



Summary of Arts Council Workshop Input

Arts Council Regular Meeting
July 17, 2024



Workshop Details

- The Arts Council is participating in workshops to develop a 6-Year Workplan for the Art in Public Places Program.
- This deck summarizes Arts Council input received during the following workshops:
 - Workshop #1 – May 20, 2024
 - Workshop #2 – June 17, 2024



How do you describe the public art collection today?

Responses	Keywords
Not as high quality as those in neighboring communities	Quality
Art community does not feel connected	Disconnected arts community
Community does not feel connected to the arts	Disconnected from public art
Island has many artists, art patrons, and citizens who want more access and opportunity to engage with the arts locally.	Opportunity and access Local artists / arts
Lot of visual art → bronze, sculpture	Visual arts heavy Bronze Sculpture
Not as much performing arts	Performing arts needs
Well-supported and prioritized on the Island through commissions and maintenance	Supported
Also under-appreciated and less well-known among our community	Under-appreciated Lacks awareness
Geographically concentrated in Town Center and North End	Town Center North End Concentrated geographically
Sizable collection; more significant than I realized	Sizable Significant Surprising
Very focused on visual arts	Visual arts heavy
Lacking space to gather to perform arts → goal to work toward	Performing arts need
Lack of awareness about the Arts Council	Lacks awareness
Arts community is disconnected → can the Arts Council play role in bringing different groups together?	Disconnected arts community
Artwork inspires feeling and emotion (e.g. figures at QFC, children at The Mercer fountain, etc.)	Inspiring Emotion
Artwork is inspiring and beautiful	Inspiring Beautiful
In-person and digital engagement opportunities for the collection are helpful	Community engagement
Accessible → known to the public and available to see all the time	Access
Artwork is a bit dated → need to maintain but also update the collection	Out-dated artwork Maintain but update
Artwork as landmark → people reference things around it or use it as reference points (placemaking)	Landmarks Placemaking
<i>The Source</i> is a landmark.	<i>The Source</i>
Variety in the artwork	Variety
Working off a good foundation	Foundation
Sculpture Gallery is central and well-organized → have something to show others at the Light Rail station area; centralize more artwork there to make it a destination?	Outdoor Sculpture Gallery Centralized
Interactive artwork → <i>Kenton's Dragon</i> , <i>The Source</i> , etc., provide opportunities for kids to interact.	Interactive Engaging kids / families

4 Workshop #1 Arts Council Responses

Where do you want to see the public art collection go?

Responses	Keywords
Plays a crucial role in quality of life in the community, fostering creativity, cultural exchange, and social cohesion.	Quality of life Creativity Social cohesion
Enriches urban landscape, stimulates dialogue, and contributes to the overall well-being and vitality of a community.	Dialogue Enriching Community vitality
More variety and types → especially more interactive art	Variety Interactive
Stronger integration with the surrounding context → pieces that make sense in the spaces in which they are installed	Context Integrated
More lighting → light-based artwork, lighting of the artwork, lighting for public safety	Lighting
Coordinated arts cooperation → bring arts / non-arts groups and individuals together	Coordination Cooperation
More crowd-sourced projects to bring people together → permanent projects like <i>Mercer Island Medallions</i>	Crowd-sourced Bring people together
Sustainability → environmental, social	Sustainability Equity
Explore other mediums → beyond sculpture to include glass, lighting, performance; make it a broader collection	Beyond sculpture Broader collection
Geographic equity	Geographic equity
Integrate context → tell the history of Mercer Island	Context History
Reflect values and pride of Mercer Island → open spaces / natural environments, schools, great place for families	Mercer Island values
<i>Mercer Island Medallions</i> a good example of telling the Island's history and community values	<i>Mercer Island Medallions</i>
Be intentional about what is commissioned and maintained going forward → future financial sustainability; position the City to commission more pieces rather than just maintain	Financial sustainability Future community Intentional
Honor Indigenous history of the Island	Indigenous history
Dedicated opportunities for different Island communities / organizations to express themselves	Self-expression Inclusion
Artwork to inspire inclusion and acceptance	Inclusion
Focus on placemaking → amphitheater at Luther Burbank Park, <i>The Source</i> , <i>Primavera II</i> , etc., are examples of artwork/arts spaces that create sense of place	Placemaking
Think about ways to welcome folks to Mercer Island, e.g. roundabouts in Thonon-les-Bains	Welcoming
Celebrate the place we're in	Celebrate place
Artwork as a theme throughout the City → e.g. Pigs in Pike Place Market; unifying theme throughout the community	Unifying
Water as a unifying theme → fountains, spray park, both art and functional	Water
Sculpture Gallery is central and well-organized → have something to show others at the Light Rail station area; centralize more artwork there to make it a destination?	Outdoor Sculpture Gallery Centralized Destination
Artwork is a bit dated → need to maintain but also update the collection	Update
Arts community is disconnected → can the Arts Council play role in bringing different groups together?	Arts Council as convener
Very focused on visual arts	Incorporate performing arts
Opportunities exist to engage community members for feedback	Engage community

5 Workshop #2
Arts Council Framing Statements

Art installations should enhance the sense of place, creating landmarks that celebrate the identity of Mercer Island and ensure geographic equity across all neighborhoods.

It should be easy for viewers to understand the connection of each piece to Mercer Island's past and present.

Sparking curiosity with artwork located throughout the Island where people walk, gather, and play.

Celebrate variety of forms of arts with a strong emphasis on high aesthetic quality.

Public art will celebrate diverse aesthetics and mediums, embracing innovation across vibrant and inclusive canvases. We aim to prioritize projects that actively engage diverse community voices, ensuring that each piece resonates and reflects the cultural richness of our city. This approach ensures that public art is not just a form of decoration but a platform for dialogue and community pride.

Promote non-resident interest in visiting Mercer Island.

Educate and promote arts on the Island. Arts are an essential element *and* an extra.

Create a destination to bring local artists together and make their work more accessible to the community.

The 6-year plan should focus 100% on the "front door" of Mercer Island. The Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery would welcome people to Mercer Island from Light Rail, be in the densest population, and be accessible to all.

Priority should be given to pieces that are integrated into their surroundings such that they appear to be commissioned specifically for that location.

Each project will be thoughtfully integrated into its geographical and cultural context, enhancing the unique identity and historical significance of its location. We will turn artworks into landmarks that narrate the rich history of Mercer Island, creating spaces that are not only visually captivating but also educational. This strategic placement aims to strengthen the connection between our community and the environment, making art a cornerstone of civic identity and pride.

Embrace Mercer Island's natural environment. In suitable projects, blend art and natural science to provide the public with a holistic, educational, and family friendly experience.

Promote arts and culture projects that expand resident involvement in the civic and cultural life of the community (e.g. volunteerism, political participation, arts/culture creation).

Art projects should be designed with sustainability in mind, ensuring cultural, environmental, financial, and physical durability.

Encourage and facilitate community members of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and economical means to participate in art creation, performance, and appreciation.

Artwork should either provide something new that does not already exist in our collection or intentionally expand on existing pieces/elements.



6 Workshop #2 Arts Council Framing Statements

Create opportunities that can be funded in the future with 1% funds, grants, and donations – sort of a menu of opportunities that are scoped out with cost and space.

Sharing our history with future generations through landmarks and performing arts commissions.

Public art should foster community connections by being accessible, inclusive, and reflective of Mercer Island's history, values, and pride, encouraging dialogue and community engagement.

Operate the public art program with physical responsibility.

Public art projects should incorporate diverse mediums such as light-based art, glass, and interactive installations that reflect local artists' self-expression and integrate performing arts.

Expand opportunities for diverse communities to express their values and creative spirit.

Maximize use of the Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery to facilitate experiences like Art Uncorked, small stage for performances, water touch gardens for children, games for adults to gather around, etc.

Focusing on long-term sustainability, we will embody sustainability not only in materials but also in artwork's ability to remain relevant and engaging over time. Projects will be evaluated not only for their immediate impact but also for their potential to endure and inspire future generations, ensuring financial and environmental sustainability at its core. We aim for public art that inspire future generations, maintaining its beauty and significance through sustainable practices and forward-thinking design.

Heighten Mercer Island's quality of life by celebrating a diverse variety of self-expression.

Promote arts and culture projects that contribute to sustainable development and intergenerational equity.

Artwork should thoughtfully consider its future on Mercer Island, including maintenance, environmental sustainability, and the changing interpretations of generations.



Who is involved in the acquisition process?

Activity	Current “Who”	Updated “Who”
Develop RFQ/RFP document.	Program Writing Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Council member (committee chair) City staff Project designer (e.g. CIP) Interested citizen Others identified by staff and/or City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove interested citizen Flexible depending on the project Find other ways for community engagement in the process
Approve RFQ/RFP document.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Program Writing Committee Chair presents to Arts Council for recommendation. Staff present Arts Council recommendation to City Council. City Council approves recommendation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the Arts Council has agency
Evaluate artist submittals.	Artist Selection Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artist Mercer Island citizen w/ special interest in project site Arts Council member (panel chair) Design Commission member Mercer Island citizen City Councilmember City staff (non-voting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum for Mercer Island citizens to weigh in at artist selection Commissions that will be involved with that location, project, etc. → for increased buy-in Interested constituency → less prescribed Interest in project site if project specific AC approve selection panel w/o CC approval
Select artist.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Artist Selection Panel Chair presents panel results to Arts Council for recommendation. Staff present Arts Council recommendation to City Council. City Council approves recommendation. Artist Selection Panel Chair notifies selected artist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff do the notification
Implement acquisition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artist Selection Panel Chair City staff 	

How are submittals evaluated?

Yes / No

1. Recognized as professional who routinely creates high quality work.
2. Worked with public, private, or corporate entities previously.
3. Completed commissioned work on time and within budget.

- Use the four pillars and framing statements to build out the evaluation criteria.
- Keep/update criteria for aesthetic quality.
- Possible to include criteria/evaluation related to artwork lifespan and maintenance needs?
- Make ranking less complicated / disparate.
- Consider general criteria + project-specific criteria.

Rank (1-6, Low to High)

4. Produced artwork sensitive and responsive to broad range of public.
5. Shows sensitivity to public benefit requirement identified in RFQ/RFP.
6. In scale with site and / or intended use; does not interfere with any traffic patterns.
7. Recognizes issues of theft, vandalism, weather, and excessive maintenance costs.
8. Experience in/ knowledge of chosen medium.
9. Written concept, sketches, and chosen medium/material expressed cohesively.
10. Entry compatible with RFQ/RFP.