

How to:

Discuss monuments with
your local government



WORLD
HERITAGE **Monuments Toolkit**
USA

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Over the course of the development of the Monuments Toolkit Project, many people expressed interest in how to engage with the local monuments landscape. This publication was developed from these inquiries.

The purpose of this guide is to give a general overview of potential entry points for citizens seeking to discuss monuments with their local or state government.

The information needed to understand monument governance by civic entities is generally accessible, but often complicated. Decision-making processes may involve people and policies at multiple levels. In addition, the particular structures and processes will vary from municipality to municipality.

This guide is a starting point to orient you to key local and state processes. We encourage you to consult local resources and build an information toolkit tailored to your community.

For additional insight, this document includes a mini case study of Santa Ana, California, to illustrate how the process can unfold in practice.

About...

ICOMOS

international council on monuments and sites

The International Council on Monuments and Sites

ICOMOS is a global non-governmental organization associated with UNESCO. Its mission is to promote the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of monuments, building complexes and sites. ICOMOS is an Advisory Body of the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention of UNESCO. As a global organization, ICOMOS has gradually built the philosophical and doctrinal framework of heritage on an international level.

ICOMOS-USA

International Council on Monuments and Sites

The U.S. National Committee of The International Council on Monuments and Sites

As part of the worldwide ICOMOS network, ICOMOS-USA promotes the conservation of world heritage and stronger connections to the global heritage community through advocacy, education, and the international exchange of people and ideas. ICOMOS-USA guides and promotes activities in support of worldwide heritage conservation through an extensive membership network of preservation professionals, institutions, and organizations, including specialized scientific committees. ICOMOS-USA is a private, non-profit, non-governmental organization with 501(c)(3) status.

About...



World Heritage USA

World Heritage USA operates to support the work of ICOMOS-USA. The organization's activities provide a gateway for U.S. citizens to experience and participate in international heritage conservation activities and for the international community to learn about the rich and diverse heritage of the United States. In doing so, World Heritage USA upholds and advances the broad goals of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Convention.

With a unique voice, World Heritage USA engages in advocacy surrounding the wide range of challenges and disruptions taking place to effective heritage conservation in the United States and worldwide. The ICOMOS-USA annual symposia support the exploration of key issues facing the cultural heritage sector and identify innovative pathways forward through the exchange of scholarship and ideas.

The Monuments Toolkit Project, funded by the Mellon Foundation, is one initiative of World Heritage USA that seeks to facilitate understanding and consensus building in the monument landscape. Other programs and projects of World Heritage USA include the International Underground Railroad Project, International Exchange Program, and Emerging Professionals Program.

Learn more about World Heritage USA programs and projects at worldheritageusa.org.



Identify the municipal body or bodies involved in decision making around monuments.

In each municipal setting, monuments will fall under the purview of different governmental bodies or agencies such as arts commissions, building committees, parks and recreation departments, historic preservation commissions, and/or the city council at large.



Explore your municipal website to identify what commission, committee, agency, department, or office oversees monuments in your city. Commonly, monuments are either grouped with public art or with historic sites and landmarks.

Note - Monuments on federal property will likely fall under the purview of federal departments such as the Department of the Interior or the Department of Defense.

Here are a few examples of monument governance in communities of different sizes and municipal status. Each place is unique - the process will vary greatly!

Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago City Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) oversees the Public Art Program and holds decision-making authority regarding the majority of Chicago's public monuments. DCASE is advised by the Chicago Monuments Project Advisory Committee and the Chicago Cultural Advisory Council. Depending on the circumstances and location, actions around monuments may also involve the Chicago Park District General Superintendent, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, and/or the Mayor.

Jacksonville, Florida

The Jacksonville City Council is responsible for approving or rejecting proposals to remove, alter, or relocate public monuments. The City Council is advised by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville which manages the City's Art in Public Places Program and the Public Art Collection. The Mayor is also able to remove monuments without City Council approval if the removal does not utilize city funds.

Arcata, California

Arcata is a small town in northern California. The Arcata City Council is responsible for making decisions around municipal monuments.

Moltonville, North Carolina

Moltonville is an unincorporated community and therefore is governed by the county. The Sampson County Historical and Cultural Preservation Committee evaluates and makes recommendations to the Sampson County Board of Commissioners regarding the change in the monument landscape under county jurisdiction. The Board of Commissioners is ultimately responsible for decision-making around monuments that fall under county purview. The North Carolina Heritage Protection Act will influence decisions.

Hemingford, Nebraska

Hemingford is a village in northwestern Nebraska. The Village Council, comprised of a chairman, vice chairman, and board of trustees, leads the municipal government and is responsible for making decisions regarding village monuments.



Attend public meetings and respond to calls for public comment.

Open meeting laws exist in all U.S. states and are designed to facilitate transparent meetings of state and city government agencies or regulatory bodies that include public input. The laws vary state by state but often require that meetings are open to the public and held in a reasonably accessible location, meeting agendas and minutes are made publicly available, and notice is given.



Consult the rules around public participation at specific meetings on your municipal website. There may be options to submit public comments without attending a meeting in person, such as by mail, phone, or through email.



**Contact your commission,
council, and/or local officials
directly.**

The names of commissioners and council members are public information. Municipal websites may also provide a direct office phone number, email address, or mailing address. Contact your local officials directly to express your opinion and advocate for a particular course of action.



Note - Use only publicly available information to avoid invading the privacy of individuals.



Review any standing policy or legislation at the local and state levels.

If monuments fall under a city's public art collection, there are likely policies in place that guide the addition or removal of monuments from the collection. There may also be statewide legislation that prevents the removal or alteration of monuments or a particular monument.



Familiarity with these regulations will allow you to more effectively advocate for change in the monument landscape or within the policies themselves.



Stay informed about municipal news and updates.

Regularly check your municipal website, public bulletins, and local news for notices and information about upcoming meetings. If possible, consult meeting agendas in advance and consider attending if you'd like to understand more about the topic or submit a public comment.

If a particular monument is slated for discussion, it should be listed as an agenda item.





Check for funding opportunities through your municipal art department that can facilitate the creation of new monuments.

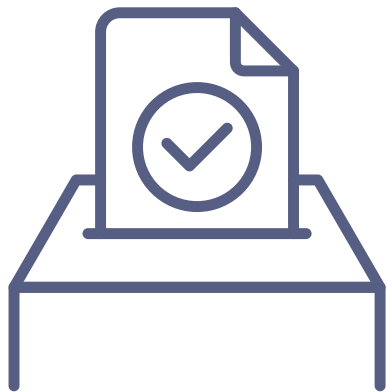
If you wish to add to the existing monument landscape, see if your municipal art department or agency is accepting any applications for grants that would help this effort. Individual artist or organizational grants may be offered.





Exercise your voting power in local and state elections.

If municipal commissioners or committee members are not elected officials, determine who is responsible for their instatement. They may be appointed by the mayor, city council, or other elected officials. Ask candidates for city government positions about their opinion on actions or decisions surrounding controversial monuments and vote for those whose views align with your own.



At the state level, legislation governing monuments must pass through the state legislature. Consider the opinions of candidates for your state's general assembly and exercise your right to vote!



Join community forums.

Locate in person or digital forums discussing municipal issues and actions from the citizen perspective. When used responsibly, social media has proven to be a powerful tool in uniting community members around common goals.



Apply or run to serve with the decision-making body.



Review membership requirements for positions that appeal to you and aim to be a decision-maker yourself!



Example: Santa Ana, California



The Santa Ana Arts and Culture Commission makes recommendations to the City Manager and City Council regarding public art such as monuments.



The Arts and Culture Commission meets monthly and the City Council meets twice a month at the City Council Chamber in the Santa Ana Civic Center. A municipal web page outlines requesting to speak at an in-person meeting, mailing or emailing a letter to be distributed to council members, and joining via Zoom or by phone.



There is a “Contact your commissioner” form on the Arts and Culture Commission webpage. City Council Members are listed with their phone and email addresses on the municipal website.



The Community Arts and Cultural Master Plan (2016) outlines the goals and guiding principles of Santa Ana as it relates to the public art landscape. They also maintain guidelines for the acquisition and deaccessioning (removal from collection) of public art. There is no California legislation that limits action around monuments (excluding land survey monuments).



There are various citizen-led advocacy organizations in Santa Ana, including Facebook groups and established community hubs.



Example: Santa Ana, California



The municipal website provides links to all of the City's social media platforms as well as an "Events" page at which you can filter to view only public meetings that are scheduled. There is also an option to sign up for the Arts & Culture mailing list.



The City of Santa Ana offers both an annual Individual Artist and Arts Organization Grant through the Arts and Culture Commission. The qualifications and deadlines are listed on the municipal website with information sessions.



Santa Ana Arts and Culture Commissioners are appointed by the City Council. City Council members are elected by ward for four year terms.



Members of the Santa Ana Arts and Culture commission should be persons who are interested in municipal arts and cultural issues, have professional expertise or substantial volunteer involvement in the arts & culture sector, must be a Santa Ana resident, etc. There is an application process.

