

MEMORANDUM

TO: DDA Board

FROM: Amber Miller, DDA Capital Projects and Planning Manager

DATE: May 31, 2024

REGARDING: DDA *Elevate* Program

Background

Placemaking has long been a focus of the Ann Arbor DDA, ranging from major street changes to small art grants. Starting in Fiscal Year 2023, the DDA Budget included dollars for a public art program. To create program recommendations, the Capital Projects and Planning Team compiled case studies through consultant resources, online research, and interviews with other program leaders. Through this research, the staff recommendation shifted from a standalone focus on public art to a broader focus on placemaking.

Elevate Program Recommendations

A focused placemaking program supports the DDA goals for a vibrant and thriving local economy and inclusive community spaces. This direction was reinforced through our March 2024 Public Workshops – feedback encouraged enhancing downtown public spaces to support a more festive and inviting downtown environment. It was further reinforced through a City Council resolution on April 1st, 2024, directing the City Administrator to implement new processes and programs to support placemaking, including encouraging initiatives that create destination corridors for visitors and investment.

DDA staff presented the DDA's *Elevate* Program details at the [April](#) and [May 2024](#) Board Work Sessions. In addition, staff met with City Public Services Staff, the City Attorney responsible for public art contracts, and the Ann Arbor Art Center to refine the program details.

Program Goals - the DDA Program will *Elevate*:

- History and Storytelling
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Play, Interaction, and Creativity
- Placemaking

Program Funding Framework:

The following funding categories are meant as a guide, please see the program document for more details.

- Capital Project Funding: 1% of each TIF construction budget allocated for art and placemaking as part of that project.
- Annual Budget for Installations to Fill a Placemaking Gap (\$175K)

- \$125,000 from TIF annually for public art installations starting in 2024.
- \$50,000 from parking annually for parking system installations starting in 2025.

Year one

Staff will begin implementation after Board adoption; in our first year, dollars from fiscal years 2024 and 2025 can be used for implementation. Based on the discussion at the April 2024 Board Work Session, staff will begin by focusing on interaction, fun, and quick impact throughout downtown. In addition, staff will partner with the Ann Arbor Art Center on communications to help elevate awareness of the program. Since this is a new program, staff expect that we will learn from implementation and bring back recommendations to adapt the program after the first year.

Action Recommended: DDA staff recommend approval of the attached resolution –

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE DDA’S ELEVATE PROGRAM TO SUPPORT PLACEMAKING IN THE
DDA DISTRICT**