WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Previous art projects in Massachusetts funded by the public have had enormous and positive community impact. Examples include:

- Brookline artist Janet Echelman’s aerial sculpture “As If It Were Already Here” mounted over the Boston Greenway in 2015 which evoked joy and community discussion.
- The more than 90 public art projects installed along the six major transit lines of the MBTA, including “Gift of the Wind,” a 46-foot tall kinetic sculpture at Porter Square station in Cambridge and “Ten Figures,” a group of life-sized human figures created out of cement, placed in areas around Davis Square T stop that have transformed these urban spaces to be more inviting.
- “Water Music,” the 1,400-piece public installation on the Route 9 railroad bridge entering Northampton that has spurred conversation and contemplation about water, conservation, and the power of nature.
- The installation of colorful and dynamic underpass lighting in Lynn’s Central Square, Washington Street, and Market Street rail lines, which not only delight the eye, but contribute to pedestrian safety.
- Punto Open Air Museum in Salem’s Point neighborhood, which is made up of over 50 large scale murals by 18 world renowned and 20 local artists which break down the invisible but undeniable socio-economic barriers between the Point neighborhood and the rest of Salem and the North Shore.

WHAT IS IT?

The Massachusetts Public Art Program is modelled on the nation’s oldest state public art program in Hawaii, which reserves a portion of public funding for capital projects for public art. Every state in New England has a public art program--except Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Public Art Program will invest approximately $2 million a year in the creation and preservation of public art on state-owned properties. The program will be funded by reserving one percent of the annual capital budget for state buildings in order create, purchase, and maintain public art. A Public Art Commission will be responsible for establishing which projects will be funded, and the Commission will ensure that input from arts professionals, community stakeholders, and government and capital funding experts is considered.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Public art evokes joy and prompts community discussion and engagement. When incorporated into the design of public spaces, public art increases the functionality, accessibility, and authenticity of these spaces so that the community’s use of them is greatly enhanced.