6-Year Work Plan for Art in Public Places

9/17/2025

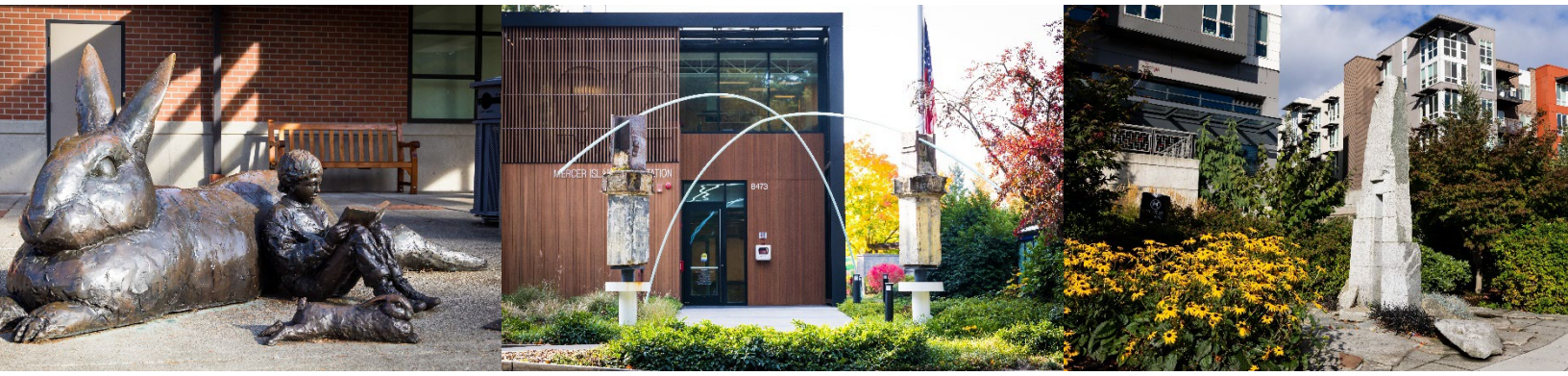

Table of Contents

Introduction 3

Project Opportunities 4

Funding 5

Public Engagement 6

Collection Care 9

Revising the 6-Year Work Plan for Public Art 11

Appendices 12

- Appendix A. Project Opportunities List 12
- Appendix B. 1% Fund Balance Information 14
- Appendix C. Grant Funding Resources 15
- Appendix D. Guidelines for Administering the Mercer Island Public Art Program 16
- Appendix E. Public Art Documentation Forms 23
- Appendix F. Terms & Definitions 25
- Appendix G. Public Art Types 27

Introduction

The City of Mercer Island (City) began amassing a public art collection in the 1980s and established a 1% for Art in Public Places Fund (1% Fund) in 1993 to support the acquisition and maintenance of visual artworks for the public realm. Per the establishing ordinance, the 1% Fund is funded by 1% of construction costs for qualifying capital improvement projects, which include major renovations/repairs and new construction of public parks and streets. Today, the City's public art collection includes more than 60 works of two- and three-dimensional art installed in public facilities and parks around Mercer Island.

In 2022, the Mercer Island City Council (City Council) adopted the 2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan), which identified the need to develop a long-range project plan for the 1% Fund. To achieve this goal, City Recreation and Capital division staff collaborated with the Mercer Island Arts Council (Arts Council) in 2024-2025 to draft this 6-Year Work Plan for the Mercer Island Public Art Program (the 6-Year Work Plan).

What does the 6-Year Work Plan include?

- Goals for the City's public art program
- Public art project opportunities to consider over the 6-year planning horizon
- Funding resources information
- Guidance for engaging the Mercer Island community in public art acquisition and exhibition
- Details about public art collection management and updating the 6-Year Work Plan
- Roles and responsibilities for City staff and for the Arts Council in implementing the 6-Year Work Plan
- Updated procedures for permanent acquisition, temporary exhibition, and deaccession

Who implements the 6-Year Work Plan?

City staff and the Arts Council are tasked with reviewing the 6-Year Work Plan and identifying individual action items to propose for the City's Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Once the budget and CIP are approved by the City Council, items will be implemented by the appropriate City departments with Arts Council input and collaboration as necessary.

What are the goals of the 6-Year Work Plan?

Through the public art program, the Arts Council and City staff seek to:

- Spark curiosity where Mercer Island residents live, gather, and play.
- Cultivate community pride, civic engagement, high quality of life, and social connection.
- Share Mercer Island's rich history, natural beauty, and local creativity with Island residents and visitors.
- Invite and encourage community members to share their own diverse experiences, backgrounds, and beliefs through artmaking.
- Promote and implement sustainability practices through public art creation and exhibition.
- Provide accessible, inclusive, and safe public art experiences that make all feel welcome.
- Steward a public art collection that future generations can enjoy, engage with, and enhance.

To achieve these goals, the 6-Year Work Plan outlines three key components – **Project Opportunities**, **Funding**, and **Public Engagement**. When coordinated, these components will result in a successful, meaningful public art program for the Mercer Island community. Details about these three components and how they relate are provided in the next sections.

Project Opportunities

Project Opportunities represent the starting point for administering the City's public art program. What project ideas exist? Which ideas are feasible given City requirements and resources? And what will the public art program focus on over the time horizon of the 6-Year Work Plan?

Developing the Project Opportunities List

The Project Opportunities List is a dynamic list of public art opportunities that can be implemented by the City as resources allow. The list supports project planning over the time horizon of the 6-Year Work Plan and aims to capture the following information:

- Preferred locations for installing public art projects
- Locally significant history, people, events, locations, and/or other details to highlight through public art projects
- Planned capital projects that are eligible and/or strong candidates for public art projects using 1% Fund dollars
- Project ideas proposed by Arts Council members, Mercer Island residents, local community groups, and/or others

City staff, in consultation with the Arts Council, are responsible for maintaining this list, including updating it on a quarterly basis to ensure new opportunities are catalogued. (More details about collecting community input for project opportunities are provided in the Public Engagement section.)

Identifying Project Priorities

Recognizing that the City has limited financial, staff, volunteer, and other resources, a small number of project opportunities will be pursued during the six-year time horizon of the 6-Year Work Plan. City staff will work with the Arts Council Chair and Vice Chair to schedule a biennial Arts Council workshop to recommend projects for the upcoming biennium. Staff are responsible for ensuring the workshop is conducted ahead of Citywide development of the biennial budget and CIP, including allowing adequate time to engage the Mercer Island community in prioritizing project opportunities if desired by the Arts Council.

After the Arts Council identifies their recommended project priorities, their recommendation will be presented to the City Council for approval via the draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP), biennial budget, and/or City department work plans as appropriate.

2025-2030 Project Opportunities List

The 2025-2030 Project Opportunities List was developed during a public art planning process conducted with the Arts Council from May 2024-March 2025. Project opportunities were proposed by Arts Council members, City staff, and community members, and preliminarily evaluated by staff against various factors. The Arts Council reviewed each opportunity and completed a dot-voting exercise to refine and prioritize the list into three levels:

- High (Green): Project opportunities to consider for implementation over the 2025-2030 Plan.
- Medium (Pink): Project opportunities to consider first for future 6-Year Work Plans.
- Low (Orange): Lowest priority projects to consider for future 6-Year Work Plans.

The 2025-2030 Project Opportunities List is included as Appendix A. This list will continue to evolve as new ideas emerge and the Arts Council conducts its biennial workshop to prioritize opportunities.

Funding

Funding is the second critical component for administering the City's public art program. What resources exist? What new funding strategies can the City consider and pursue to fund public art? And how will the City apply resources to specific projects?

1% for Art in Public Places Fund

The 1% Fund is established by which requires all qualifying capital improvement projects to set aside 1% of the total project cost to support permanent public art installations. Qualifying capital improvement projects are defined as:

> *Projects funded wholly or in part by the City to construct or remodel any public project, including buildings, decorative or commemorative structures, parks or any portion thereof; and projects involving the construction, renovation or repair of public streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities.*

A project's 1% Fund contribution may be used to integrate a public art project into the capital project or transferred to the 1% Fund for future use. Transfers are calculated at project closeout by Public Works and Finance staff and are completed at the end of the fiscal year closeout (typically in Q2 of the following fiscal year). City staff are responsible for tracking 1% Fund contributions and commitments.

The available balance (i.e. funds available for future appropriation) as of January 1, 2025, is $120,618. More details about 1% Fund contributions for recent biennia are provided in Appendix B.

Other Public Art Funding Strategies

Beyond the 1% Fund, other resources and funding strategies documented below may be applicable to public art projects identified in this work plan. A list of potential opportunities is provided below. Staff are responsible for ensuring these resources are current, including adding new resources as they emerge.

- City Donations program
- Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery sales
- Individual donations and crowdfunding
- Partnerships with local arts and other community organizations
- Partnerships with private developers and businesses
- Federal, state, county, and local grant opportunities (a list of grant resources is provided as Appendix C)
- Fundraising events, such as local art auctions and benefit concerts/performances

Selecting the Right Funding Source

Funding sources will be identified for specific projects as they are moved from the project opportunities list to the project timeline. When choosing funding sources for specific projects, considerations should include, but not be limited to, the following.

- Relevant community groups and others who could serve as fundraising partners and/or project sponsors for grant requirements
- Deadlines for grants and other application-based opportunities
- Match, City Resolution, and other requirements for application-based opportunities
- Fundraising goals for individual donations and other outside funding pursuits

Public Engagement

Public Engagement is the third critical component for fostering a successful public art program. How will the community engage in the public art process from start to finish? How will the City keep the community informed about progress, engagement opportunities, and achievements?

Community Collaboration to Develop Public Art

Collaborating with the Mercer Island community to produce public art projects is one avenue for cultivating community ownership of and pride in public art. The following methods for community collaboration will be considered throughout the process to develop and implement public art projects.

Community Input for Project Opportunities
Soliciting project ideas is a useful way to implement the community's public art interests and needs. Ideas may be general, such as requests for installation sites, artwork mediums/genres, or themes. General ideas will be solicited through City channels, such as the City website, Let's Talk, on-site signage, and during regular Arts Council meetings, on a rolling basis and added to the project opportunities list by City staff. Staff are responsible for updating the Arts Council when new project opportunities have been added to the list and for ensuring that the list is updated prior to engaging the Arts Council in recommending projects for the upcoming biennium.

Occasionally, members of the Arts Council, the community, or local organizations may submit a formal public art project proposal for the City's consideration. A formal proposal is one that includes a defined project scope and a request for City resources to implement, including funding. The City may choose to establish a formal "Call for Project Proposals" or accept proposals on a rolling basis. The process for evaluating community-initiated public art project proposals is provided in the Guidelines for Administering the Mercer Island Public Art Program (Appendix D).

Community Role in Project Development
After a public art opportunity is prioritized for a future biennium (i.e. moved to the project timeline), City staff and the Arts Council will identify the best method(s) for engaging the community in project development. These may include, but not be limited to, the following.

- Identify and engage community organizations and/or broad community feedback to develop the preferred project scope.
- Require project-specific community engagement methods in the request for qualifications/proposals.
- Partner with local schools and/or youth organizations to develop projects and foster early connection with the arts among local young people.
- Organize design workshops or charettes for community members to provide input on project themes, design elements, and/or site-specific details.

Community Role in Artist/Artwork Selection
The process for evaluating submittals for a permanent or temporary public art project is outlined in the Guidelines for Administering the Mercer Island Public Art Program (Appendix D). Per the process, community members may participate in the Selection Panel to choose an artist or artwork in the following roles.

- Resident with special interest in the proposed project
- Other Mercer Island Board or Commission Member(s)
- Other individuals as appropriate

Occasionally, it may be appropriate to seek feedback from the broader community when making a final selection of an artist or artwork. Ways to solicit broader community input include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Host finalist presentations and allow the attendees to ask questions and submit comments.
- Allow the public to vote on their favorite finalist.
- Mount temporary displays of finalist proposals in high-traffic areas (e.g. Mercer Island Community and Event Center, Mercer Island Library, Town Center events, etc.) where residents can view options and submit feedback on-site.
- Invite small groups of diverse community representatives to review the finalists and provide additional insights to the Selection Panel.

Community Role in Artmaking

Providing opportunities to participate in the artmaking process can transform public art from a passive experience to a deeply communal one. When developing public art projects, the City should consider opportunities for engaging the community in creation. Public art projects that may be good candidates for community artmaking include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Murals
- Graphic arts, such as printmaking and banners
- Performance and time-based art
- Environmental art installations
- Works that are created individually and assembled to create the whole, such as mosaic, collage, and fiber/textile arts

Public Art Activation

Engaging the community with existing public art installations is another important way to foster connection and understanding, both with the public art collection and within the community itself. Both digital and in-person opportunities should be considered for activating public art and include, but not be limited to, the following.

- STQRY – A digital community engagement platform that includes details about Mercer Island public art, culture, and history/heritage.
- City social media accounts – Digital channels that can be used to promote STQRY content as well as implement other engagement opportunities, such as inviting residents to submit their photos and stories of works in the public art collection to highlight both public art and local community members' experiences with it.
- Interpretive signage – Signs installed at public art installations that include artwork tombstone and a QR code that sends users to STQRY.
- Public art maps – Maps of the entire public art collection and/or themed tours that can be distributed to community groups, posted on-site, and downloaded digitally.
- Events at public art sites – City-run and community-hosted events that encourage gathering at public art sites, including public art walks, large-scale special events, art-focused nature walks, community artmaking activities, and other in-person activities.
- Artist talks and/or panel discussions – In-person or virtual events where artists from the public art collection discuss their work, process, and stories behind works in the collection.
- Literary and performing arts events inspired by/incorporating public artworks – Opportunities to connect visual, performing, and other artforms to bolster awareness of the public art collection and strengthen the entire arts and culture ecosystem on Mercer Island.

Communicating Progress and Achievements

Clear and consistent communication about public art progress and achievements is another important piece of successfully engaging the public with the public art program. City staff are responsible for producing and maintaining public art communications, which may be distributed via the following City channels:

- City website (www.mercerisland.gov/publicart) – Static information about the public art program.
- Let's Talk (letstalk.mercergov.org) – Collecting community feedback and project-specific needs.
- MI Weekly newsletter – Calls to action, such as community input opportunities, event announcements, and other immediate/time-sensitive needs.
- STQRY (mercerisland.stqry.app) – Ongoing and deeper learning about the public art collection.
- On-site signage and other materials – Pop-up announcements and other timely information.

Collection Care

City staff are responsible for managing the public art collection, which encompasses a range of tasks outlined in this section as well as other duties and responsibilities that may arise to safely maintain works in the collection.

Documentation

When a new work of art is added to the public art collection, the artist or artist's representative will provide the following documentation:

- Artwork Statement – Facilitates understanding of the completed artwork and may be used for interpretation and engagement purposes.
- Public Art Record Form (Appendix E) – Includes tombstone (title, artist, medium, year built, acquisition method) and other object details, including size dimensions, valuation, and condition upon acquisition.
- Technical and Maintenance Requirements Form (Appendix E) – Outlines the methods and materials used to execute, install, and maintain the artwork as well as any other special considerations for collection care.

This and other documentation related to acquisition, installation, maintenance, and interpretation will be maintained in a public art record. Photographs, media coverage, and other interesting or important materials will also be kept in the public art record and may be used for interpretation and engagement activities related to the individual artwork.

Asset Inventory

Works of art in the public art collection are tracked as City assets by the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) team. City staff are responsible for notifying GIS of new acquisitions, deaccessions, temporary deinstallations, or other changes to the public art collection to ensure the asset inventory stays accurate.

Public Art Record

Staff maintain a public art record for each work in the public art collection. The record includes provenance documentation related to acquisition, installation, maintenance, and interpretation as well as photographs, media coverage, and other interesting or important materials.

Appraisal

Artwork valuations are established for insurance purposes and should be estimated at the time a work is added to the public art collection. When artwork is donated to the City, appraisal is required at the time of the gift and should be provided/paid for by the donor. If updated valuations are needed, staff work with a qualified professional to appraise artworks.

Insurance

Works of art in the public art collection and works temporarily exhibited by the City are insured by the Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA), the City's insurance provider. When updates to the collection are made through acquisition or deaccession, staff are responsible for reporting changes to the City's Administrative Services and City Attorney's office to ensure the City's property schedule is accurate.

Routine Maintenance

City staff develop a public art maintenance plan that is updated annually and includes cleaning, minor repair, and other needs for each work in the public art collection. Routine public art maintenance is funded by the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund (1% Fund) and conducted annually by a contract art conservator in consultation with staff and based on the maintenance plan.

Major Repair and Restoration

Occasionally, public artworks may require significant repair or restoration. Staff consult with the artist and/or a contract art conservator to develop a scope of work. When possible, the City will contract with the artist to complete the work or will engage a contract art conservator to execute the repair. Staff are responsible for determining the funding source for special repairs or restorations that fall outside the scope of routine maintenance.

Artwork Curation

Every five years, existing public art installations should be evaluated for safety, accessibility, integration, and other site-related aspects to determine if artworks should/can be adjusted. This assessment work could be timed with annual routine public art maintenance or conducted separately by staff and members of the Arts Council as desired. If need to re-site, deaccession, or otherwise adjust an existing installation arises, staff are responsible for proposing a scope of work that will include costs, timeline, required review/approvals, and other components to successfully re-site an artwork.

Revising the 6-Year Work Plan for Art in Public Places

The 6-Year Work Plan is intended as a living document that may be reviewed and revised at different points throughout the 6-year time horizon. This section recommends a cadence for updating the 6-Year Work Plan. Additional reviews may be requested by the City Council, the Arts Council, or City staff, with the understanding that:

- Minor updates that do not substantively change the 6-Year Work Plan (e.g. corrections to grammar/typos, updates to citations, etc.) will be made by City staff on a rolling basis and do not require approval; and
- Requests for significant revisions outside of the regular review cycle may require additional discussion and approvals prior to being completed.

City staff are responsible for overseeing regular, routine updates to the 6-Year Work Plan, including compiling project ideas submitted to the City and adding them to the Project Opportunities List on a quarterly basis; and tracking 1% Fund contributions and updating the 6-Year Work Plan annually with accurate numbers.

To identify future project priorities staff will schedule a biennial workshop with the Arts Council and ensure the Project Opportunities List is prioritized prior to the City's biennial budget and CIP planning process. For example, project priorities for 2027-2032 should be recommended by the Arts Council by March 2026 and incorporated into the draft CIP and department work plans for the 2027-2028 biennium by City staff.

The guiding elements of the 6-Year Work Plan, including the goals and the key components of Project Opportunities, Funding, and Public Engagement, should be reviewed every five years but may be revised earlier if directed to do so by the City Council.

Appendix A. Project Opportunities List

	Project Opportunity	Summary	Public Art Pillars	1% Fund	2025-2030 CIP	Park Master Plan
HIGH	Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery Activation Plan	Develop a phased plan implementing improvements at the Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery, including temporary arts activations, curation of existing artwork, enhancements to park areas, etc.	Place Connection Longevity	Eligible	2027-2028	Aubrey Davis Park (2019)
HIGH	Deane's Children's Park AIPP	Visioning process to redesign the Deane's Children's Park Playground begins in 2025, and construction is planned for 2026-2027. The redesign offers nature-themed art integration opportunities, including potential for building off *Kenton's Dragon* by Kenton Pies, the popular dragon sculpture/play structure at the park.	Aesthetic Place Connection Longevity	Eligible	2025-2026	N/A
HIGH	Public Art Installation at Mercer Island Transit Interchange	Explore opportunities for enhancing the roundabout at 77th Avenue SE and North Mercer Way.	Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	N/A
HIGH	*The Source* Restoration	Restore *The Source* by John Hoge in preparation for the 50th anniversary of this earthwork.	Aesthetic Place Longevity	Eligible	2029-2030	Luther Burbank Park (2006)
MEDIUM	Mural Collaboration with Mercer Island High School	Produce a community mural with Mercer Island High School (MIHS) students.	Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	N/A
MEDIUM	Luther Burbank Park Sport Courts Mural	Add artistic designs and/or mural(s) to the bare walls inside the newly renovated sport courts facility at Luther Burbank Park.	Aesthetic Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	Luther Burbank Park (2006)
MEDIUM	Luther Burbank Park Amphitheater Renovations	Design and implement renovations of the 50+ year-old facility to better serve future performances and audiences.	Aesthetic Place Connection Longevity	Ineligible	N/A	Luther Burbank Park (2006)
MEDIUM	Mural at Aubrey Davis Park Basketball Courts	Partner with the community to implement a new mural in Aubrey Davis Park. Project could be a collaboration between the City, local artists, students, park neighbors, and others.	Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	Aubrey Davis Park (2019)
MEDIUM	Historic Downtown Public Art Installation	Highlight historic downtown street names and other Mercer Island history in a project that replaces the *Street Name Inlays* public art installation deaccessioned in 2025.	Aesthetic Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	N/A
MEDIUM	Refresh the Town Center Public Art Banners	Replace *Island Icons* (2018) installed on Town Center light poles with new banners, artistic signage, or other art element.	Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	N/A
MEDIUM	Luther Burbank Park Boiler Building Phase 2 AIPP	Create a "signature entrance" from the Luther Burbank Park Administrative Building to the Waterfront as part of phase 2 of renovations to the Boiler Building.	Place Connection	Eligible	2028, 2030	Luther Burbank Park (2006)

Appendix A. Project Opportunities List

	Project Opportunity	Summary	Public Art Pillars	1% Fund	2025-2030 CIP	Park Master Plan
MEDIUM	Community Artmaking Project	Collaborate with the community to develop and implement a small-scale, permanent public art installation.	Aesthetic Connection	Eligible	N/A	N/A
LOW	Outdoor Gallery Golf	Activate the Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery with pop-up mini golf holes designed by an artist and/or inspired by artworks in the public art collection.	Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	Aubrey Davis Park (2019)
LOW	Costume / Stage Design Sponsorships for Live Performance	Sponsor costume, set, and/or other visual design elements for live performances.	Aesthetic Connection	Ineligible	N/A	N/A
LOW	Natural Resources + Public Art Collaboration	Develop a permanent public art project in connection with the City's Forest Stewards program.	Aesthetic Place Connection	Eligible	N/A	N/A
LOW	Town Center Art Elements	Implement low-cost visual art elements to beautify Mercer Island Town Center. Examples include vinyl wraps for utility boxes and signs for local businesses.	Aesthetic Place	Eligible	N/A	N/A

Appendix B. 1% Fund Balance Information

City staff are responsible for tracking 1% Fund contributions and commitments. This section documents completed and anticipated contributions for 2023-2026.

2023 Contributions to 1% Fund – Completed

Project ID	Project Title	2023 Construction Spend	1%
PA0118	Lincoln Landing Watercourse Restoration	$13,762.50	$137.63
PA0125	Mercerdale Park Playground	$48,824.39	$488.24
PA0136	LBP South Shoreline	$376,430.80	$3,764.31
PA0165	Bike Skills Area	$302,500	$3,025
SP0100	Residential Street Resurfacing	$978,709.21	$9,779.27
SP0101	Arterial Street Preservation	$42,631.25	$416.31
SP0120	Sunset Hwy/77th Ave SE Improvements	$1,137,561.29	$11,375.61
SP0129	4400 ICW Improvements	$192,840.57	$1,928.41
		Total 1% Contribution	$30,914.78

2024 Contributions to 1% Fund – Anticipated

Project ID	Project Title	2024 Construction Budget	1%
PA0109	ADP Trail Safety Improvements	$447,701.83	$4,477.02
PA0124	LBP Boiler Building Phase 1	$1,884,401.10	$18,844.01
PA0143	LBP Sport Courts Renovation	$978,904.84	$9,789.05
SP0100	Residential Street Resurfacing	$481,896	$4,818.96
SP0101	Arterial Street Preservation	$81,401	$814.01
SP0135	ICW Corridor Improvements	$1,127,127	$11,271.27
SP0111	80th Ave SE Pedestrian Improvements	$1,590,160	$15,901.60
SP0137	Traffic Signal Improvements	$161,808	$1,618.08
		Total 1% Contribution	$67,534.00

2025-2026 CIP Projects Contributing to 1% Fund – Anticipated

Project ID	Project Title	2025	2026
90.25.0015	Deane's Play Area Improvements		X
90.25.0020	LBP Dock & Waterfront Improvements	X	X
90.25.0043	First Hill Playground	X	
90.25.0050	Roanoke Park Playground	X	
90.20.0001	Residential Street Resurfacing	X	X
90.20.0002	Arterial Preservation Program	X	X
90.20.0014	SE 27th Street Overlay (76th to 80th)		X
90.20.0024	Town Center Commuter Parking Facility Project	X	

Appendix C. Grant Funding Resources

City staff are responsible for tracking and applying for grants. For some opportunities, City Council authorization may be required before a grant application can be submitted.

Organization	Grant	Funding Level	Match Required	Funding Cycle	Key Elements
National Endowment for the Arts	Our Town	$25,000 - $150,000	Yes – equal to grant amount	Annual Due in August	Placemaking Partnerships
	Grants for Arts Projects: LAAs	$10,000 - $100,000	Yes – equal to grant amount	Biannual Due Feb. & July	Partnerships
ArtsWA	Grants to Organizations: Art Project	$2,000 - $5,000	No	Annual Due in Spring	Programs
WA State Historical Society	Heritage Capital Program	$10,000 - $1m	Yes – 50%	Annual 2-stage process	Capital Needs Heritage
4Culture	Doors Open: Facilities	$250,000 - $2.5m	No	Annual	Capital Needs Programs Partnerships Racial Equity
	Art Projects	$2,000 - $10,000	No	Annual	Programs Partnerships Racial Equity
Port of Seattle	Economic Development Partnership Grant	$1 per capita	Yes – 50%, ½ can be in-kind support, ½ financial match	Annual	Placemaking
Mercer Island Community Fund	Community Grants	$500 - $5,500	No	Annual	Community
Bloomberg Philanthropies	Public Art Challenge	Up to $1m	No	4-year cycle 2022 last year	Large-Scale Partnerships Community
	Asphalt Art Initiative	Up to $100,000	No	Annual	Safe Streets Public Space
Project for Public Spaces	Community Placemaking Grants	Varies	No	Annual	Placemaking Public Space

Appendix D. Guidelines for Administering the Mercer Island Public Art Program

These guidelines establish the procedures for administering the City of Mercer Island ("City") public art program.

The Mercer Island Arts Council ("Arts Council") and City staff oversee the public art program and are responsible for ensuring it is fair, equitable, and appropriate given the scope of a specific project and the evolving needs of the Mercer Island community.

The Mercer Island City Council ("City Council") is responsible for approving public art projects as described in the City's 6-Year Work Plan for Art in Public Places and, when necessary, may request process steps in addition to or different from those outlined in these guidelines.

This document outlines the following procedures:

- Developing a Public Art Project – The general process for review, approval, and launching a public art commission.
- Evaluating Submittals for Artist/Artwork Selection – The general process for evaluating artists and/or artworks submitted for a permanent public art acquisition, a public art donation, a proposal to temporarily exhibit art in public space, or another request deemed public art.
- Accepting Community-Initiated Project Proposals – The general process for reviewing and accepting community-generated proposals for a permanent public art acquisition or a request to temporarily exhibit art in public space.
- Deaccessioning Public Art – The general process for withdrawing a work or works from the public art collection.

Developing a Public Art Project

Procedure

When a new opportunity to commission a permanent work of public art is identified by the City, the following process will be used to seek approval of and launch the proposed project.

1. **Establish a Public Art Committee.**

The Arts Council, in collaboration with City staff, will appoint a Public Art Committee consisting of 1-2 Arts Council members, City staff, and relevant project stakeholders, which could include other City board members, Mercer Island residents, outside consultants, and/or others interested in the project.

2. **Develop the proposed project scope.**

The Public Art Committee is responsible for developing and proposing an appropriate project scope that may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Artist selection methods: Methods may include Open Competition, Limited Competition, or Direct Selection.
- Project goals: Identify metrics for gauging the success of the project, such as goals for artist/artwork representation, community engagement, use of sustainable materials, etc.
- Project site and context: Describe the project's location, intent, and historical, cultural, or other significance (if relevant). If a specific location is not proposed, identify potential sites available for the project.
- Public benefit: Describe the expected public benefit of the project, including the significance of the selected site, theme, etc.
- Project budget and schedule: Include major milestones such as Selection Panel review period, City Council approval date, and estimated project completion/installation date.
- Submittal requirements: Basic requirements are outlined at the end of this section. Additional materials may be required based on the scope and needs of the project.
- Proposed Selection Panel: Identify individuals to serve on the Selection Panel, the group responsible for reviewing artist/artwork submittals and recommending an artist/artwork for selection for the project. (More information about the Selection Panel is detailed in the "Evaluating Submittals for a Public Art Project" section.)

3. **Seek approval of project scope.**

Once the proposed project scope is developed, the Public Art Committee will present it to the Arts Council for review and recommendation. Depending on the scope of the project, the Public Art Committee may seek endorsement from other City Boards or Commissions before presenting to the Arts Council. City staff will transmit the Arts Council's final recommendation to the City Council for approval of the project and authorization to open the project for submittals.

4. **Open the project for submittals.**

Following City Council approval, City staff will develop and issue a Request for Qualifications or Request for Proposals, as appropriate to and based on the approved project scope.

Submittal Requirements

Standard submittal requirements outlined in a Request for Qualifications include:

- Narrative of artwork intent/approach: The narrative should articulate the submitter's intent for the project, including how their work, process, and experience relate to the project. The narrative should explain how the proposed Artist/Artwork will meet the stated goals of the project.
- Artist's vision/approach: Describe the vision for the project, including the submitter's specific approach to the site, the themes, and/or the Mercer Island community in general. Include the submitter's personal and/or artistic approach to promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability.
- Community engagement approach: Summarize how the submitter intends to engage the community in the creative process.
- Artist's statement: Provide a brief bio that can be used in future communications and promotions about the project.
- Resume/CV: Submit a current, professional resume. Artist Teams should submit resumes for each team member compiled into one document.
- Images of previous work: Provide up to five (5) images of previous work by the Artist or Artist Team that demonstrate the submitter's ability to complete the project. (JPEG format, 1920 pixels maximum on the longest size, 72 dpi, with compression settings resulting in the best image quality where the file size remains under 2MB.)
- Ability to work within city government structure: Describe the submitter's ability to successfully execute a public art project, including previous work with local governments or other experience working with municipal staff, elected official, volunteer boards, or others to complete public sector projects.
- References: Submit three (3) current references, including the reference's name, phone, e-mail, and title as well as a brief description of the reference's professional association to the submitter.

If the City decides to issue a Request for Proposals, the following additional submittal materials will be required:

- Artwork concept design(s): Provide concept designs, including potential site locations, for the proposed artwork(s). Include up to five (5) images, including sketches, plans, models, renderings, precedents, or concepts.
- Cost estimates: Provide cost estimates for each proposed art piece, including best estimates of current year material, artist time, and installation costs.

Evaluating Submittals for Artist/Artwork Selection

Procedure

When the City receives submittals for a permanent or temporary public art project, including for public art commissions administered by the City, requests for public art donation, and other requests deemed public art, a Selection Panel will review submittals and recommend a preferred selection. The Selection Panel may consist of the following individuals:

- Working artist generally recognized for producing quality work
- Resident with special interest in the proposed project – Based on the project scope and location
- Mercer Island Arts Council Member – Serves as the Chair of the Selection Panel
- Other Mercer Island Board or Commission Member(s) – Based on the project scope and location
- Mercer Island City Council Member
- City Staff – Non-voting member
- Other individuals as appropriate

City staff and the Arts Council will propose a Selection Panel to the City Council as part of the process to seek approval for a proposed public art project. Once a Selection Panel is approved, the following process will be administered.

1. **Review submittals.**

Panelists will individually review and preliminarily score submittals using the Four Public Art Pillars Selection Criteria outlined at the end of this section.

2. **Convene the Selection Panel.**

After individually reviewing the submittals, Panelists will meet to review each submittal, compare their preliminary scores, and rank the submittals. Depending on the Panel's rankings and the scope of the project, the Panel may choose to invite a finalist or finalists to a finalist interview. Finalists will be compensated with an honorarium, the amount of which will be determined based on the overall project budget but will not be less than $500 per finalist.

3. **Seek approval of artist or artwork selection.**

Once the Selection Panel reaches a consensus, the Chair will report the Panel's decision to the Arts Council for review and recommendation. City staff will transmit the Arts Council's recommendation to the City Council for approval and budget appropriation (if necessary).

4. **Implement the project.**

Upon City Council approval, City staff will notify all finalists of the result and move forward with the appropriate administrative steps (execute a contract, complete the donor transfer, etc.). Staff will also identify specific milestones relevant to the project scope and timeline for communicating progress to the Arts Council.

Conflict of Interest

To avoid any conflict of interest or appearance thereof, any Panelist having an association with an applicant must disclose the association to the Selection Panel Chair immediately upon becoming

aware of such association. The Selection Panel Chair will determine if the association exempts the Panelist from discussion or dismissal from the Selection Panel.

Rejection of All Submittals

If the Selection Panel finds that no submittal conforms to the Selection Criteria, it may recommend that the Arts Council:

- Reject all submittals and request a new solicitation;
- Cancel the project; or
- Another option as identified by the Arts Council and/or City staff.

Four Public Art Pillars Selection Criteria

The criteria for selecting artists and/or artwork are based on Four Public Art Pillars outlined below.

Public Art Pillar	Evaluation Questions	Score
Aesthetic	• Quality – Does the proposal demonstrate high artistic merit? • Representation – Will the proposal add new mediums, materials, artmaking processes, styles/genres, and/or artists to the public art collection? • Originality and Innovation – Will the proposal bring something fresh and unique to the public art collection? • Sustainability – Is resource conservation thoughtfully considered for the design and creation of the proposed project?	
Place	• Context – Does the proposal demonstrate understanding of the project site and its historical, cultural, and environmental context? • Functionality – How will the proposal integrate into and/or enhance site? • Sense of Identity – Will the proposal enhance and/or cultivate a strong sense of place for residents and visitors?	
Connection	• Inspiration – Will the proposal provoke feeling in the viewer? • Collaboration – Does the proposal provide opportunities for Mercer Island residents, community groups, and others to participate in the public art process? • Diversity – Will the proposed project resonate with people of diverse abilities, backgrounds, and beliefs? • Community Cohesion – Will the proposal foster community dialogue and enhance community members' understanding of each other? • Inclusion & Accessibility – Does the proposal provide a safe and inclusive public art experience for all?	
Longevity	• Staying Power – Does the proposal demonstrate appeal for future Mercer Island generations? • Collection Care – Can the proposed project be completed and maintained within budget?	
	Total Score (out of 100)	

Accepting Community-Initiated Project Proposals

Procedure

Occasionally, members of the Arts Council, the community, or local organizations may propose a public art project for the City's consideration. The City may choose to establish a formal "Call for Project Proposals" or accept proposals on a rolling basis. To properly evaluate these proposals, the following process will be used.

1. **Intake proposal.**

City staff review project proposals and determine, in consultation with Arts Council leadership, whether the proposal should be transmitted to the Arts Council for review.

2. **Present proposal to the Arts Council.**

When a proposal is sent to the Arts Council for review, the proposal author will be invited to present to the Arts Council at a regular or special meeting. Following the presentation, the Arts Council will review the proposal using the Four Public Art Pillars Selection Criteria and either:

- Preliminarily accept the proposal;
- Reject the proposal;
- Seek additional information from the proposal author; or
- Request other next steps as identified by the Arts Council and/or City staff.

3. **Advance the project proposal.**

If the Arts Council decides to preliminarily accept the proposal, they may choose to recommend the following:

- Add the project to the Project Opportunities List for consideration in a future biennium;
- Prioritize the project in the current biennium; or
- Another option as identified by the Arts Council and/or City staff.

Following preliminary acceptance, City staff will seek relevant approvals, which may include from other City departments impacted by the proposed project and the City Council.

Proposal Requirements

Community-initiated project proposals will include, but not be limited to, the following materials:

- Project overview
- Proposed location
- Design concepts
- Anticipated budget and funding strategy
- Demonstration of community support
- Description of public benefit
- Preferred project timeline

Deaccessioning Public Art

Deaccession is a procedure to permanently withdraw an artwork from the public art collection. All artworks owned by the City are eligible for deaccession. (For donated works, all legal documents relating to the donation will be consulted prior to beginning the deaccession process.)

City staff are responsible for assessing the public art collection and recommending deaccession needs to the Arts Council. Works will be carefully and impartially evaluated within the context of the entire collection, and staff may consult other qualified individuals, including the artist, an art conservator, an appraiser, a curator, and/or the City Attorney's office, before recommending deaccession. Additionally, staff may consider notifying and seeking input from community members, organizations, and other individuals before making deaccession recommendations to the Arts Council.

Criteria for Deaccession

A deaccession may be recommended for one or more of the following reasons:

- The artwork is being displaced from its current location and cannot be re-sited.
- The artwork has been damaged or has deteriorated, and repair is impractical or unfeasible.
- The condition or security of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed by the City.
- The artwork endangers public safety.
- The artwork is not, or is only rarely, exhibited due to the lack of a suitable installation site.
- The artwork has been determined to be significantly incompatible or inferior in the context of the public art collection.
- The City wishes to replace the artwork with work of more significance by the same artist.
- The artwork requires excessive maintenance or has faults of design or workmanship.
- In the case of site-specific artwork, the artwork is destroyed by severely altering its relationship to the site.

Seeking Approval to Deaccession

After a work has been identified for deaccession, City staff will present the assessment to the Arts Council for review and recommendation to the City Council. Upon receiving the Arts Council's recommendation, City staff will transmit the recommendation to the City Council for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting. Once City Council approves the recommendation, City staff will move forward with finalizing the deaccession, including coordinating deinstallation needs, updating the public art record, and messaging to the public.

Disposing of Deaccessioned Artwork

Depending on the condition of the artwork and the conditions of the deaccession, City staff and the Arts Council may recommend that the work be:

- Returned to the artist;
- Traded for one or more works of comparable value by the artist;
- Sold in compliance with law and policies governing surplus property;
- Responsibly destroyed; or
- Responsibly disposed of in some other reasonable manner.

Appendix E. Public Art Documentation Forms

Public Art Record

Accession Number (Asset ID) _____

Title _____

Artist _____

Type & Medium _____

_____

_____

Year Built _____ **Year Acquired** _____

Acquisition Method _____

Location _____

Dimensions _____

Condition on Acquisition _____

_____

Value _____

Technical and Maintenance Requirements

Accession Number (Asset ID) _____

Title _____

Artist _____

Material(s) – Including material thickness; finishing materials (glaze, paint color and type, sanding grit, tool pattern, patina, surface sealer, etc.); welding or jointing materials; etc.

_____

_____

_____

Fabrication Method(s) – Including general construction techniques/methods; welding or jointing methods; casting alloy, wax body, glass or fiber type; finishing methods; etc.

_____

_____

_____

Foundation Material/Method(s)

_____

_____

Other maintenance considerations?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F. Terms & Definitions

Accession
Adding an artwork to the permanent public art collection.

Artist
Practitioner who produces works of art for commission, acquisition, and/or exhibition.

Artwork
All forms of art conceived in any discipline or medium, including visual, performance, literary, media, and other methods.

Conservation
Repair of damaged or deteriorating artwork to maximize endurance while changing as little to the object as possible.

Deaccession
Formal removal of accessioned artwork from the permanent collection.

Donation
Artwork or sum of money given willingly and without compensation.

Maintenance
Regular routine inspection and care of artwork carried out by a trained technician.

Medium
May refer to both the type of artwork (e.g. painting, sculpture, earthwork, etc.) and the material(s) the artwork is made from.

Public Art
Original works of art that are accessible to the public and that possess functional as well aesthetic qualities.

Public Art Collection
All works of art owned and accessioned by the City of Mercer Island.

Restoration
Treatment to return an artwork to a known or assumed state, often by the addition of non-original material.

Site-Specific
Artwork specifically designed for and permanently installed in a particular location.

Temporary Exhibit
Work or works of art loaned to the City of Mercer Island for limited exhibition in a public space.

Tombstone
Lists the primary details of an artwork, including the object title, artist, creation date, and acquisition information

VARA

The Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990, or VARA, is a federal law that grants "moral rights" to authors of certain works of visual art, including paintings, sculptures, and limited-edition photographs. VARA gives artists two protections:

1. Right of attribution: The artist has the right to be credited as the creator of their work and can prevent their name from being used on a work they did not create or on one that has been distorted or mutilated.
2. Right of integrity: The artist can prevent any intentional modification, distortion, or mutilation of a work if it harms the artist's reputation. For artworks designated as having "recognized stature," the artist may also have the right to prevent the destruction of the work. For site-specific public art integrated in or attached to a building, VARA protects the art from being removed if doing so would modify or destroy it.

Appendix G. Public Art Project Types

Earthwork or Landform
Artwork made directly into a landscape by sculpting the land itself or making structures using natural materials such as grass, twigs, and rocks.

Graphic Arts
Visual artistic expression typically produced on flat surfaces, including drawing, printmaking, banners, and tapestry.

Light-Based Art
Visual artwork in which light is the main and/or sole medium of creation.

Mixed Media
Artwork composed with a combination of media or materials.

Mosaic
Artwork composed of tiles or other small parts traditionally made of ceramic, glass, stone, or other materials.

Mural
Large-scale painting or other artwork applied directly on or attached to a wall, street, sidewalk, or other surface.

Painting
Two-dimensional artwork produced by applying paint or other media on a surface.

Performance Art
Artwork created through actions by the artist and/or other participants that may be live, recorded, spontaneous, and/or scripted.

Photograph
Image produced by the action of light on a light-sensitive material.

Sculpture
Three-dimensional artwork produced through carving, modeling, casting, constructing, or other processes using a variety of materials.

Sound-Based Art
Art that uses sound as both its medium (what it is made of) and its subject (what it is about).