

CITY OF ANN ARBOR

ANN ARBOR PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

2025/26 Plan + Goals

Potential Projects & Desirable Goals

Ann Arbor Public Art Commission (AAPAC): Mary Thiefels (Chair), Sarah Fuller (Vice-Chair), Cynthia Harrison (City Council Liaison), Jamall Bufford, Allison Neal, Marietta Porter, John Kotarski, Peggy Leonard, and Fang ZHANG

I. Overview

Per [Chapter 24](#) of the [Ann Arbor Ordinance section 1:838 2B](#), “the oversight body shall by February 1 of each year, submit to City Council a plan detailing potential projects and desirable goals to be pursued in the next fiscal year, including enhanced projects and any proposed expenditure of donated grant, or other funds. The plan shall also include a recommendation as to which projects from the current Capital Improvements Plan are appropriate for designation as enhanced projects” The following is the information identified above. Each of these working groups works to achieve the tasks set forth in Chapter 24 of the [Ann Arbor Ordinance 1:838 \(2\)](#).

II. Working Groups + Goals/related ordinance

1) Capital Improvement Project Work Group

Sarah Fuller, Allison Neal, Mary Thiefels, & David Esau (non-voting member)

The Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Work Group would like to do the following in 2025/26:

- a. Foster a more regular and direct relationship with the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to better understand and support their public art projects;
- b. Continue to make recommendations to City Council for CIP projects that make sense for design enhancements

- c. Provide research and examples to help reinforce the importance of and show new ways/places public art has been seen/been successful in other cities.
- d. In the absence of the Design Review Board, identify opportunities to enhance “placemaking” (e.g. engage with the Planning department and/or the DDA).
 - ❖ 1:838 (B) The plan shall also include a recommendation as to which projects from the current Capital Improvements Plan are appropriate for designation as enhanced projects;
 - ❖ 1:838 (C) Work with city staff to determine which capital improvement projects are appropriate for designation as an enhanced project and what type and amount of public art may be appropriate for such projects;
 - ❖ 1:838 (D) Make recommendations, subject to the approval of the City Administrator, regarding disbursement of public art funds to acquire, produce, install, maintain, alter, relocate, or remove public art;

2) Communications Work Group & Outreach Work Group

Jamall Bufford, Sophie Grillet (non-voting) & Mary Thiefels, Marianetta Porter, & Sarah Fuller

In 2025-26, the Communications work group would like to achieve the following goals:

- a. Continue to promote the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission through continually updating the AAPAC website, Public Art Tour¹, and social media pages
- b. Explore the possibility of in-person Public Art Tours of the city’s collection
- c. Continue participating with the Ann Arbor District Library’s Summer Games to promote the city’s collection
- d. Continue updating the [Public Art Idea Book](#) to stimulate imagination and inspire Public Art and Design projects for inclusion with private developments. Include periodic presentations of ideas at Design Review Board meetings.

In 2025-26, the Outreach work group would like to achieve the following goals:

- a. Continue to engage with youth in the community to add non-voting youth to the commission.
- b. Continue to explore the AAPAC Leadership Forum to bring awareness to the AAPAC and collaborate on current and future projects.
- c. Continue to support and collaborate with local artists, arts organizations, and arts spaces to bring awareness of the AAPAC and forge strong relationships with local

¹ <https://www2.a2gov.org/GIS/MapAnnArbor/PublicArt/>

artists and the art-appreciating community (e.g. Ypsilanti Parks and Arts, pARTy, and NCECA).

- d. Communicate with local and possibly Statewide arts and cultural organizations to draft a statement of cultural freedom of expression, and on ways we might jointly protect and nurture the arts in the face of non-profit budget cuts and other headwinds, both proactively and after the fact. In other words, to prepare on behalf of the City Council, if they agree, a statement of principle for the Arts and Culture sector, attesting to our freedom from Federal Government interference and adhering to the First Amendment right of free speech in art, culture, historical research and interpretation, and that every voice may contribute peaceably.
- e. Connect with specific developers in town where appropriate and designate a liaison from AAPAC to participate in their public art and design project planning.

3) Fundraising Work Group

Allison Neal, Sarah Fuller, Fang Zhang, & Mary Thiefels

In 2025/6, the Fundraising work group would like to achieve the following goals:

- a. Continue to plan for stewardship of endowment - strategize around using interest earned by endowed funds for mini-grants and establish application protocols.
 - i. Hold first open application window for mini grants to support public art projects
- b. Work to identify additional funding sources for CIP enhancement projects

4) Nominations/Leadership Review Work Group

John Kotarski, Sarah Fuller, Jamall Bufford, & Mary Thiefels

This working group annually fills open positions to maintain a Commission of 9 members and reviews the Chair and Vice-Chair of AAPAC by facilitating a survey of the current commission members that establishes feedback on the leadership and makes nominations for leadership moving forward.

5) Special Projects Work Group

Jamall Bufford, Peggy Leonard, & Sophie Grillet (non-voting)

In 2025-26, the Special Projects work group would like to achieve the following goals:

- a. Continue to facilitate the biyearly Nomination and Selection process for the Golden Paintbrush Award in 2025.
 - i. Identify new annual physical award
- b. Expand the online virtual Public Art Tour to include non-city public artworks by including a link to the other art collections
- c. Find and incorporate more ways to include performance arts (dance, music etc.) in city celebrations and festivals.

III. Future Planning Cycles

1) Vision for sustainability of Art Projects in the City

IV. Conclusion

It is the intention of the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission to support the city's efforts to advise on, maintain, implement, and promote a world-class public art collection by completing the tasks as determined by Chapter 24, which are within the city ordinance and continue to focus on the goals identified above.