



## CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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**DATE:** January 21, 2014  
**TO:** Steve Powers, City Administrator  
**FROM:** Craig Hupy, Public Services Area Administrator  
**RE:** **Update on Public Art Program in Ann Arbor**

On June 3, 2013, amendments were made to the Public Art Program. A review of the highlights and major changes are:

- Effective July 1, 2014, cut off new funds gathered through 1% of capital projects. Existing funds to continue to draw down under the previous terms of the ordinance
- The City is now expressly permitted to accept gifts and grants, raise funding in coordination with nonprofits and use cross funding to support public art
- A process for implementing “enhanced capital projects” to include art was described
- Duties of the Public Art Commission were revised to
  - Require the Commission to submit recommendation of “enhanced projects” by February 1st of each year
  - Require the Commission to seek public input through public engagement

The review of the Public Art process in Ann Arbor the Public Art Task Force put forward three conclusions:

- Public Art programs do better where the community is involved in selection and funding of certain projects. The City should work with outside entities, and seek local organizations and the Ann Arbor Community Foundation to locate, design and raise funds for such projects.

- Administration of the City' Public Art activities is complex, involving long-term planning for capital improvement projects, public engagement, relations, among other duties. A full time arts administrator is preferable.
- Staff should review the successful implementation of any changes in the ordinance after approximately three years. This timing is based on fact that capital improvements take longer than two years to move from inception to completion.

Using funding gathered under the former 1% for Art process and with the guidance of a part time temporary Art Program manager, the following projects are in process or have been completed:

#### West Park

*TreeFORMS*, by Trevan Pelletier, tree-like sculptures installed near the park's amphitheater, completed in 2011.

#### Allmendinger Park

*Nourishing Healthy Seeds*, by Mary Thiefels, is a mural, mosaic and found-object "neighborhood time capsule." It features objects donated by residents surrounding the park and was completed in 2012.

#### Ann Arbor (Stadium) Bridges

Current project and budgeted at \$400,000. The project's Selection Panel have recommended artist Catherine Widgery. The artist is completing modifications to the original art design for AAPAC's recommendation and Council approval.

#### Kingsley Rain Garden

Current project and is under contract with artist, Joshua Wiener, for \$23,380. Artist is fabricating the sculpture and installation will take place in spring 2014.

#### Argo Cascades

Current project and budgeted at \$150,000. The project's Selection Panel is considering two proposals for recommendation to AAPAC.

## Arbor Oaks Park

Current project without a Percent for Art amount budgeted. Project is in partnership with the Community Action Network and Bryant Neighborhood Association. Grant was submitted to the Southeast Michigan Community Foundation in November.

## Jewett Memorial

The Public Art Commission approved \$5,000 from the former Percent for Art funds for the project and the rest of the \$18,000 to \$36,000 (two chairs) budget will be privately raised.

## WWTP

The Public Art Commission approved an investigation of an art project at the renovations to the WWTP. A budget amount has not been recommended.

Given the Task Force's conclusions, City staff and Public Arts Commission chairman have been reviewing possible options for the structure of Ann Arbor Art program. This review was undertaken with two main goals. One, how to maximize the ability to use gifts, grants, crowd funding and other non local government funds in the art program; and second, how to fund a full time art administrator.

The Task Force concluded that a full time art administrator is preferable and this resonates strongly with the leadership of the Public Art Commission. With the current temporary part-time art administrator, the members of the Public Art Commission find themselves spending their time and energy doing tasks that could be more effectively done by full time art staff. This causes the volunteer art commission members to spend fairly large commitments of time on details of specific projects, instead of focusing on the broader goals of art in Ann Arbor.

The issue of how to solicit gifts, donations and other funds for the Art program is being examined by staff. The major conflict is that staff under direct employment of the city is constrained by city policies and procedures from soliciting gifts and donations, creating private public partnerships and cooperate sponsorships. Additionally, city policies limit the use of city funds for entertainment that might be part of the process of soliciting gifts and donations.

A meeting was held between Art Commission leadership, city staff and the Ann Arbor Community Foundation to determine if there is a willingness to host the Ann Arbor Arts Program outside of the confines of the municipal structure.

The understanding after that meeting was the Ann Arbor Community Foundation was willing to hold funding for specific projects. That concept of fiduciary trust fits well within their mission. The idea of housing the Ann Arbor Arts program by the Ann Arbor Community Foundation did not meet acceptance. The reason for not wanting to host the Ann Arbor Arts program was the Community Foundation did not want to host a program that would potentially compete with raising funds for their own programs.

Staff and leadership of the Art Commission met with staff of the Toledo Arts Commission. The population served by the Toledo Arts Commission is approximately five times larger than the City of Ann Arbor. The Toledo Arts Commission is housed outside of municipal government within a 501(c)3 nonprofit. While outside of municipal governments, the Toledo Arts Commission works closely with the City. The Toledo Arts funding is varied from Toledo's parks, grants, gifts, partnerships, sponsors', auctions and fundraisers. Toledo Arts commission has a number of full time employees to undertake fundraising, programs and develop relationship with donors. Toledo Arts Commission uses a consultant to do strategic planning on a reoccurring basis.

In reviewing art programs in other municipal communities, it was noted that art programs appeared to be located in one of three parts of the organization. The office of the mayor, the department responsible for economic development, the parks department, or within the County level of government, regional organizations or a nonprofit; similar to Toledo's program.

City of Ann Arbor staff has begun work with the Art Commission to develop a prioritization tool to be used during the Capital Improvement Plan process to identify and rank potential future "enhanced projects" in the CIP process. As this year is the second year of the two year budgeting cycle, there is very limited opportunity to identify and plan for "enhanced projects." However, this is an excellent time for the Arts Commission to agree on the procedures and tools to be used in determining and prioritizing "enhanced projects" in future budget cycles.

As the Arts Commission determines its means of selecting new projects, the concept of having the arts program contained in a nonprofit organization created for this purpose should be explored for feasibility. Additionally, the location of the arts program within Ann Arbor government should be reviewed.