those attending the symposium had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with other community members while providing their perspectives and feedback. All four discussion periods were developed to include three separate in-person meeting rooms, each facilitated by a community representative with support from RRI staff in the form of a co-facilitator and notetaker. An additional virtual discussion session option was included, facilitated by RRI staff, to promote accessibility and participation among those joining the Symposium virtually. Additional data was collected via a secure web-based survey², offering in-person and virtual Symposium participants an opportunity to provide or expound upon their responses to each of the guided discussion questions after the conclusion of the event. A training with session facilitators was conducted by the RRI in the weeks preceding the symposium to establish the goals of and methodology used for the event and to ensure alignment with trauma-informed data collection best practices.

Although the initial Symposium schedule included three separate break-out rooms per session, these options were reduced due to a limited number of participants. The final schedule is included in the table below, in conjunction with participant counts for each room. These counts are based on the number of individual worksheets received by RRI data collectors in each room; however, the completion and submission of these documents was voluntary and thus, actual participant counts may be marginally higher for each in-person session.

Table 1: Portland Monuments Symposium Discussion Sessions and Attendance				
Session Number	Date	Time	Room Number	Participant Count
1	Friday, October 11, 2024	1:00-2:00pm	221	16
			104	15
			Virtual	2
2	Friday, October 11, 2024	3:30-4:30pm	221	20
3	Saturday, October 12, 2024	1:00-2:00pm	214	25
			Virtual	1
4	Saturday, October 12, 2024	2:15-3:15pm	214	9
			221	8

Upon entering the discussion room, each in-person participant was provided with a guided discussion packet composed of a voluntary demographic survey (Appendix A), guided discussion guidelines (Appendix B), a worksheet for each of the four sessions (Appendices C, D, E, and F) and a Symposium overview and selection of Portland public Artworks Collection (Appendix G). The demographic survey and session worksheets were returned to RRI data collectors at the conclusion of the session. The virtual sessions followed a similar data collection paradigm; however, the note sheets were distributed via an anonymous Google Form and demographic information was collection via a secure web-based survey. To improve accessibility, the guiding questions were reworded by RRI staff in collaboration with the City of Portland to approach an eighth-grade reading level, resulting in the updated wording in Table 2.

² Using [Qualtrics](#) survey software.

Table 2: Key Portland Monuments Discussion Questions Rewritten near 8th Grade Level

1. How can Portland adapt and be open to change with its use of public art to hold memory and history? (8.7 grade reading level)
2. What do Portlanders think about the City's current monuments? (8.8 grade reading level)
3. The City of Portland has core values. These values are equity, anti-racism, collaboration (*working together*), communication, transparency (*being open and honest*), and fiscal responsibility (*using money wisely*). How can monuments support the City's values? (14.1 grade reading level; due to complexity of the middle sentence)
4. The City of Portland has decisions to make about monuments and public art. These decisions include how to think about our history and how to educate the public about our monuments. What principles and practices should guide these decisions? (8.8 grade reading level)

To aid in cultivating rich discussions regarding the guiding questions that invited participation from all attendees, an approach known as the **1-2-4-All Method** was employed. This process initiated with an introduction to guiding question before inviting participants to engage in a time of independent reflection, or step 1. During this time, participants were encouraged to record their personal thoughts and reflections before transitioning into a dyadic portion of discussion, or step 2, which provided an opportunity for each person to share their thoughts with another participant and combine their notes. After engaging in collaborative discussion and note generation, two dyads coalesced into groups of four, completing step 4 through continued conversation and combining of notes. Finally, these groups of four reported out to the discussion session at large, while the co-facilitator recorded highlights from the conversation to a flip chart to ensure that a reflection of participants' diverse contributions were effectively included in the data gleaned from each discussion session. These flip chart reflections were additionally supplemented by notes recorded by the notetaker, ensuring that contributions from session participants were accurately recorded and any additional comments were captured.

Upon completion of the Portland Monuments Symposium, all the anonymous note sheets were assigned random identification numbers to aid in tracking which phase of the **1-2-4-All Method** process each piece of feedback originated from and to maintain groupings based on day, time, and room number. These notes were then subjected to inductive qualitative coding, a process that examines text data and assigns each fragment a code derived from an overarching theme or higher order idea. The data associated with each discussion question was analyzed independently, resulting in potential crossover regarding qualitative themes as codes were derived from the topics that participants chose to discuss. Due to this inductive qualitative analysis paradigm, some themes associated with each discussion question may not directly address the prompt at hand, however, the content of each Findings section of this report highlights the information participants chose to share and discussion in each session. These qualitative codes then served as the outline through which to structure the following findings section of this report, ensuring that feedback from participants is grouped by theme for ease of dissemination. The narrative sections developed through this framework were then cross-referenced with content from the flip charts and notetaker notes to ensure that all the themes and contributions of session participants were effectively expressed through the report. Additionally, content provided by participants who did not speak to the specific question at hand was then grouped with similar content from other sessions and examined for any consistent themes, ensuring that all contributions from respondents were included in this final report.

As these themes were compiled into the Findings section of this report, the narrative structure reflects a descending order of frequency, with topics more frequently mentioned by Symposium attendees appearing earlier under each section heading. Throughout the findings portion of this report, "City" refers to the City of Portland's governing body and the decision-makers within that institution.

Respondent Demographics

Table 3 presents the aggregated data received through the in-person and virtual demographic survey options. Participants were informed that this survey was completely voluntary and were asked to complete it only once throughout the 2-day Symposium to prevent duplication. As a result of this approach, attendance data is skewed toward the initial session and the actual demographic makeup of all Symposium attendees may differ due to the voluntary nature of the demographic survey.

Table 3: Respondent Characteristics (N = 50)		
Attendance Modality	Count	Percent
In-Person	47	94.0%
Virtual	3	6.0%
Session Attended	Count	Percent
Friday 1:00-2:00pm	33	66.0%
Friday 3:30-4:30pm	4	8.0%
Saturday 1:00-2:00pm	6	12.0%
Saturday 2:15-3:15pm	4	8.0%
No answer	3	6.0%
Race/Ethnicity <i>[sorted in descending order of frequency]</i>	Count	Percent
White	31	62.0%
Not listed above, please describe:	6	12.0%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous Peoples of the Americas	5	10.0%
Latino/a/e/x	5	10.0%
Asian	3	6.0%
Black or African American	3	6.0%
I prefer not to answer	2	4.0%
Middle Eastern or North African	1	2.0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
No answer	2	4.0%
Tribal Membership <i>[sorted in descending order of frequency]</i>	Count	Percent
No	43	86.0%
Yes	4	8.0%
Prefer not to answer	2	4.0%
No answer	1	2.0%
Tribal Descendant <i>[sorted in descending order of frequency]</i>		
No	45	90.0%
Yes	2	4.0%
I prefer not to answer	1	2.0%
No answer	2	4.0%

Table 3: Respondent Characteristics (N = 50)

Languages Spoken or Signed at Home <i>[sorted in descending order of frequency]</i>	Count	Percent
English	46	92.0%
Spanish	4	8.0%
Japanese	1	2.0%
American Sign Language	1	2.0%
Chinese	1	2.0%
No answer	4	8.0%
Gender <i>[sorted in descending order of frequency]</i>	Count	Percent
Woman	26	52.0%
Man	15	30.0%
Gender expansive (non-binary, agender, gender fluid, genderqueer)	5	10.0%
I am undecided or questioning	2	4.0%
I prefer not to answer	2	4.0%
Transgender	0	0.0%
Trans man	0	0.0%
Trans woman	0	0.0%
Two Spirit	0	0.0%
I prefer to describe my gender as:	0	0.0%
No answer	3	6.0%
Disability <i>[sorted in descending order of frequency]</i>	Count	Percent
No	41	82.0%
Yes	5	10.0%
I prefer not to answer	1	2.0%
No answer	3	6.0%
Education	Count	Percent
Some school	0	0.0%
High school graduate, no college (includes high school diploma equivalent, like a GED)	0	0.0%
Some college, but no degree	3	6.0%
Associates or other technical degree (includes certificates)	2	4.0%
Bachelor's degree	11	22.0%
Advanced degree (master's, doctoral, and professional degrees such as law or medicine)	29	58.0%
Other [please describe]	0	0.0%
I prefer not to answer	1	2.0%
No answer	4	8.0%

Findings

Discussion Question 1: How can Portland adapt and be open to change with its use of public art to hold memory and history?

Funding and Plan Development

Regarding the implementation of an adaptive public art approach, Symposium participants discussed the essential components of funding and plan development as core aspects of holding memory and history. A session participant asserted that the City should “commit to funding/finding funding/partnering with financially capable donors” while they “create a plan that can be followed up and implemented.” These funding streams, according to another participant, should be time bound and specific, underscored by the feedback that the City should “commit to a funding plan for a defined timeframe for the project (i.e., 10 years).” While funding should be associated with timeframes, the display period for public art is additionally endorsed as time bound, with a participant sharing that:

It could create monuments like any public art piece and consider them time limited (i.e., are only displayed for a set period, such as 20 years). After 20 years, the piece is re-evaluated and may renew it if it continues to be relevant. Public engagement and policy can guide decision of relevance. All new works are time-limited/deaccessioned/destroyed after a set time.

Participants noted that Portland’s public art plan could be bolstered by working with “existing arts and culture organizations to plan and implement” while funding could be established through “native funding streams,” “public and private partnerships,” and “special vice taxes.” Another participant noted that the public plan could incorporate “gifts, donations, etc. ...” to diversify funding streams and increase community involvement. However, one respondent noted that the source of funding can impact the City’s responsibilities regarding stewardship and decision making around public art. Considerations around funding sources dictating the purpose and commissioning of monuments and public art were further noted in the report out portion of the discussion session, with notetakers recording that “if it’s a public building, then there is a percentage of construction cost that provides money for use in the space,” expounding that “even though there is money, there is still the decision of who gets the job, people are selected from there.” Additionally, the report out portion of the discussion involved a participant sharing that funding “origins are different too, monument or memorial – starts with a person,” while conversely “public art starts with a budget.” This comment further asserted that “how will we spend the money, is the focus, and then working art into the conversation.”

Funding considerations should be accompanied by remaining cognizant of the “lifespan of public art,” calling on decision makers to answer the question of “what happens next?” Remaining adaptive and open to change was further endorsed as essential to the City’s public art plan, as a respondent called on leadership to “build change into public processes” with the caveat that “art is influential, but what [are] you influencing?” In their individual reflection, one participant suggested that decision makers “acknowledge, document, share, reflect, engage in dialogue” throughout the implementation of a public art plan, with another respondent noting that “we could deaccession memorials [and] art [that] no longer are relevant through a regular review process, can only create new memorials that are artistic, engaged in community, [and] temporary.” The facilitation of dialogue around public art was further endorsed as beneficial by another participant, stating that “messaging needs to be about dialogue and conversation, not absolutes” and that those involved should “accept discomfort, talk about it.” This sentiment was further reflected by another participant, who suggested that the City “document, acknowledge, share available information as a starting point” because “we need to understand those as a starting point,” underscoring that this is a “slow deliberate process” that moves “at the speed of trust.”

Regarding community involvement in the development of a plan, one participant suggested that decision makers *"create a series of community meetings for input from public to have maximum of diverse voices to try and create consensus"* seeking to establish a *"broader understanding of cultural needs and directions."* Another participant noted that these considerations should result in an *"approved process with a wide range of people."* According to one group member, this process could take the form of ranked-choice voting and give Portland-area constituents an opportunity to *"weigh in on six or more options"* as this is a *"sufficiently high-profile issue that affects a lot of public interest."* This participant expounded through stating *"treat it as advisory, but everyone gets a say"* while another noted that it *"seems we need to create new monuments from many perspectives, and be open to taking down monuments that celebrate problematic [figures] and replace them with an unheard voice."* Calls for the development of a plan were accompanied by suggestions for regular audits of Portland's public art and monument collection, with participants requesting in the report out portion of the session that the City conduct an *"audit of more public art in the city,"* expounding that the City should *"solicit more opinions of people in the city and neighborhoods, as well as those who are related to people of those monuments."* Additionally, another call for audits was reflected in the report out portion, with a participant noting that these regular assessments should include an evaluation of the location or neighborhood in which the art piece currently resides. Regarding the development of a monuments plan and its associated funding, one participant shared:

Often times with politics or art, people with the most access to resources or wealth make the decisions that impact all of us, and I am excited for Portland's public art processes to center community engagement, empowerment of vulnerable populations, and collaboration with orgs like RACC and other cultural & arts orgs who have decades of experience running equitable and thoughtful decision-making processes!

Community Involvement

Participants noted a variety of potential routes toward an adaptive and open framework through which to hold memory and history throughout Portland's public art collection. The value of community involvement was frequently endorsed as an essential component of the ongoing relationship between Portland residents, City government, and public art. Comments ranged from the importance of including young people in the public art process to partnering with existing arts organizations to develop and implement an inclusive strategy. One participant shared:

To adapt the leadership (representing the larger body) needs to be informed by the body and then be adaptive. This can be done in public art with robust funding of organizations that are connected to and (stay current/empowered by) with the stakeholders/communities!

This sentiment of community involvement was further underscored through participant feedback noting *"go to [the] community and meet [them] where they are"* and highlighting the value of inclusion throughout the public art process through iterative opportunities for community-wide input. This inclusion of the community was proposed as a way to be *"responsive to peoples [and] histories that haven't been uplifted historically"* while history that is presented should be done so in a way that prioritizes accuracy in lieu of comfort for the dominant culture. To this end, art can serve as a healing force for communities historically excluded by or further oppressed in public art, contingent on inclusion and co-creation throughout the process as *"the city needs to do a better job reaching minority populations, uplifting history that isn't seen so much in mainstream colonial western white history."* This sentiment was further emphasized through a participant stating:

We need transparent & collaborative decision making with stakeholders, community members affected or impacted by the artwork/its context/history, who share the community space, or whose culture or identities may be represented, referenced or impacted by the artwork. Involve them into art selection processes. Younger voices involved! Trauma informed care in all phases.

Community involvement was further framed in conjunction with the assertion that decision making regarding public art should lie solely with residents of the Portland area, with one participant noting that the government should recuse themselves from making changes to existing art or implementing new features while another stated that *"art should not be a decision by the city council."* Another respondent endorsed public art as a reflection on the community, so decisions regarding these fixtures should rest with members of the community. The reflection of the community

in its public art was further illustrated by a participant asking, “[D]oes our public art reflect our cultural values?” The inclusion and representation of these values would be supported through the City listening, working slowly and thoughtfully with the community to ensure congruity with themes and historical events deemed important by Portland residents as *“white community members take a listening approach and keep the space open for community members who have been negatively impacted [to] lead the way, make decisions, create new ways.”* The inclusion of historically excluded groups and people was framed by one participant as a relinquishing of space and power typically held by the dominant culture, indicating the association of public art and sequestered control within City decision making.

People from outside the Portland area, attending the Symposium to both glean information regarding city-wide issues and processes while contributing ideas from their home regions, suggested hosting conversations that allow residents with different points of view to share their thoughts and have discussions. Additionally, another participant noted that bringing in voices from out-of-town can facilitate an exchange of experience, knowledge, and evidence-based solutions. However, a Portland respondent noted the local specificity of the conversation at hand, asking, *“Why are people who aren’t living in Portland allowed to be in the room?”*

Intentionality and Expressed Purpose

Participants further shared that the City’s plan, community involvement, and decisions around public art should be accompanied by intentionality and expressed purpose, with one participant sharing, *“Purpose and intention could be more central to the public art we display and maintain. Making space for other ideas and being open to important figures in smaller communities. Activation of public space and understanding our use.”* One participant noted that intentionality and purpose can be expressed through *“creating space for reflection,”* while another group member endorsed *“space to reflect”* as an essential resource for the assessment of public art. This intentionality could further be expressed through the inclusion of a memorial component in the presentation of public art in conjunction with the provision of context regarding the purpose of the instillation in question. During the report out portion of the discussion, a participant noted the centering of these intentions and history through sharing that *“art can remain”* with the caveat that *“context and perspective [are] respected.”* These considerations were accompanied by calls for *“better interpretation”* in the form of *“more historians, more representation.”* When considering this historical interpretation, one participant noted that:

History is often times marked by war and conflict and harm, and representing these histories in shared space can be violent and harmful for communities directly impacted by that history. Represent Indigenous cultures rather than colonialist culture. Perhaps integrating education in public art, and actually managing a program that offers learning guides and school tours that provide context and critical dialogue around artwork.

This focus on intentionality and purpose was further centered in discussions regarding both adaptive leadership and adaptive art, underscored by a participant noting that *“flexibility”* regarding public art offers an *“opportunity for change.”* A willingness and ability to engage in adaptive leadership was further noted by a respondent, stating *“adapt, less drawn out deaccession processes, especially when accession policies were not used [or] applicable to the process.”* Another participant suggested that the City should *“build change into public art processes,”* with this sentiment echoed by respondents endorsing the value of being *“flexible, [we] can’t have a one size fits all policy”* and centering *“emergent”* pieces. Practically, adaptive leadership could be bolstered by having a *“process for hiring staff in this City’s art office, some knowledgeable people [and] not political appointments”* while another group called for *“experts, rather than political appointees.”* Flexibility and adaptation among leadership was further championed as an essential value of Portland’s public art approach as *“History happens fast. Climatic and social conditions are changing rapidly. Today’s views of memory and history will differ from those of the recent past or near future. Flexibility is key. Ephemeral and archival art.”*

Monuments and Politics

Participants' contributions during the report out portion of the discussion session revealed an additional area of consideration, focusing on the interplay between monuments and politics. The inherently political nature of funding public art and selecting these pieces along with the artists that create them was captured by a notetaker, who reflected respondents' assertion that politics are inexorably linked to the commissioning of monuments. This connection is further asserted through stating that art is tied to funding, and historically those with financial means hold power over determining the art displayed publicly, leaving participants to wonder how this money was accrued and why the wealthy maintain a dominant control over public art. The undertones inherently present when making decisions regarding monuments and public art were further identified as the intentions that underscore the allocation of funds or the motivations to fund the commissioning of a monument.

Regarding the influence of politics and members of the city government on the display of public art, session participants inquired whether or not politicians should have decision-making power over this contentious domain of civic life. It was noted that the process should *"move at the speed of trust,"* with the caveat that there is presently *"very little trust in the city government."* Conversely, the notetaker recorded a participant sharing, when it comes to politicians determining which art is commissioned and displayed, that they *"don't have a problem with it because we elected them and it is their responsibility."* This discrepancy between the intention behind public art and monuments is further illustrated by a participant who noted that monuments are typically funded privately, which is often associated with an underlying intention or message, while public art, funded through public money, bolsters greater interest and investment from the public. Regarding representation in public arts and monuments, a participant shared that art doesn't have to be identified with race, expounding that *"when I look at statues of MLK, I don't think 'oh, that's not me,' I think 'oh, that's a great man'"* further emphasizing that *"it's not Black art, it's for everyone."*

Community over the Individual

Participants additionally noted the value of centering the community over the individual in Portland's public art, remaining adaptive and open to change by representing experiences that resonate with diverse groups throughout the city. This focus was framed by one participant as *"concepts over people,"* while another noted that centering the *"history of [a] 'great man', not people"* as a misguided approach to public displays of art. This divergence from a focus of monuments and public art on an individual was further reflected across several participants, with one expounding *"monuments should focus on collectives,"* while another respondent noted that *"no community is a monolith."* The concern regarding honoring a single person was underscored by a participant noting that there is an *"inherent vice"* associated with *"uplifting individuals"* while another asserted the importance of representing the *"experience of communities instead of achievements of individuals."* A community over the individual approach was further encapsulated by a participant noting *"do not memorialize individuals,"* opting to maintain a focus on *"broader art"* as *"this reduces politics."* Another participant shared that Portland's public art should not shy away from telling the entire story, underscoring that we should *"not be afraid of our own history,"* while another group member noted that diversity in types of representation is important, stating *"be careful with identifying by race – how about other groups, religions for example."* The transition away from focusing on individuals over community experiences was further discussed as participants explored the value of telling the entire story, with a respondent noting, *"Make art/monuments a community say [or]project. History needs to be accurate, even if that means uncomfortable. This is a choice community needs to make, not the city by itself."*

Accessibility and Education

Additionally, intentionality can be upheld through centering accessibility and education, as one participant noted that the City should *"make art accessible in the places it is placed [and] interaction styles,"* suggesting that this entails being *"responsive to INCLUSIVE community linguistically"* along with *"consideration[s] to disability."* The incorporation of community involvement into the City's public art processes could additionally uphold the value of accessibility through *"capturing ideas [and] complaints as an accessible resource."* Accessibility was further discussed in reference to technological supports for the public's engagement with public art, as one participant noted *"adapt to future and*

present technologies to tell stories," with the intention that the City "can change, add, and modify the art, story, and histories frequently." Participants across groups suggested incorporating digital interfaces, with a respondent specifying "it can be more open by involving QR codes and augmented reality to share more information from different cultural points of view." Conversely, a participant shared in the report out portion of the discussion session that they "still think charcoal or paint on canvas is still important."

Return of the Monuments

A participant advocated for the return of the monuments that are no longer on display, stating that *"Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, and Elk should be restored in place"* and *"we can hope to make efforts to explain Lincoln's huge hatred of slavery."* Another participant echoed this sentiment, stating, *"I'm not sure anything in policy needs to change. We have a variety of people who are represented in monuments. I would like an explanation of why city policies need to change."* A call to return the monuments in question was further endorsed by another respondent noting that the City should *"reverse course on the decision it has made about the Elk, George Washington, Teddy Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Promised Land, Harvey Scott, plus York and let this process play out."* Alternatively, another participant suggested that the City prioritize *"more trees, less art,"* underscoring the breadth of thoughts and opinions associated with Portland's public art and monuments.

Areas of Concern

Throughout discussion sessions, participants additionally noted areas of concern. A primary concern among participants throughout the discussion was the differentiation between "public art" and "monuments" regarding the discussion at hand, with one respondent noting that *"'Public art' should be replaced with 'monuments' to be relevant to holding 'memory and history.' 'Public Art' projects offer opportunities for much more and different responses – memory and history only is the focus once in a while."* This differentiation was further noted by another respondent, who stated that *"public art and monuments [are] different"* and involve *"different outcomes, processes."* The value of terminology regarding official processes was underscored as a participant endorsed that *"any policy should contextualize 'monuments' and 'public art' so the public can properly understand and form opinions, tastes, and creations."*

Questions for Further Discussion

Finally, participants voiced questions throughout the discussion session regarding Portland's public art processes and the possibility of shifting public opinion regarding these pieces. The range of questions voiced by Symposium participants is included in the following alphabetized list:

- ♦ *"Are memory + history the same?"*
- ♦ *"Can you change the attitudes of people?"*
- ♦ *"Does our public art reflect our cultural values?"*
- ♦ *"Does policy need to change? Is it currently not working? What needs to change?"*
- ♦ *"Erect statues again with more context?"*
 - *"How much context?"*
 - *"How much is needed to provide picture?"*
 - *"Is it harmful to keep up and provide history?"*
- ♦ *"Has Portland already made up its mind?"*
- ♦ *"How can art facilitate anger? Pain? Catharsis?"*
- ♦ *"How do you answer the problem that... people will never be happy?"*
- ♦ *"How to repatriate/move art?"*
- ♦ *"Is Portland even decided in what art it wants to remove? If so, is that shared? When?"*
- ♦ *"What constitutes are good artist or project, what is good art?"*
- ♦ *"What's missing in the collection?"*
- ♦ *"Why does deaccession take longer than commission?"*

Discussion Question 2: What do Portlanders think about the City's current monuments?

Removal or Destruction of Monuments

Participants discussed the removal or destruction of monuments as a key feature of this Symposium conversation, with varying opinions ranging from returning pieces that had been toppled or otherwise removed, to recontextualizing these existing components of the City's collection, to seizing this opportunity to erect new installations. The diversity in Symposium participants' conceptualizations regarding the reinstitution of monuments is reflected throughout provided feedback, with one respondent endorsing that they *"want them put back up because anarchists illegally took them down,"* expounding that they should be *"put back and recontextualized."* Another participant expressed that they are in opposition to the *"erasure of monuments,"* but proposed holding an *"elevated conversation"* regarding their purpose and how they can be *"contextualized for today's audience and into the future,"* with the group additionally noting that the recontextualization of monuments could be a *"creative way to make for ongoing dialogue."* This theme of recontextualization was further expressed, with a participant stating that *"monuments should be restored and replaced,"* adding that these pieces should be *"recontextualized"* while the City adds to the presentation of these installations, not removing components. Alternatively, two participants suggested rehoming the monuments within communities that would benefit from their arrival, stating that they *"may be better in other communities"* and, regarding the monuments currently in storage, that *"maybe they could be given to other communities."*

Opposition to the unsanctioned vandalism of monuments and their subsequent removal was further expressed by Symposium participants, with one respondent asserting that a *"mob of young, white anarchists should not dictate city policies"* while endorsing that the *"city council should vote on each statue that was removed and do a public up-down vote."* Framing the defacing of monuments as mob-associated was further echoed by a participant, who shared that the *"mob' of those that took them down do not represent Portland."* Although this was not a universal conceptualization of the defacement of monuments, several participants shared that while they agree with the purpose of these protests, they take offense with the methods employed by certain participants to this end, with one participant sharing *"what happened is not how things should happen, but should be more of a conversation."* Conversely, another participant noted that *"things are targeted for a reason"* while those in their discussion group inquired, *"[H]ow did we get to this point?"* Responding to a participant that framed protesters as *"people that are angry and want to destroy something,"* another participant emphatically asserted that these people *"feel left out of the conversation."* Another participant echoed that the sentiment of marginalization served as a precipitating factor in the defacement of monuments, offering that *"people vandalized because they weren't listened to."*

Participants' thoughts regarding the City's monuments were further expressed through a person sharing that *"Portland is a young city, we should preserve the limited past we have,"* further expounding that *"damaged monuments should be repaired and reinstalled ASAP"* and that *"criminal destruction of public monuments [and] art should not be an impetus for their reunion."* This participant continued, stating that they think there needs to be an *"official list of public monuments."* The dichotomous nature of this topic was noted with one participant observing that *"I think they [Portlanders] miss them and want them restored,"* while another participant noted that the *"activists don't want them."* A respondent addressed this polarization through asking, *"[W]hich binary choice – to remove or stay?"* Moving forward, a participant endorsed that they are *"interested in commissioning additional 'monuments' in various forms, set in conversation with formerly, and selectively, reinstalled monuments,"* while another respondent noted that *"recontextualization coupled with longer periods of rotating works"* would benefit the City's monument collection and presentation.

Intention of Monuments

The intention of monuments emerged as a key theme among participants, with one voicing “[W]hat do our monuments serve?” and “[W]hy are they there?” Another respondent echoed this sentiment of inquiry regarding the intention of Portland’s monuments, asking “[W]hat is the intention and how will it be used?” and “[I]s the art questioned?” The group further noted that this effort is “not as much a qualitative discussion” without additional clarification.

The intention of Portland’s monument collection was further expounded upon, with a participant noting:

There is a wide range of interpretations about our city's current monuments. We need to honor our past and acknowledge our history... we also need to create new monuments and art that reflect our city's vibrant and creative culture today, do NOT erase our City's history, we need to be generative [and] create what is next.

Additionally, a participant provided their conceptualization of Portland’s monuments, stating that “They reflect ideas about the city, the state, and the country. They include some people. They are a full picture of the past or the present. They are ornaments. They are limited.”

Another participant noted that there is ambiguity regarding the intention of Portland’s current monument collection, expressing that “current monuments feel unrelatable, unclear on objectives of most – not high quality.” Referencing the implementation of policies regarding monuments, it was noted that “policy objectifies” and “events should be malleable” when considering codifying the intention of these pieces. It was proposed that “monuments should go through a similar process as [the] public art process” because “monuments objectify an idea.” In an effort to reify the malleability of monuments, a participant proposed “using monuments as teaching and gathering spaces to re-contextualize and address ongoing changes and paradigm shifts in broader culture (in this way they take on a more dynamic role rather than a static one).” The intersection of intention and policy was further noted in the report out portion of the discussion session, stating that “policy in some ways also enshrines cultural values” and that the relevancy of these policies can be bolstered by “having these be living documents.”

Monuments Are Not Inclusive

Some Symposium participants noted that Portland’s monuments are not inclusive and prioritize representations of the dominant culture, encapsulated through a respondent sharing “my impression is that they don’t represent all communities.” The impact of monuments was framed as “points of view versus points in time,” underscoring the varying interpretation of meanings and representation associated with these instillations. To this end, another participant framed these points in time as monuments “based on a false history,” with a participant noting that this is a “white man’s history” during their reflection time. This participant continued, noting that these monuments are “not inclusive” and “idealize certain histories over others” while asking “[W]ho is it representing?” These inquiries were further reflected by another participant, who posed questions asking about the creators of the monuments, what these pieces mean to people, and who these instillations are representing.

There was a contingent of non-Portland residents in attendance for this discussion session, offering an opportunity to include outside ideas and nascent lines of inquiry to center the conversation on potentially overlooked domains. One of these participants shared that “some feel the City Council should not be making the decisions for the monuments” before asking, “[A]re minds made up about the dispositions of the monuments?” This participant continued, clarifying the purpose of the Symposium through asking, “[A]re these sessions designed to oppose the community?” Another non-Portland resident reflected that “it sounds like it may be time for Portland to let go of some outdated monuments to make way for site-specific works, works that engage with history and memory in more inclusive ways.” Finally, a discussion group comprised of those coming from outside the Portland area noted that there was “no explanation of why these things are important for Portland” while asking, “[H]as the issue or issues been resolved?” This question was followed up by the discussion group asking, “[W]ho was involved?”

Need to Define

Symposium participants offered a variety of viewpoints and considerations regarding Portlanders' thoughts about the City's current monuments, representing diverse assertions gleaned through lived experience and engagement with public art. A primary area of discussion regarding residents' attitudes toward City monuments centered on a need to define monuments and subsequently differentiate them from public art, as a respondent noted *"the definition of a monument sometimes is what gives the monument its power."* This domain of inquiry was further echoed by a participant noting that it is necessary to define the *"monuments versus public art classification"* and that *"more background would have been helpful."* Another participant reflected a need for further disambiguation, asking *"what 'Portlanders'?"* and *"which 'current monuments'?"* Specificity regarding the provided discussion prompt was further endorsed as helpful by another participant, who asked, *"[W]hat monuments in particular, are they in civic spaces, are they in schools, businesses?"* Further context regarding policies around monuments was requested by a participant who inquired, *"[H]ow old are these statutes?"*

There was further uncertainty expressed among respondents regarding the status of the City's current decision-making process, with a participant asking, *"[H]ave they made up their minds?"* Another participant echoed this question, adding *"[A]re they willing to be flexible with ideas and actions (change their minds)?"* The perception of the current status of the City's decision-making process was further expounded upon as a participant noted *"it seems that decisions have already been made – should ask the questions soon – before the decision is made."* Finally, a respondent offered an amendment to the discussion prompt at hand, stating that *"it is easier to answer the question: [W]hat do the legal caretakers of the monuments think about the City's current monuments?"*

Mitigating Harm through Community Engagement

Community engagement emerged from discussion sessions as an area of interest among participants, varying from those who wish to be involved in the monument decision-making process to calls for further discussion with community members regarding this topic. Pertaining to the latter, a participant noted that *"ongoing conversation is necessary, these monuments reflect the U.S.' particularly heavy history which will take a long time to work through."* The propensity of Portland's monuments to assert the *"idealization of someone who caused harm"* is noted by one respondent as *"causing more damage than good,"* underscoring the value of ongoing conversations through community engagement to assess the impact of these instillations on groups that have experienced historical oppression and continue to be marginalized today. A participant underscored this continued harm through stating:

The monuments cause harm, idolizing and highlighting people who are mainly white racist men who caused harm but were uplifted by the current colonial western demographic. They completely misrepresent the population as a whole and only push one perspective – the white one. The lack of representation is distasteful on behalf of a government body, especially as Portland and Oregon as a whole have a racist history and constitution. It is time for monuments to capture new feelings and events and representation. Move forward. Educate. STOP ERASURE!

It is then necessary to inquire if monuments *"perpetuate racism, erasure, and stereotypes"* as determined through ongoing community engagement. A participant underscored the inclusion of diverse voices and stakeholders through stating that they are *"hoping to create some change"* through *"bringing in a bunch of partners - universities, tribes, City, maybe the country."*

Uncertainty

Throughout this discussion session, some participants and groups expressed feeling unsure about their thoughts regarding Portland's monument collection, with some members noting the narrow definition of these pieces as obfuscating the conceptualization of these facets of the city and potential paths forward. A participant noted this uncertainty through stating, *"I feel unsure about how the city is defining monuments,"* before continuing *"looking at the monuments that have been removed in the city of Portland's monument page I would say that the definition seems very*

narrow." A participant additionally noted that the "City of Portland's website definition [is] narrow" while asking, "[W]ho is defining memorials versus monuments, when is it a monument?" Another respondent noted the ambiguity of these definitions, endorsing that "we have to define moving forward," a process encumbered by "minutely defined 'monuments'." This sentiment was further echoed by a participant noting that "the question is too broad and too vague for me to answer it," concluding that they "really don't understand what it means." Due to these potential limitations regarding concrete definitions of monuments and other public art, a participant shared that they think this discussion prompt is a "silly question" before asking, "[H]ow would any one person be able to answer without unbiased polling data?" Finally, another participant endorsed that the "combining of public art and monuments in one phrase while not understanding or recognizing the difference between the two is not responsible," calling for additional clarification in subsequent conversations around this topic.

Should Reflect Cultures, Not Individuals

The inclusion of community members and incorporation of diverse perspectives into the monument decision-making process was further underscored through the theme of reflecting cultures, not individuals. This call for an expanded and recentered representation was accompanied by assertions that monuments should be both future-oriented and place-based, resulting in instillations that provide an aspirational impact while venerating the land upon which Portland was built. A participant encapsulated this monuments ethos, stating that these pieces "shouldn't be rooted in the past/individuals but rather the future and place (imagining who we want to be in the future)." This point was further reified by this group, who stated that "monuments feel rooted in the past" and that Portland would benefit from pieces that are "future-facing [and] place-based," expounding that "rooting monuments in place is VERY important." This sentiment was further discussed by a participant who noted that priority should be given to "monuments that are not isolated/specific to 'important' persons or event, but broader, deeper content and context, and rooted in place."

Process Questions

Throughout the discussion sessions, several process questions emerged regarding the practical steps for proceeding with the management of Portland's monument collection and the group or people tasked with making these decisions. A participant asked, "[W]ho decides?", while another respondent drew a dichotomy between "elected officials" versus a "young mob dressed in the black of anarchism" holding sway over the decision-making process. These inquiries were underscored by a desire for "following the democratic process" accompanied by a perceived lack of transparency on behalf of the City regarding the decision-making process. Another participant noted that "historically, the democratic process in the US has not been very democratic," resulting in producing an inaccurate "representation of the governed."

Overall, a diversity of opinions and thoughts were shared throughout this discussion session, offering a glimpse into the polarization associated with the City of Portland's public monuments. This reality was underscored through a participant sharing, "I think Portlanders may be fairly divided on the current monuments (at least this is how it feels in the microcosm discussions I have witnessed and participated in)." Another participant noted the "conflicted perspectives" present within the discussion session, additionally underscoring the divisive nature of this topic among Portland residents.

Discussion Question 3: The city of Portland has core values. These values are equity, anti-racism, collaboration (working together), communication, transparency (being open and honest), and fiscal responsibility (using money wisely). How can monuments support the City's values?

The Purpose and Function of Monuments

Many respondents wrote about how monuments themselves are antithetical to the city's values of equity and anti-racism. One respondent postulated that *"maybe monuments can't support the city's values of equity and anti-racism, if monuments are thought of as what traditionally they have been."* Another respondent wrote how monuments *"express oppression and colonialism."* Put into context, these sentiments were associated with the idea of monumentalizing an individual rather than a group, or a place, or a historical event. Some respondents wrote about how the city can reflect their stated values by creating new monuments and public art that recognizes every culture in Portland while still honoring *"the historic monuments."* Another possibility for monuments came from a respondent who wrote that monuments can *"... illustrate the stories of what citizens have valued over time, the history of Portland (both the good and the bad), that revered individuals are also human, that the struggle for civilization is a story dense with conflicting narratives."* Another respondent noted how monuments were traditionally used to communicate the power structure of society, writing that:

Monuments are commissioned or put up by the people in power, to express the values that support them being in power. If monuments are created from the top down — with city officials and people with money making the decision for what they are — they'll speak to the power structure rather than the people.

The longevity of monuments, as predicated on their cultural and historical relevance, was also discussed:

One of the things that I haven't heard yet is what tends to happen to monuments is they tend to be plopped. They might be held in the imagination for a period in time, and then that period of time passes, and monuments become just objects to people.

Considerations regarding the purpose and function of monuments were further emphasized during the report out portion, with a participant prompting the City to *"be mindful that monuments impact people differently depending on your social position."* Participants also explored an expansion of the definition of these art pieces. One participant underscored this expansion by asking, *"We also brought up creating opportunities for things that could be monumental ideas — perhaps it was performance or something if there wasn't infrastructure for a permanent piece. What else can be monumental?"* Another participant asserted that *"if we're going to be investing in monuments to last a long time, that investment should also be in the community, [such as] interactive programming."* This sentiment was echoed by another participant, who shared that the City should center an *"understanding of monuments and maintenance as investments into the community."* To this end, an expansion of the definition of monuments can include dance, conversation, trees, and nature in an effort to center community inclusion, values, and adaptability over time.

Lack of Confidence and Trust in the Process

There was a common theme of mistrust and a lack of confidence in the monuments process. Some respondents voiced about some suspicion about these city values, asking if they were *"... just words, or are they put into action?"* Going further, another respondent wrote how these values were just words on a page because they *"... are not enacted in a meaningful way".* In a similar vein, there were responses that touched on a flawed city government, some writing about how testifying at city council meetings is overly short (being given only 2 to 3 minutes), or that the *"online survey was very slanted [and] not accessible to many."* Another wrote about an imperative for not allowing city employees to move forward with their own biases. More respondents wrote about how they had experiences with the city government that are not in alignment with the city's stated values, or that it is likely that the monuments that were taken down will go back up despite community conversations, or that the city government has no place in

facilitating these decisions. Some respondents suggested that the city government should be more transparent about who makes decisions and how, and that the monuments *"should not be [put back up] secretly"*.

There was a running sentiment among respondents about community values not necessarily being shared by everyone and subsequently undermining public trust in the monument decision making process. As one respondent wrote, *"... groups of people can have values in common, but rarely do they agree on them all the time,"* continuing, *"[values] are in constant flux"*. A respondent echoed this sentiment of transient values through noting that *"values can change overtime."* A participant further reflected that *"monuments that no longer reflect the community values should be decommissioned,"* a thought underscored through noting that monuments should be *"adaptable."*

Suggestions for the Future

In thinking about what to do for the future, some respondents wrote about the need to rethink the permanency of monuments, possibly establishing an archive for oral histories and local photographs, or even establishing a *"truth garden"* filled with the torn-down monuments. When thinking about commissioning future art projects and monuments, one respondent wrote how the commissioned artist should be from the Portland area. Additionally, the background of the artist creating the instillation should also be considered, as a group noted, *"regarding the settler-colonial statues that are an attention point, you can't just consider the statues themselves, but the full truth of who made the statues and what else they were involved in."*

One respondent pondered the idea of a fully-funded residency program to bring in artists and scholars (like historians, sociologists, and researchers) to do community work and other projects involving monuments. Another wrote how it was important to figure out if the public art should be temporary and go through a rotation cycle. In thinking about new monuments, there were several responses that emphasized the importance of outreach, especially culturally-sensitive outreach, as encapsulated by a participant noting that *"funding and representative investment is important — especially investing in underserved and underrepresented communities."* This assertion was accompanied by the inquiry *"are placements of art/monuments equitable?"*

The artistic merit of monuments was discussed as a value to be upheld by the City's commissioning of these pieces, with participants noting in the discussion session that *"there are so many aesthetic issues that it makes you be offended on an artistic level alone."* As the City proceeds with any decision-making centered on monuments, the *"quality of artistic expression or quality of placement is a value to consider."*

Supporting Diversity

When thinking about new monuments, respondents wrote about the need for diverse voices — namely involving BIPOC community members, intellectuals, and artists, as well as historiographers and art historians in the monuments process. There was a theme of accessibility among responses, emphasizing that the process of engaging the community needs to go to where the community is and not necessarily ask the community to show up to a location convenient for the City. Additionally, the informational plaques for future monuments should be available in multiple languages and include historical and cultural context that can *"bring a deeper understanding of the city's history,"* as well as acknowledging the experiences of BIPOC communities and individuals. One respondent wrote about how the monuments need to make Portland's racist past transparent, and that the city's value of building a more equitable future can be shown by *"calling out [and] reflecting [on this] harmful past"*. However, some participants noted uncertainty regarding the efficacy of plaques in efforts to recontextualize monuments during the report out portion of the discussion, expressing that *"most people don't really read plaques – we're much more interested in the conversation between different points of view recognized in monuments."*

Partnerships with the community and organizations as conducive to upholding the City's stated values was further framed as an opportunity to collaborate with local Indigenous groups, with a participant sharing during the report out that *"there's 28 Native American works, and there are several of us who are contracted with the city,"* further asserting

that the City *"needs to expand who's indigenous and involved."* This discourse was additionally noted in the report out portion through a participant sharing that *"Portland needs to expand outreach to native communities."*

Rethinking the Question

There were a number of respondents who wrote about how this third discussion question was flawed. Some wrote plainly that the question was *"flawed"* or that *"... each question is getting worse."* A noticeable few wrote that the question was capitalizing *"on ambiguity,"* and that it needs to be more *"defined."* One respondent noted how the *"... ambiguity of the public art vs. monuments has created a lack of clarity."* This conflation between public art and monuments being confusing or obfuscating for some was noted by several respondents. One respondent in particular asked pointedly, *"[A]re we lumping all public artwork as monuments?"* One respondent remarked on anti-racism as a *"much more complex and misunderstood concept,"* that is *"not so cutely defined."* Some respondents actually reworded the question. For example, one wrote: *"I think the question should be reframed: How are monuments supporting the city's values[?] This allows questioning and 'refreshing' to happen/occur [around] the existing monuments [as a] framework to use when considering new monumental works."* Some respondents remarked on who holds these values. *"I assume when you say the city of Portland has core values, you mean the employees of the City of Portland are directed to work towards certain goals."* Another wrote, *"I don't believe cities have values. People have values."* And another respondent wrote, *"I don't know if the monuments can reflect the city's values when they are not shared throughout the community."*

Questions for the City

Respondents asked questions about the role the City of Portland plays in implementing their core values. One respondent asked, *"How are these values being implemented?"* and another wrote, *"How does the city make sure it follows its values in other kinds of difficult/challenging matters[?]"* Other similar questions asked how the city practiced and prioritized these values. One participant asked, *"How is the city listening to community through its core values[?]"*

Other questions focused on needing more context or information *[alphabetical order]*:

- ♦ *"Are they currently in practice?"*
- ♦ *"Are we lumping all public artwork as monuments?"*
- ♦ *"... can the people running this symposium define the word 'monument'?"*
- ♦ *"What is the point of these conversations if the monuments will (for the most part) go back? (Is this just belly button gazing?)"*
- ♦ *"When were the core values established?"*
- ♦ *"Which values are prioritized [and] why?"*
- ♦ *"Why is fiscal responsibility the priority?"*

Monument Questions

Many of the respondents' questions were focused on monuments themselves, asking general questions about the representation, permanence, and purpose of monuments *[alphabetical order]*.

- ♦ *"[D]oes [a] monument have to be [a] copper figure statue?"*
- ♦ *"[How does] truth fit in this process[?]"*
- ♦ *"[S]hould monuments be to individuals?"*
- ♦ *"[W]hat is the purpose of a monument?"*
- ♦ *"[W]ho's [sic] history does a monument commemorate?"*
- ♦ *"[W]hy are they permanent...?"*

Another set of questions addressed the authority of the City of Portland. Similar to those regarding truth, respondents asked the following alphabetized questions:

- ♦ "... should the city be the one to do this [facilitate the monuments discussion]?"
- ♦ "Who chooses [which] story to be told?"
- ♦ "Who gets to change or expand the story?"
- ♦ "Who gets to erase the story?"
- ♦ "Who gets to tell the story?"
- ♦ "Why are cities the stewards of monuments[?]"

On the theme of authority, one respondent asked, *"Who's evaluating these monuments [and] how often do they represent our community equitably?"* Other respondents asked about values and how monuments supposedly play a role in communicating, representing, or otherwise expressing values [alphabetical order].

- ♦ "How do the individuals of the monuments (George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, etc.) align with or support the city's values? (Do they?)"
- ♦ "How can monuments support the City's values?"
- ♦ "If we don't memorialize our values now, what will we leave?"
- ♦ "What are the sub parts of these values?"

Discussion Question 4: The City of Portland has decisions to make about monuments and public art. These decisions include how to think about our history and how to educate the public about our monuments. What principles and practices should guide these decisions?

Considerations for Creating Monuments

When thinking about future monuments, there were multiple themes in the responses, ranging from accessibility and centering the community to thinking about collaborating with archival organizations to clarifying the role of the city government.

Accessibility, as a theme, was tied to inclusivity and representation by some respondents. One respondent wrote about the time and energy it took for the people who participated in the symposium, underscoring how more people *"were not able"* to attend and *"deserve to be heard."* Another respondent wrote, *"... go to the people,"* go to the *"community spaces/meetings [that are] already happening."* This theme of accessibility was also connected to the theme of outreach. One participant wrote that the *"principles should include outreach."* Another respondent wrote about a need to facilitate *"multiple events in different communities"* about the current monuments. Some respondents wrote about accessibility more broadly, calling for more equitable access (physically and intellectually) to monuments and conversations around them. As it was relevant for conversations on community outreach, one participant wrote about more *"accurate representation of BIPOC folks"*.

Some respondents wrote about an imperative for the community to have access to *"underrepresented histories"* and contextual information *"as it changes [and] evolves."* Representation came up as a relevant theme in several instances, however, it was especially frequent when participants wrote about history-making, as one respondent inquired *"[W]hose history is being told?"* Another, similarly asked, *"[W]ho tells the stories? Who writes the plaques?"* Some respondents reflected on how to balance monumentalizing a past that is emotionally evocative and brutal. In the responses, there was also a clear theme of wanting to represent all histories. As one respondent wrote, *"... all the known histories [need] to have a moment/space."* Another wrote about the need for *"process [and] practices,"* that can ensure *"multiple perspectives on history."* For some respondents, representation was on the forefront when thinking about the need for monuments and public art to address *"... the injustices [that] these monuments represent for so many people and communities."*

Tied to these discussions on representation and history-making was the discussion on who should lead the development of new monuments and public art. It is quite clear when looking at the responses that the vast majority of respondents did not find a dominant role for the city government in leading the development of new monuments and public art. As respondents wrote, *"[The] City does not get to decide how people should think about history."* And *"It shouldn't be [up to] the city to dictate history [and] educate the public."* and *"[C]ommunity-led rather than city led."* If the government is to facilitate a community partnership with experts and other organizations (e.g., the Oregon Historical Society and Oregon Humanities, as noted by respondents), there were several prevalent themes. Some noted a need for transparency by linking it to clarity, as one respondent wrote, *"[B]e clear on process, intention, [and] actual possibilities [versus] non-possibilities."* Similarly, another respondent wrote about transparency by tying it to community voice: *"if the City of Portland really values Collaboration and Transparency, the City of Portland should open the funding for Monuments up to rank choice voting."*

There was a high frequency of respondents who wrote about the need for the development process of new monuments and public art to be community centered and led. For some respondents, new monument development was tied to the *"[d]ifficulty of addressing historical racism,"* and other *"shameful histories."* Prioritizing local histories and artists was strongly connected to having monument development be community centered and led.

Discussing the connections between monuments (particularly those monumentalizing individuals) and white supremacy and colonization, participants thought of alternative possibilities for monuments. There were three dominant themes: monumentalizing nature, being site-specific, and moving away from individuals. This approach to developing a conceptualization of the purpose of monuments was summarized by a notetaker during the report out portion of the discussion, stating *"[W]hy monuments, should there even be monuments?"* and that a participant would *"rather see Mt. Tabor continuously reforested, or [a] monument to volcanic activity..."* Some participants remarked on the *"lack of connection"* monuments have to *"place."* And that monuments and public art should shift to *"memorializing land, [and] nature."* Some noted complications with monumentalizing individuals, citing George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In seeking to expand the definition of monuments, participants noted in the report out portion that the Symposium was *"loading a lot on 'just' monuments"* and the City should have the *"courage to expand."* To this end, participants told the City *"don't silo this process around monuments, use something like it on the way we rename or mark streets, or commemorate people, places, things, and values."* Expanding the possibilities of commemorating and honoring culturally meaningful observations, a participant noted that *"Rosa Parks' Day means a bus seat is held and bus fare is free, that's a monument."* This shifting conceptualization of what constitutes a monument was further noted by a participant sharing that *"we made monuments a hundred years ago – we're not putting up monuments the way we did 100 years ago, because we're not those people."* To this end, a notetaker summarizes that a *"small handful of monuments cannot represent an entire diverse city — to try to make them do so will be a disservice."*

In proceeding with the development of future monuments, participants in report out discussions noted that effective community partnerships would be conducive to facilitating monuments that reflect the community. Taking a more "hands off" approach was mentioned, as a notetaker recorded *"there's one thing they could do if they trust us to have the conversation – they could fund the arts, and they wouldn't have to worry about who's going to write the words on the plaques."* To this end, utilizing community infrastructure, such as libraries, to facilitate conversation with members of the community and display monuments was noted as they are *"already community spaces with the resources and capacity to archive and educate."* Additionally, bolstering the partnership with the Regional Arts and Culture Council was noted, with a participant asking, *[C]an RACC play a role or be restored to playing a role as a professional entity?"* Another participant further expounded that *"RACC cares for the public art collections,"* asserting that *"if the city wants to walk the talk, they need to treat RACC correctly, and trust them to be a partner in this."* This sentiment was further discussed through a participant stating:

The city is not in a position to handle a public art program by themselves. They did something destructive in this community, in the midst of this monuments issue, and I think that was a failure of the city to have a mud-slinging of the arts and culture council.

Focus and Clarity

Participants were critical of the symposium questions conflating monuments and public art, some saying that they were two different topics, that decisions made for monuments should not carry over to public art, and that the symposium lacked focus by putting both on the discussion table. As one respondent wrote, *"The symposium has intermingled the two terms so what is the focus?"* Another wrote that the decisions made about public art *"... should not be conflated with decisions [made] about monuments."* This sentiment was further echoed during the report out portion of the discussion session, as a notetaker summarized, *"The combining of public art and monuments in the same thought is not correct. The answers you get will be limited by the questions you ask."*

Another theme among responses was needing clarity. For some respondents, there was a lack of definition for the term monuments, or even context for how monuments can be a *"... 'settler colonial' thing?"* The need for clarity also surrounded what the purpose of a monument is, how a monument is not public art, and vice versa. Some respondents wondered if we should even have monuments at all? One respondent wrote that *"[t]he city needs to define what the purpose of public space is, and whether monuments help with that."* Some suggested for the city to *"[e]stablish goals around 'educating the public,'"* in order to clarify what the public is being educated about as it pertains to monuments and public art. Some respondents also suggested doing something with the money allocated for

public art and monuments. One respondent wrote, *"What [if] giving the money to the people was the monument?"* and another wrote, *"I'm assuming most of the People of Portland would vote for spending that money on... the People."*

Additionally, participants inquired in the report out portion of the discussion session regarding the efficacy or appropriateness of bringing in a *"third or fourth party from outside the area to have influence over our local input."* This concern was accompanied by participants asking *"[W]here we draw the line from being inspired by other governments and states verses being influenced by them,"* underscoring the careful consideration necessary when including voices from outside Portland to make decisions regarding local monuments.

Concern with the City's Follow-through after the Symposium

Participants expressed concern regarding the application of the data gleaned from the Symposium to the City's monument plan moving forward. Several groups questioned how the content of the Symposium report would be framed and utilized by the City. A notetaker summarized this concern: *"[W]ho uses this feedback and how will it impact the politicians who will digest it?"* The responsibility of the City to consider this feedback and implement the provided considerations was further noted, with a group expressing that *"this report should be read non-reactively; the city reps may not agree with the opinions represented, but the people who were able to give their time and those who weren't so privileged deserve to have these views acknowledged."* Another discussion session noted in their report out that *"more broad base building between community members and stakeholders must be done before we have conversations about values, principles and practices,"* underscoring the relationship cultivation necessary to effectively reflect the values of Portlanders in the City's monument collection. Additionally, the City was called on to make provisions to effectively carry out these monument considerations through making staffing and resource allocations sufficient to support the work at hand, with a notetaker summarizing that *"if we actually want the highest level of outcome, the city needs to staff someone to do the job,"* and that *"if it's no one's job, it won't be done."* This sentiment of commitment through making these resources available was further echoed in another report out portion, with a group noting that the City *"needs to properly staff the department to take care of this"* as it's currently *"no one's job to do this."*

Considerations for Current Monuments

Two strong themes from the responses tended to urge the city to be transparent in their decision-making process and to include the community as much as possible in a highly accessible way. Respondents wrote that the reason for toppling the monuments came from a frustration with the city government not listening to the community. Some respondents wrote about needing to foster respect and honor for *"all of our monuments."* There was a theme of keeping the old, or toppled monuments so that the community can learn of Portland's history of oppression, racism, and acts of colonialism. Conversely, a participant asserted the colonialist implications of monuments, noting in their report out portion that *"tangible, physical monuments are a manifestation of white supremacy,"* expounding that *"white supremacy culture needs monuments where other diverse culture have reverence for the greater than human(systems) world."*

Appendix A: PMP Symposium Demographic Survey

NOTE: The paper version of the survey is included. The web-based survey was identical in content and structure.



Portland Monuments Project

Thank you for attending a group discussions session at the Portland Monuments Project Symposium. To describe the group of people who participated, please complete this brief demographic survey – it is voluntary and anonymous (*please do not write your name on it*). Demographic characteristics will be summarized across all participants and included in a report documenting themes and topics raised during the group discussions.

1. What is your 5-digit zip code? _____
2. What year were you born? _____
3. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? *[Select ALL that apply]*
 - ☐ American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous Peoples of the Americas
 - ☐ Asian
 - ☐ Black or African American
 - ☐ Latino/a/e/x or Hispanic
 - ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
 - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - ☐ White
 - ☐ Not listed above, please describe: _____
 - ☐ I prefer not to answer
4. Are you an **enrolled member** of a Federal or State recognized American Indian Tribe or Alaskan Native Village/Corporation? *[Select ONLY one]*
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I prefer not to answer
 - ↳ Tribal Affiliation(s): _____
5. Are you a **descendant** of a Federal or State recognized American Indian Tribe or Alaskan Native Village/Corporation? *[Select ONLY one]*
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I prefer not to answer
 - ↳ Tribal Affiliation(s): _____
6. How do you identify your gender? *[Select ALL that apply]*
 - ☐ Man
 - ☐ Woman
 - ☐ Gender expansive (non-binary, agender, gender fluid, genderqueer)
 - ☐ Transgender
 - ☐ Trans man
 - ☐ Trans woman
 - ☐ Two Spirit
 - ☐ I am undecided or questioning
 - ☐ I prefer to describe my gender as: _____
 - ☐ I prefer not to answer
7. What language(s) do you speak or sign at home? _____
8. Do you identify as having or living with a disability? *[Select ONLY one]*
 - ☐ Yes *[answer Question 9a]*
 - ☐ No *[skip to Question 10]*
 - ☐ I prefer not to answer *[skip to Question 10]*

8a. Please describe the nature of your disability. *[Select ALL that apply]*

 - ☐ Hearing
 - ☐ Intellectual, developmental, cognitive
 - ☐ Invisible
 - ☐ Mental health
 - ☐ Mobility or other physical disabilities
 - ☐ Neurodivergence
 - ☐ Speech or communication
 - ☐ Visual
 - ☐ Something else *[please describe]:* _____
 - ☐ I prefer not to answer
9. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? *[Select ONLY one]*
 - ☐ Some school
 - ☐ High school graduate, no college (includes high school diploma equivalent, like a GED)
 - ☐ Some college, but no degree
 - ☐ Associates or other technical degree (includes certificates)
 - ☐ Bachelor's degree
 - ☐ Advanced degree (includes masters, doctoral, and professional degrees such as law or medicine)
 - ☐ Other *[please describe]:* _____
 - ☐ I prefer not to answer

Thank You!

Appendix B: PMP Symposium Guided Discussion Guidelines



Portland Monuments Project

PMP Symposium October 11-12, 2024 Discussion Guidelines

The PMP Symposium breakout sessions will focus on deepening public engagement and expanding conversations around public art and monuments.

Guidelines for the Discussions:

- ♦ Participation is voluntary. You can leave at any time, and those who wish to not participate are welcome to step out or stay and listen to the discussion.
- ♦ The discussion is anonymous. We are not collecting your names, so your answers will not be connected to your identity. We ask that everyone respect each other's privacy and not tell anyone else what is said here today.
- ♦ There are no right or wrong answers.
- ♦ Please talk one at a time to be respectful of others and so everyone's voice can be fully heard.
- ♦ Although you might disagree with what someone else says, everyone's opinion is valuable and respected. It's ok to disagree.
- ♦ Try to stay on topic so the discussion is focused on the question.
- ♦ Please don't have side conversations while others are talking – these can be distracting.
- ♦ It is important to hear all sides of a topic – both positive and negative viewpoints are encouraged.
- ♦ Information collected during the discussion will be combined and analyzed for key themes. Any direct quotes will only be included if the identity of the participant is anonymous. A summary report will be prepared and inform the Portland Monuments Project.

Appendix C: PMP Symposium Breakout Session 1 Worksheet



**Portland
Monuments
Project**

PMP Symposium October 11-12, 2024
Breakout Session 1: Friday 1:00-2:00

Guiding Question 1: How can Portland adapt and be open to change with its use of public art to hold memory and history?

Please use this form to record your thoughts, ideas, and conversations with fellow breakout group members.

Individual Reflection:

In Groups of 2:

In Groups of 4:

Use the back of this sheet if more room is needed.

Appendix D: PMP Symposium Breakout Session 2 Worksheet



**Portland
Monuments
Project**

**PMP Symposium October 11-12, 2024
Breakout Session 2: Friday 3:30-4:30**

Guiding Question 2: What do Portlanders think about the City's current monuments?

Please use this form to record your thoughts, ideas, and conversations with fellow breakout group members.

Individual Reflection:

In Groups of 2:

In Groups of 4:

Use the back of this sheet if more room is needed.

Appendix E: PMP Symposium Breakout Session 3 Worksheet



**Portland
Monuments
Project**

PMP Symposium October 11-12, 2024
Breakout Session 3: Saturday 1:00-2:00

Guiding Question 3: The City of Portland has core values. These values are equity, anti-racism, collaboration (*working together*), communication, transparency (*being open and honest*), and fiscal responsibility (*using money wisely*). How can monuments support the City's values?

Please use this form to record your thoughts, ideas, and conversations with fellow breakout group members.

Individual Reflection:

In Groups of 2:

In Groups of 4:

Use the back of this sheet if more room is needed.

Appendix F: PMP Symposium Breakout Session 4 Worksheet



**Portland
Monuments
Project**

**PMP Symposium October 11-12, 2024
Breakout Session 4: Saturday 2:15-3:15**

Guiding Question 4: The City of Portland has decisions to make about monuments and public art. These decisions include how to think about our history and how to educate the public about our monuments. What principles and practices should guide these decisions?

Please use this form to record your thoughts, ideas, and conversations with fellow breakout group members.

Individual Reflection:

In Groups of 2:

In Groups of 4:

Use the back of this sheet if more room is needed.

Appendix G: PMP Symposium Overview and Selection of Public Artworks Collection



**Portland
Monuments
Project**

<https://www.portland.gov/arts/monuments>



The goals of the Portland Monuments Project (PMP) are to:

- ♦ Engage the community in creating policies about Portland's public art collection.
- ♦ Foster new conversations about the purpose of monuments and memorials in Portland.
- ♦ Finalize recommendations for new monuments, updated interpretations, and the future of monuments that were damaged or removed in 2020 and 2021.

Portland State University (PSU) is working with the City of Portland's Office of Arts and Culture to gather and analyze input and feedback from the community. Data will be gathered throughout the project through discussions held at the PMP Symposium (October 11-12, 2024), community events and activities initiated by PMP partners, and a web survey (information below).

Much of the data gathering will be focused on four guiding questions that will support the project goals:

- ♦ How can Portland adapt and be open to change with its use of public art to hold memory and history?
- ♦ What do Portlanders think about the City's current monuments?
- ♦ The City of Portland has core values. These values are equity, anti-racism, collaboration (*working together*), communication, transparency (*being open and honest*), and fiscal responsibility (*using money wisely*). How can monuments support the City's values?
- ♦ The City of Portland has decisions to make about monuments and public art. These decisions include how to think about our history and how to educate the public about our monuments. What principles and practices should guide these decisions?

The following pages of this handout include a selection of the Portland Public Artworks Collection to give you an idea of the range of pieces it includes.

For more information about the Portland Monuments Project, please contact Darion Jones, Assistant Director, Office of Arts & Culture, City of Portland, Darion.Jones@portlandoregon.gov.

For more information about the PMP evaluation, please contact Deb Elliott, Research Professor, Regional Research Institute for Human Services, Portland State University, elliotttd@pdx.edu.

Selection of the Portland Public Artworks Collection



<https://www.publicartarchive.org/collections/Regional-Arts---Culture-Council>



Title: Animals in Pools

Artist: Georgia Gerber

Year: 1986

Location: Transit Mall, SW 6th Ave. and SW Yamhill St., between SW 5th Ave. and SW 6th Ave.

Placement: Sidewalks

Type: Sculpture (visual work)

Material: Bronze (metal)



Title: Ramona Quimby Sculpture Garden

Artist: Lee Hunt

Year: 1996

Location: Grant Park in North Portland

Placement: Parks (recreation areas)

Type: Sculpture (visual work)

Material: Bronze (metal)



Title: Facing the Crowd

Artist: Michael Stutz

Year: 2001

Location: Providence Park, NW entrance

Placement: Sports complex

Type: Sculpture (visual work)

Material: Bronze (metal)



Title: Leah Hing Mural

Artist: Lynn Yarne

Year: 2023

Location: Portland Building, Leah Hing Room 108

Placement: Municipal buildings

Type: Mixed media

Material: Vinyl, acrylic paint, plywood, aluminum (metal)



Title: Flow

Artist: Greg A. Robinson

Year: 2024

Location: Washington Park, SW entrance

Placement: Parks (recreation areas)

Type: Sculpture (visual work)

Material: Cedar, glass (material)



Title: From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free

Artist: Natalie Ball

Year: 2024

Location: Portland Building, 2nd floor

Placement: Municipal buildings

Type: Fiber art

Material: Cotton (textile), polyester, wool (hair), hide (collagenous material) acrylic paint, chalk



Title: Fare Well

Artist: Don Merkt

Year: 1997

Location: Water Pollution Control Lab,
Exterior

Placement: Water treatment plants

Type: Sculpture (visual work)

Material: Cast iron



Title: A Book with Ella Rene

Artist: Tristan "TK" Irving

Year: 2022

Location: Powell's Books

Placement: Commercial
buildings

Type: Murals (any medium),
vinyl wrap

Material: Vinyl



Title: Water, Please

Artist: Don Merkt

Year: 1997

Location: Water Pollution Control Lab, Exterior (N. Pittsburgh Ave)

Placement: Water treatment plants

Type: Sculpture (visual work)

Material: Aluminum (metal), stainless steel



Title: Albina Yard Maintenance Building

Artist: SpaceCraft: Mission to Arts

Year: 2012

Location: Albina Yard Maintenance Building

Placement: Utilities buildings

Type: Murals (any medium), mural paintings (visual works)

Material: Acrylic paint