

# UC Berkeley

## Places

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Eight years ago, Phoenix initiated an innovative citywide public art master plan. Instead of focusing on simple public space enhancement projects, the plan integrated the art program into the planning, funding and design of capital improvements — highways, water facilities, waste transfer stations, and more.

The plan, developed by William Morrish, Catherine Brown and Grover Mouton in collaboration with citizens, civic leaders and public agencies, responded to several challenges:

How could art projects make the city's underlying terrain and infrastructure systems more legible, part of the city's conscious cultural framework?

How could art projects involve citizens and designers in making public works that are not only functional but also visual and educative resources?

How could the art program create a dialogue that would elevate the design of other public and private development?

By 1992, political support for this program had declined. Even so, few art programs have matched the conceptual breath of Phoenix's plan, its integration of art and public works, and its understanding of how a public art program could be a catalyst for broader, sustained discussions about city design.

*Places* first reported on this initiative in 1988. Here, we offer reflections on what the plan accomplished and afterwords by Morrish and Phil Jones, the current Arts Commission director.

Opposite page: Summary drawing from the 1988 public art plan. This drawing, and others throughout this series of articles, courtesy William Morrish and Catherine Brown. Photographs courtesy Phoenix Arts Commission.