



Public Art & Monument Advisory Committee online comment submissions

The public comments in this document were collected via online form from February 8 to April 30. They are in response to a call from Mayor Greg Fischer, encouraging the public to add their voice to the review of public art that can be interpreted to honor bigotry, discrimination, racism and/or slavery.

1. This is history, do not destroy. The liberals need to get over I didn't win a trophy.
2. I think the big gold statue of the nude guy on Main Street is offensive. I understand it is considered art, but feel it should be moved to a location where there is not a large volume of children. Children of all ages are on that Main Street corridor on a daily basis, due to the many child-oriented attractions there, and many are too young to be seeing such art.
3. Dear Mr. Mayor, First, I wish to thank you and your Advisory Committee on Louisville's Public Art for at least two opportunities to participate in public meetings, the last one being from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm this past Wednesday, February 8. However, I believe the committee should be reminded that this time window, 5:30 to 6:30, is during rush hour and very inconvenient for most citizens, as typical work hours for the majority of Metro residents do not end until 5:00 pm. Furthermore, I personally have become aware of these opportunities only a day or two before or after each, making it difficult for me to plan to attend. I do have some comments regarding the two monuments currently receiving attention in the media. Firstly, in regard to the Prentice monument: I have long been aware of George Prentice's bigoted, anti-Catholic / anti-immigrant German and Irish articles that preceded and are thought to have encouraged the 1855 Bloody-Monday riot. As the public library portrays itself as an institution of classical wisdom, understanding and tolerance, I find it unfathomable that the city would choose a site directly in front of the original library entrance to display a monument to this bigoted person. (My family's forebears include Catholic - German and Irish immigrants and whenever I pass this statue, my reaction is to abhor the image of such a contemptible person occupying so honored a position.) Secondly, in regard to the Castleman monument: After this statue was first vandalized many years ago, I knew only of Castleman's role in the Spanish-American War; and was perplexed why anyone would deface the monument to a "hero" of the Louisville Legion. I have since discovered through family tradition that when John Castleman was training the legion in anticipation of possible war with Spain, he provisioned his troops by emptying the shelves of my great-grandparent's grocery - with only a never-fulfilled promise of payment. As a result of this action by Castleman, my great-grandparent's grocery was

bankrupted; and my great-grandfather had to sell the store and find other employment. I never met my great-grandparents, they died long before my birth; but their daughters, my great-aunts, held nothing but contempt for the “hero” Castleman. As the provisions available from this one grocery could not have served the needs of the entire legion, I suppose it likely that the descendants of many other immigrant grocers may recall the inventories of their family’s establishments having been commandeered in the same way. I now perceive Castleman as nothing more than a vain-glorious brigand and thief. I am not sure of the precise motive for the Prentice statue being vandalized, but I am certain that the third (at least) vandalizing of the Castleman monument is in response to the bigotry implied by its current inscription. The point of the foregoing is this: If, because of the acts of these individuals against my progenitors, I, a person of European descent, should be offended by exalted display of their images, ought we as a community not be sensitive to the insult inflicted by the same images upon other members of our community due to far more egregious acts inflicted upon their predecessors? I do not believe vandalizing to be an acceptable means of expression, but I can understand that frustration for lack of action could lead to this. I for one would not be terribly concerned about the cost of restoring the vandalized monuments – better to find the best price for scrap bronze and marble.

4. I want to speak from the voice of an artist which I am. Art speaks to the community in so many ways, sometimes the actual process of making art is a political act and the finished piece is a reflection of that process. It can have the prospective of the historical period it was made in. Community art reflects the community it was made in. Historical pieces should remain intact because they reflect the community at that time and period. It speaks to an historical perspective in a specific time and place, whether we agree with the politics or not. The artist toiled in the making that public piece as well as all the artisans that helped her/him in the process. We cannot just diminish those pieces or the artists because we disagree with the politics of the time. We can see them for what they are—an artistic and historical expression of the time. Making art is a time consuming process that involves dedication, patience, knowledge, and artistic expression. To me it is a great disservice to desecrate public art in any way or to remove it from the place it was intended. Let the art speak for itself. Let us as citizens of this community deal with our past in open dialogue and not in destroying our public art pieces.
5. South Louisville Does not have one single mural. The Taylor Berry Neighborhood Association is gathering a huge effort for neighborhood clean-up this spring and summer with over 40 volunteers lined up. All three elementary schools (Jacobs, Frayser, & Semple) would all love to contribute student. The city is abundant with talented and emerging mural artists. Our children who live and go to school here deserve better than trash, and attorney & alcohol billboards. We are desperate for vibrant and positive imagery that reflects who we really are, and not the way people see us.
6. Dear Committee Members, Thank you again for your meeting on February 7, especially for the way you had the meeting structured. It was much more valuable for me to be able to talk with both members of the committee and people who were not members about what we want the committee to accomplish. I have been using the example of the Castleman Monument as a way to help me think about this issue, and I now understand

that you are now more interested in discussing the principles to use for making decisions about public art and monuments. In the process of thinking about principles, there are some other questions I believe it would be useful to at least discuss if not resolve. Let me start then with some proposed principles. I don't necessarily agree with all of these principles, but they seem to be a good place to start: 1) Public art and monuments include statues, historical plaques, and names of public facilities (e.g. streets, bridges and buildings). 2) No public art or monument commemorating any person who has at any time in their life advocated racism, violence or any other form of prejudice against race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or profession should be allowed either to be installed or to continue to exist within a public space in the Louisville Metropolitan Area. 3) In situations where public art or a monument is to be removed, there should be an effort to replace it with a more suitable work. 4) Recognizing that the context and meaning of public art and monuments can change over time, replacements for works should capture any positive symbolism the work may have acquired while eliminating the offensive nature of the work. 5) The suitability of a proposed work of public art should not depend on the identity of the creator of the art. (The process could be similar to that used to select the design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC.) Before we talk about principles, it seems like we also need to talk about what public art is and what purpose it serves. Many people are clear about what they don't want: anything that glorifies bigotry or degrades anybody. But what is it doing for us? Do we need it at all? Is it just something nice to look at? Or is there something else it can do for us? I of course have many ideas about this (contact me if you want to hear them) but I think the range of talent on the committee is likely already enough to start looking at these questions.

7. Your meetings should allow individuals from the public to have 3 minutes to speak. At the end of the meeting it should be open to questions from the audience. Each metro council district should hold a similar meeting. One a month until all 26 has had one. When the list of monuments has been determined, any action to these monuments should be voted on by the constituents of each district where these monuments reside in by referendum in that metro councilmen's next election. Actions should not be taken until all meetings in each district are complete and not because June is the start of the peak of the mayoral campaign.
8. Castleman statue—The statue would be appropriate if the plaque listed only the civilian accomplishments for which he is being honored with the statue: his efforts to help establish Cherokee and other parks, his contribution to equestrian groups, and his development of the nearby neighborhoods. Those are the reasons this statue is located where it is and he is not in military uniform. This is not a military statue and information provided on/near the statue should not refer to his military service.
9. Please keep the statue!
10. Removing the Castleman statue will not change anything. It should stay but have a new plaque to explain more of his life.
11. I am an artist. How do I register to participate in providing public art for your city? Do you have a current call for artists now?

12. With regards to the controversy over Louisville's public art associated with the history of slave ownership, namely the statues of John B. Castleman and George Prentice, I offer a simple compromise. Let the city rededicate the statues, for example, rename the Cherokee Park equestrian statue as "The Spirit of Cherokee Park" and rename the statue of George Prentice to: "The Spirit of Public Learning and Journalism". And as a practical matter, solicit someone like our renowned Ed Hamilton to make slight adjustments to the bronze work to convert the bronze images from distinct individuals, to more of an "Everyman." In this way we could retain our beautiful art in the city without giving offense.
13. I live in the Cherokee Triangle neighborhood. I strongly oppose the vandalism of the Castleman statue and the statue in front of the library. The act of vandalism to achieve an objective is just wrong. It's illegal and only stands to divide us. Since this has happened 2x to Castleman Statue I now struggle with trust. I know black lives matters. But doesn't all human beings lives matter as well. Erasing all memories of slavery, will not change the fact it happened. Bad history for sure. Let's try to change the way police are trained. By all means keep this statue where it is and remove the plaque. Reminder he is in a riding suit facing east toward Cherokee Park.
14. I would like to see the Castleman monument come down. The Confederates were traitors to the Union. We have no statues erected to honor Benedict Arnold so why should we honor Confederates. There are no statues honoring Hitler in Germany, why do we allow this?
15. I believe historic art, including statues serve to remind us of our past victories and our mistakes. To deny history is ludicrous. We cannot change it, and to try or to deny is folly and dangerous. I would not want your job!
16. I feel the statue of John Breckinridge Castleman should remain. He is noted as having been against the institution of slavery and joined the Confederate Army because he was a proponent of State's Rights. He served in the US Army following the Civil War. If you read up on his history he does not stand out as a racist: When a dispute over whether African American soldiers serving in the US Army became a disputed issue among some Southerners, General Castleman said, "I unhesitatingly say that I will at any time salute an officer, superior or inferior, who salutes me, without regard to the color of his skin. The regulations and laws, and the fundamentals of courtesy and discipline, upon which these regulations and laws are based, prescribe this. It is no time to stand against them. I want to urge every soldier to be a soldier in the full sense of the term. We are at war, and soldiers are under the rules of the American army. We are all one under the flag. We salute the rank, not the individual." [2] –Wikipedia. The people objecting to his statue are likely ignorant of the man's history, character, and service to his country. He should be held up as an example to live up to. The man is more than his uniform. This might be a good opportunity to educate people about the man they are obviously jumping to the wrong conclusions about.
17. I'm fine with things the way they are. History is just that. Let's not waste taxpayers' money on this. Maybe let's fix the God awful roads the whole city has.
18. We cannot change history. We have a small group of radicals trying to make the changes. They make it appear as if everyone wants this change. Most people are not

wanting the change. If this continues, what happens to monument row in Washington? Where will it end? I am against the change.

19. By using social media as your method of public comment, you have virtually eliminated older people from participating in this program.
20. I am not in favor of having Confederate Statues lace our lovely city. And I am very much in favor of all of the public comment and opinion that this Committee is seeking, thank you. I don't see the Castleman statue as a Confederate statue, but I believe the process taking place to review its place in our city is important and vital. The more I have read about General Castleman - it seems like his story could be one of redemption and forgiveness. He fought for the Confederate Army, but was pardoned by Lincoln and Johnson. Then obviously forgiven by the US Govt enough to commission him as Colonel in the US Army. Then he used his wealth and stature to develop one of the most beautiful park systems in the country that we all benefit from daily. Perhaps he wanted to be known for something more than being a traitor. If the US Army and 2 US Presidents forgave his treasonous actions, I might be able to also. I do believe in allowing people to change. If the Castleman statue stays - I would appreciate more written background about his story as part of the public art. People and issues are complex and I think our citizens and public art deserve that and are capable of that.
21. I am so sick of this public politically correct movement that like screaming banshees would swoop down and remove every vestige of unpleasant reminders of the past that are not to their liking, or their feelings or their political view. There is no room for nuance or real examination of in-depth history—only cliché, hurt feelings and the rush to destroy anything causing us any controversy or unpleasant emotions. The rush to destroy monuments and arts of the past eras are not new in human history...sadly it goes on today whether it be ISIS destroying Palmyra or the Taliban destroying Statues of Buddha or some members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt calling for the destruction of all the great monuments of ancient Egypt. As to those who fought for the Confederacy 99.9 % of those men did not own slaves. They fought for their states' rights. The Civil war started to preserve the union not to end slavery. As to the cost to this nation due to the evils of slavery read Lincoln's second inaugural address. No one states it better than he that the destruction and rivers of blood unleashed by the war was God's own judgement on the nation for not ridding itself of the terrible scourge if slavery.. Louisville is not celebrating or condoning white supremacy because it retains a few statues of citizens with confederate past. Oh and if anybody didn't know Kentucky and Louisville remained in the Union, perhaps that information could be added to those monuments. I see tributes all over the city to Martin Luther King and Muhammad Ali. History represents the good, the bad and the ugly. As for the removal of the Confederate soldier monument by UofL, I think it was a travesty. A large bronze plaque added to the monument explaining its context and history as part of Louisville would have been more honest. Instead it was removed and replaced with a traffic sign. Gee wasn't that a grand gesture. I suppose we should now go through old pictures and eradicate any views of it to satisfy everyone. Instead we are now graced with the incredibly ugly gigantic wishbone that (dis)graces the beautiful beaux art Speed Museum. And the row of decapitated animal heads just adds to the overall mood. But

don't worry. I am sure PETA will be contacting the public art committee soon to have it removed as it represents all too visible man's inhumanity to animals...

22. I support keeping John Castleman's monument in place in the Cherokee Triangle because: One, the gorgeous bronze equestrian statue is a very important part of Louisville's past. Removing this statue would harm our proud city's history and heritage. John Castleman was one of Louisville's most famous and accomplished citizens. As the Commissioner of the Board of Parks for over 25 years, he played a key role to recruit Fredrick Olmsted to design Louisville's wonderful Park system, and then oversaw its development. He founded the American Saddlebred Horse Association, the first single breed horse association in the United States. He achieved the rank of Brigadier General in the US Army, many years after the Civil War was over. He created the Louisville Legion, which was one of the best local military bodies in the United States at the time. In 1900, after Kentucky Governor William Goebel was shot, Castleman was (for the second time) appointed adjutant general of Kentucky and was able to avert a civil war in Kentucky with the fallout of the assassination. His list of achievements and exceptional leadership for our city and state are long. Secondly, the motivation to remove his statue because he was a racist is absolutely wrong! People are misinformed, in great part because the Courier Journal has done the city a major disservice by repeatedly referring to the statue as racist art. There are multiple historical references to John Castleman being a champion of black people. He was quoted as insisting on the "proper saluting of officers without regard to the color of their skin" (see his Wikipedia page). In 1887, he prevented a white mob from lynching two black men (See C-J Apr 30, 1887). Please read the laudatory and heartfelt "Negro's Tribute To General Castleman", when Castleman died (C-J May 26, 1918), where J. Raymond Harris said, "Whenever in the course of affairs, injustice or proscription raised its hand against us, General Castleman's voice has been heard pleading for tolerance and amicable adjustment." Removing his statue on the basis of him being a racist would be rewriting history. Thirdly, placing all the emphasis on the fact that he fought in the Civil War overlooks not only all his achievement for our city, but the fact that he was appropriately punished (he was imprisoned in solitary confinement from September 1864 until July 1865) and then pardoned for his crimes by two US presidents. We live in a civil society where people are ultimately forgiven for their crimes and hopefully strive to redeem themselves, and boy, did he redeem himself. His time in the Confederate army was 3-4 years while in his early 20s, and he was only a mid-level ranking soldier. His rank of General was attained while in the US army many years after the Civil War. He became a great man *after* the Civil War, and because of his achievements for the city of Louisville. He spent 50+ years making many significant contributions to establish Louisville, KY as a wonderful city. Lastly, a really key point, I ask the reader, please look closely at the statue. Do you see a sword, a gun or a man in battle or a Confederate uniform? No, you don't. You see a kind older gentleman in civilian clothes proudly riding his favorite Saddlebred horse, Carolina. It's clearly not a Confederate statue nor was it erected as one or in any way to glorify racism, bigotry or slavery. The statue needs to be removed from the registry of Confederate statues and reestablished as simply a tribute to one of Louisville's finest leaders ever. In no way was the statue originally erected to glorify racism, bigotry,

Confederate soldiers or slavery. It was erected to honor a man who had a very positive and material impact on the city of Louisville. The statue is a striking and beautiful piece of equestrian art, perfectly positioned in the Cherokee Triangle roundabout, where he politely greets people to Cherokee Park with gallantry and poised decorum. Removing it from this location would be a terrible mistake for our city.

23. I am completely opposed to removing the statue of General Castleman. First of all, just about every negative thing said about him by his critics is false. Second, it is not a confederate monument, but a monument to a civic leader. Yes, Castleman was in the Confederate forces as a young man. So were thousands of Kentucky veterans. If you eliminate all of them, you will have to eliminate most of Louisville's leadership during the second half of the 19th century. I am a professional historian (retired), not just someone blowing off steam. It is unhealthy when a people deny their past.
24. I think Castleman et al should be evaluated for potential as "teaching tools." Man on horse can also be a lesson on the subtle segregation trail. How to judge Daniel Boone by Enid yandell.....injun killer or friend?? J Graham Brown, old gent with a dog or vehement racist who forbade integrating his own hotel and theatre??? Maybe Quinn becomes ground zero for the freedom trail and these monuments are included? We did nobody any favors by sending the Confederate monument to Brandenburg to be resurrected as.....a confederate monument! What an in situ lesson lost, and Ari Wards vision for its transformation lost as well.
25. I think we should move them to a less conspicuous location. There is a finite amount of space for Public monuments and those that no longer reflect the values of our community should not be in prominent places. We need to publicly show our marginalized neighbors that they have a place in our community TODAY and don't diminish their presence & contributions by honoring people & events that dishonor them.
26. I am 47. As a child my brother and I loved seeing the Castleman statue on the way to the park. Today my 4 and 6 year olds do too. This man had a complicated history, but this is not a monument to the worst of his actions in life but to what he did right- for the city of Louisville and for the country, continuing to serve in the US military after the civil war. I would be very sad to see this statue removed. The objection to the insane monument to the confederacy at the University I understood. The vehemence of the small opposition to this Castleman monument is grossly out of proportion with the aims of the monument. Add critical analysis of a complicated figure! It is the story of the United States- divided only to come together and move forward. It is the story of most people- down by stupid or misguided things fired by idealism in their youth only to become better with age. I don't want a cover up of the things he did early on, so spell it out and get into the difficult legacy of the man BUT- this is, to most people and especially to children- just a work of art, and a good one. I love it and I would hate to see it go. It is a truly heartbreaking thought.
27. I appreciate the opportunity to submit my opinion on the Castleman Statue. Based on the basic research that I've done, I feel the Castleman Statue should be removed. Although I think the monument is beautiful, historic and a familiar landmark, I believe we should move on. I believe other contributed just as much as he did with the creation

of the local parks and they deserve some recognition, including Andrew Cowan. He seems to have benefited from overly generous credit for his contribution to the park. A compromise solution might be to add statues of other park contributors around Castleman so that he is not the sole recipient of the attention.

28. When the topic of the statue at Cherokee Triangle comes across your desk...Please keep in mind that a lot of people do not want this statue removed... But something needs to be done about the vandalism, whether cameras being installed without telling the public for the simple reason if they don't know they are there they can't hide their faces or license plates. If you decide to take it down, I will petition for ALL of MARTIN LUTHER KING statues or street signs to be brought down because he was against and didn't believe in GAY MARRIAGE. If you take down one you take down all. And while we are at it ALL should be banned as well he was a draft dodger. Didn't want to fight for the freedoms this great country provided. I could go on and on. Just think before you do something rash and decide this statue needs to come down as well. (UofL confederate as an example). Remember elections are coming up as well and I'm sure there are more of us that want the statue to stay than there are that want it removed.
29. John Castleman did a lot of good for the city, ignorant bigots only want to attack him for one part of his life when he honorably served the cause he felt was right. Clean it up and Keep it up. It's not even about the Confederacy really, those attacking him are typically the kind of people who just hate White people and our history period. They are the same people going after statues all over the U.S including Presidents such as Thomas Jefferson. Where does it end?
30. The same persons that are vandalizing the statues are the same that are putting the messages on the bill boards. They are linked to the group called anti-racist action. Start getting LMPD after them and you will get your vandal's a reward will flush them out quicker these people doing this have no real job and a few hundred bucks will make there slacker buddy's sing the up side to this is they are not using fall protection on the billboards and will fall to their deaths soon!
31. This is a part of history whether anything was right or wrong. I think the statue should be cleaned up and cameras in place. If this vandalism continues you will have proof of who's doing this and they should be arrested. If everyone gives in to this vandalism and protests nobody is held accountable and they get their way and the cycle continues. I think the statue should stay and this issue goes much deeper than a statue.
32. I'm sorry I have been unable to attend public forums as I do feel passionately about this issue, especially as a white man from the south who has benefited greatly from unfair privilege at the cost of unfair treatment of Black Americans over the centuries. I see no middle ground on statues honoring either racists or traitors to our country. That's precisely what the Confederacy stood for. States joined together to separate from the United States, and since then have done everything they can to block fair treatment of Black Americans. We now know the history of these statues which was part of an organized campaign to keep racism alive and honor those who showed no honor. While we do need to educate children and adults about these people, we do not need to continue honoring them. Absolutely no public money should go into protecting or taking care of the shameful statues. And if anyone should be able to decide whether or not the

statues are offensive, it should be the Black community of Louisville. Not the white community.

33. During research of my home I came across a very informative article on the Castleman monument and some interesting history of the man and the monument. I feel that this article could be very helpful to provide more information about this person and the reason we have the monument. This article appeared in the Courier Journal on February 9, 1913. I want to share this article but I do not see a way to do that on this form. Please e-mail me and I will forward you the article and also another one that I found from September 11, 1895 that was all about Col. Castleman and a Col. Andrew Cowan, who fought on the Union side, planting a Tree of Peace in what is now Cherokee Park.
34. For Louisville to thrive as a truly compassionate city will require diverse and inclusive culture in spaces both public and private. Public spaces are for all and should not be used to honor the views of white supremacists and uphold symbols of Black oppression. Our tax dollars should no longer be used to maintain these structures. Memorials like the John B. Castleman statue in the Cherokee Park neighborhood serve as constant reminders of the past and present oppression of Black people. They are insulting to anyone with a sense of history and who supports progress. Their images and stories belong only in history books. The white supremacist ideas represented by these symbols still permeate our society today and result in discrimination and violence. The effort to remove these white supremacist monuments is a necessary part of the struggle for justice. That white supremacists from our past continue to be honored with public monuments cannot be separated from the impact of racism today, including mass incarceration, poverty, unemployment, and gentrification. If our Louisville family is to have a chance at real racial reconciliation, we must remove all obvious symbols of white supremacy to show our collective will to address systemic oppression. Racism is wreaking havoc in the minds, homes, and neighborhoods of families city-wide. Now is our opportunity to be proactive. All over the USA, especially in the South, progressive Black people and their allies are leading struggles to rid the South of symbols of treason and racist oppression. State governments in South Carolina and Alabama removed the Rebel Flag. The Memphis city council voted to remove the statue of confederate General and founder of the KKK, Nathan Bedford Forrest. A grassroots movement in New Orleans won the removal of four racist monuments. The Georgia NAACP has called for the removal of the Stone Mountain memorial to the confederacy. Our neighbors in Lexington removed two white supremacist statues from Cheapside Park. Louisville deserves, and can do, better. Louisville needs a city-wide ordinance that mandates the removal of all Confederate and white supremacist monuments; as well as the renaming of streets, schools, parks and other public works that honor white supremacists. We need a community driven process for choosing their replacements and creating public symbols the city can be proud of.
35. Please save the statues located throughout our city and counties. These historic monuments were never meant to be racially motivated in any way. To say it was is a stretch to say the least. What happened to art is left to each person's perception and how that person views it. These statues have been beautifully and intricately sculpted

and captures the art of that period. When does the few rule the majority anymore? Has the mayor taken a city wide poll and asked this question? The value and cost to replace these beautiful statues will be very expensive and should deter us from removing them in the first place. This is all such nonsense and shows immaturity in our thought process these days. There is some art that offends me also....so I don't look at it. End of problem! Let's put our big girl or boy pants on and grow up!

36. All of our statues should be preserved. The people depicted deserve to be memorialized. They earned it.
37. Respect the decisions of those that originally erected each monument. How does someone today make a decision for something historical?
38. You might as well just take down every historical statue and the entire city of Louisville and get rid of the rest of our history too! All of the statues are part of Louisville's history and as such should not be removed. Who cares if a minority of the population doesn't like a statue? When it was erected, most times decades ago, it represented the feelings of the citizens of Louisville. As such, it became embedded into Louisville's history. Removing any part of Louisville's history presents the options for that history to be resurrected and happen again in the future.
39. I feel strongly that if we don't learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it. So instead of tearing down and vilifying the monuments or public art that depict the historical figure, we should take a fresh look through a current lens. What I recommend is having a current lens and perspective detailed on a placard, display board or electronic message board that can be updated with changing times. When we dismantle "offensive" or "uncomfortable" art and monuments we lose the opportunity to teach our children (and others) WHY they were out of touch or offensive to current laws, morals and society.