



Shirlington

CIVIC ASSOCIATION



Public Art Discussion
From Members Meeting
February 11, 2026



Public Art Discussion

- The Shirlington Civic Association meeting focused on the 2026 rollout of major streetscape improvements by Federal Realty Investment Trust.
- During that work, the “Downstream” mosaic fountain on the library plaza will be retired.
- A new piece of public art in a new location will be selected, following county processes and paid for by the property owner.
- The public art presentation and a summary of comments made by community members follows.

Public Art in the Village



**At Io Piazza: “We the People”
by Brad Morton**



On the Library Plaza:

**“Flow” light sculpture
by Erwin Redl**



**“Downstream” by Martha
Jackson-Jarvis**

- ▶ Non-functional, deteriorated; will be decommissioned and removed
- ▶ A new art piece will be designed and installed

Location for new art

In January SCA, Federal Realty, and County staff walked the Village to evaluate potential locations.

The most feasible sites are Campbell Ave, where the historic fountain is now, or at the Randolph St entrance to the Village. **The fountain will be moved to the lower level.**

-  Feasible sites
-  Won't work



Types of Public Art in Arlington County

(See more at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Public-Art/Public-Art-Collection/Permanent-Collection>. The website includes self-guided walking tour maps.)



Pavement art



Wall art

Types of Public Art

Functional: Seating, bridges, fences

Clockwise, starting upper left: “Meeting Bowls” (temporary) Verizon Plaza, N. Courthouse Rd ; “Potomac Garden” on Crystal Drive; “West Glebe Flow” on West Glebe Road bridge; “Transparent Tapestry” on Wilson Blvd, Ballston (divides public plaza from private courtyard)





Types of Public Art

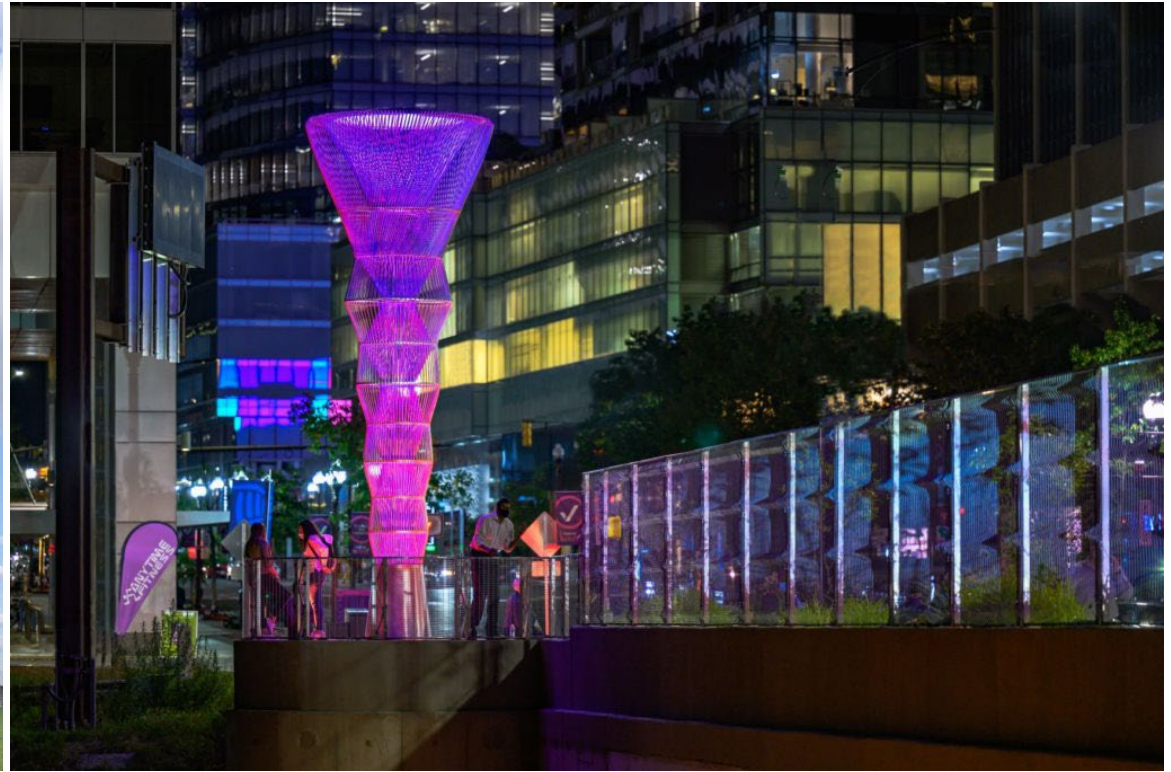
Freestanding sculptures

Clockwise, starting upper left: “The Family” in Hall's Hill/High View Park; “*FREED*” at John Robinson Town Square in Green Valley; “Floral Sky” at The Crossing on Clarendon Blvd; “Anna and David” on Wilson Blvd, between Clarendon and Rosslyn

Types of Public Art



Kinetic



Lighting

Types of Public Art

Interactive



Parts of a play structure can be repositioned, swiveled, peered through, and explored



Responds to movement by glowing softly from within

Questions for discussion

- ▶ **What have you liked or not liked about art in our neighborhood?**
- ▶ **What type of art piece do you think would work in a feasible location on our streets?**
- ▶ **What themes would you like to see represented?**
- ▶ **Would you be interested in working with a County committee for developing the new public art in Shirlington?**

Notes from the discussion:

1. I like that we have art! It's a valued part of the Village at Shirlington.
2. I like how lights/lighting art really works in the Village. I love the "Flow" piece on the library wall, because the Village comes alive at night.
3. I like Signature's main staircase with programmable color lighting; it's an inspiration.
4. I really like how the "Wheelhouse" evokes the spirit and history of Jennie Dean Park. We need something that speaks about the Village at Shirlington.
5. One theme to sum up the Village might be "Communication & Arts" for WETA and Signature Theatre.
6. We like the new streetscape design that will open up the center of Campbell Ave to pedestrians. The large fountain and its basin take up a lot of space there now. Be careful not to recreate the same situation.

Notes from the discussion:

7. What about murals? [*Answered: Federal Realty plans to add murals on spaces they own, e.g. the walls of the North and South Vias.*]
8. Think about social media - what will be the Village at Shirlington's "spot" to take and post photos? There is none now, year-round.
9. Consider WETA's new video screen on 31st St. The Fireplace graphic became iconic during the holidays. People took selfie photos with it.
10. Please nothing that looks like people. It's too divisive.
11. I was glad to see the category of public art called lighting. Something like the North Lynn Street bridge from Rosslyn to Georgetown would be great.
12. Can we work with Signature or WETA creative staff on art concepts or even execution?

Notes from the discussion:

13. Art on Campbell Ave should be visible from the North Via, where people park on the surface lot, to be a front door that says, “You’ve arrived in Shirlington.” The Vias are off-center, so line the art up with one of them.
14. We didn’t like how the “Downstream” mosaic materials deteriorated into an eyesore. It required too much maintenance, collected leaves and dirty water. It attracted kids but wasn’t sanitary. Nice idea, poor execution.
15. The new art piece shouldn’t be climbable (or swimmable!) like “Downstream” was. We need to think of how kids will interact with it. Make sure it’s safe.
16. How does the public art decision get made? How is the artist involved? How will the community be involved in the selection?

Notes from the discussion:

Long-term and other comments:

- ▶ Harris Teeter's blank windows are an eyesore. Can we activate that side of the street, e.g. with historical photos, like at the CVS in Clarendon?
- ▶ In the long run, we need public art on a renewed Pedestrian Bypass over I-395! Big waste, such an ugly bridge seen by thousands of drivers every day.

Final note: The location, selection, and installation of the new art will go through Arlington County's Public Art process. Federal Realty and the County have agreed on a budget.

For More Information

- ▶ <https://shirlingtoncivicassociation.org>
- ▶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Public-Art>
- ▶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Commission-for-the-Arts/Public-Art-Committee>
- ▶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Commission-for-the-Arts>