



ARTS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Item (5)
July 17, 2024
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| TITLE: | Art in Public Places 6-Year Workplan Progress | <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution |
| RECOMMENDED ACTION: | Endorse the Public Art Pillars and provide input on planning process and timeline. | |

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|-------------------------|---|
| STAFF: | Sarah Bluvas |
| COUNCIL LIAISON: | Ted Weinberg |
| EXHIBITS: | 1. Summary of Arts Council Workshop Input |

SUMMARY

This staff report provides an overview of the progress to develop a 6-Year Workplan for the Art in Public Places Program (the Plan), an internal planning document that will guide internal decision-making for future public art projects. During the regular Mercer Island Arts Council (Arts Council) meeting on July 17, staff will seek endorsement of the Public Art Pillars and input for the upcoming planning process/timeline.

ABOUT THE 6-YEAR WORKPLAN

Development of the Plan was identified in the 2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan). In [April 2024](#), the Arts Council endorsed the planning process, which includes workshops focused on specific elements of the public art program. Staff will use the Arts Council’s input to draft the sections of the Plan for Arts Council review and endorsement. Once finalized, the Plan will inform public art items for future City department workplans.

ARTS COUNCIL WORKSHOP INPUT

The Arts Council has participated in two workshops to date:

- Workshop #1 – May 20, 2024 ([Agenda Item #2](#) | [Video Recording](#); Item begins at 7:13)
- Workshop #2 – June 17, 2024 ([Agenda Item #2](#) | [Video Recording](#); Item begins at 3:02)

A summary of feedback received during both workshops is provided as Exhibit 1.

The first workshop focused on current public art conditions. The Arts Council reviewed City planning documents relevant to public art and explored the City’s collection and program. They shared their observations as well as short phrases/sentences they wrote responding to two prompts.

For the second workshop, staff presented four “public art pillars” to serve as the foundation for public art projects developed over the six-year planning horizon:

- Aesthetic: Elements of physical artmaking, such as medium, materials, process, style/genre, and artists.
- Place: Both the physical location of the artwork and the sense of identity a work of art may cultivate.

- Connection: How public art encourages connection, both to the artwork itself and to/within the Mercer Island community.
- Longevity: Long-term viability of public art on Mercer Island, including culturally, environmentally, and financially.

Using the pillars, the Arts Council drafted and discussed statements to “frame” how public art projects will be prioritized and developed through the Plan. The Arts Council also shared feedback on the public art acquisition and deaccession guidelines. (At the third workshop, refined framing statements will be presented for comment, and the public art policy discussion will continue.)

ENDORSEMENT OF PUBLIC ART PILLARS

Following the second workshop, Arts Councilmember Skone recommended including safety/accessibility in a public art pillar description and suggested adding a fifth public art pillar:

***Innovation and Originality:** The art should demonstrate skill and creativity, offering visual appeal that engages and inspires viewers. Art that pushes boundaries or introduces new ideas can spark dialogue and enrich public discourse. Inspirational/Unique/novel/amazing, Art that brings awe and/or joy or provokes thought and feelings and/or nurtures the spirit*

At the July 17 meeting, the Arts Council will discuss these suggestions and, if desired, endorse the list of public art pillars to include in the Plan.

INPUT ON PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Additionally, staff invite the Arts Council to share feedback on how this internal planning process can be improved. Staff propose adding three more workshops (special hybrid meetings) to continue the planning process in 2024. A draft schedule is provided in the table below.

| Date | Title | Topics | Milestone |
|--------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| September 16, 2024 | Special Hybrid Meeting | Framing Statements Public Art Policy | Draft Review: Framing Statements |
| October 16, 2024 | Regular Hybrid Meeting | Framing Statements Interpretation / Engagement | Endorsement: Framing Statements |
| November 18, 2024 | Special Hybrid Meeting | Public Art Policy Interpretation / Engagement CIP Project Opportunities Evaluation | Draft Review: Public Art Guidelines Endorsement: Goals for Public Art Interpretation / Engagement |
| December 11, 2024 | Special Hybrid Meeting | CIP Project Opportunities Collection Care Funding Evaluation | Draft Review: Future Plan Updates Endorsement: 25-26 Project Opportunities Matrix |

Public Art Policy and Evaluation work will continue into 2025. Staff anticipate completing all sections of the Plan by the end of Q1 2025.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Endorse the Public Art Pillars and provide input on planning process and timeline.