

Parking and Transportation in Support of an Arts and Cultural District

As a community begins efforts to promote an arts district, it should ensure that an appropriate level of transportation and parking resources are available and consistent with all proposed elements of the project and that consideration is taken for each subsequent stage of the arts district evolution. A successful arts district combines elements that are attractive to creative people for both business and residential use as well as attracting visitors and tourism. Transportation and parking resources should be sufficient to support any current and proposed uses, but should be designed in such a way that they are aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the goals and aspirations of the arts district.

Successful arts districts are walkable neighborhoods – those that have design elements that make it easy for residents and visitors to walk from place to place and experience a variety of businesses, workplaces and living spaces. They are connected to the larger community by public transportation and roads adequate to bring visitors and supplies from the interstate highway system. The walkable arts district has a core or center – often an historic commercial street. Initial investment on improving design and transportation amenities should focus on this area first.



1. To ensure walkability in the core arts district area, communities should consider planning and zoning guidelines that require that buildings be located close to the street in areas where buildings had been situated similarly in the past.

Streets and roads in the arts district should be adequate to bring visitors and resources into the district. Streets with improperly designed parking schemes will discourage visitors. Care should be exercised in the traffic policies of roads and streets to allow for easy use by pedestrians and bicyclists. Roads should have marked and signaled crosswalks at every major intersection. Speed limits should be limited within the district to allow for safe use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

If the district is centered on a main commercial street, parking should be provided along the street to allow for easy access to businesses and residences on upper floors. Parking meters and /or short time limits should be imposed to encourage frequent turnover of parking spaces and discourage long term parking. Longer-term parking should be located to the rear of the buildings that face the main thoroughfare. Planning guidelines should discourage parking lots located in front of buildings in the area.



2. Parking meters encourage turnover.



3. Parking lots should be located behind the main street.

The visual quality of transportation amenities and support infrastructure should be considered when design changes are made. When possible, these investments should be concentrated in the core of the district, where they will have the most impact. Utility wires can be buried to remove overhead visual clutter.



4. Streetscape improvement through landscaping.



5. Street amenity as public art.



6. Well marked crosswalks enhance walkability.



7. Public transit improves access and sustainability.