

# Promoting Public Art

The working group *Promoting Public Art* met May 1 at 10am at John Kotarski's house. John Kotarski, Allison Buck, Colleen Crowley, and Don Hammond were present.

The discussion centered around a report (see attached) by Don Hammond outlining communication components promoting public art in Ann Arbor. This report was based on previous discussions between John and Don as summarized in our March report (also see attached).

## Summary

Don's concept has three components: a small physical label at the site of the artwork; a printed card distributed by community partners; and an online webpage accessible using a smart phone or a computer.

QR codes placed on the label and on the card would direct users to expanded information on the web. This web information could be developed as needed.

All of these components would be aligned (branded) through graphic design.

The mock-up can be designed before the art inventory is complete. In fact, this concept will allow for cultural assets to be included as they are identified.

## Advantages

Ann Arbor owns considerable works of art as well as other cultural assets like historic exhibits and sustainability projects. The more residents and visitors understand details about these cultural assets the better the cultural assets will be seen as interconnected and part of a valuable enrichment to our public spaces.

Graphic design can align these seemingly disparate projects into a coherent menu of cultural assets.

The web and digital print elements can, by their nature, be edited with minimal disruption.

## First Step

Don recommends a professionally designed "proof of concept" mock-up as a first step. This would cost less than \$3,000 depending on what parts can be done by city staff.

## Final Cost

The cost of the final project would depend on how the city chooses to proceed. Sign making, web production, and printing could be done in-house following a professional design. Or, design and fabrication of the project could be outsourced. The design of these elements would

become part of Ann Arbor's cultural assets so careful attention should be made to the details of this promotional project.

#### Accessibility for Citizens with Disabilities

The three elements, label, web, and card can help make our cultural assets more accessible to individuals with disabilities.

#### Collaborators

The digital print component could be shared with CVB, restaurants, museum's, libraries, and any other institution that may want to include the material in their own print/web marketing. This could be easily done with digital elements.

Expanding cultural assets to include historical exhibits and sustainability projects can also build stakeholders for the program.

#### **Recommendations:**

We recommend staff:

1. Explore producing a "proof of concept" mock-up for an artwork label, printed card, and webpage either in-house or outsourced to local graphic designers.
2. Evaluate the advantages/disadvantages of producing the final elements either in-house or outsourced to local fabricators.

# Promoting Public Art

The working group *promoting public art* met January 23 at noon at Café Verde in the Peoples Food Coop. John Kotarski and Allison Buck attended. Colleen Crowley had a work conflict.

This was an organizational meeting and it was agreed that John Kotarski would lead the group by identifying meeting dates/places/times, creating an agenda, and reporting deliberations to the art commission.

It was decided that the inventory of artwork currently being assembled by Venita was essential before any effort could be directed to promote the art. We need to know what and where Ann Arbor's cultural assets are located before we recommend a course of action.

However, promoting Ann Arbor's public art would benefit from a strategic concept which we can explore before the completion of the inventory. This concept is similar to what was done for the Ann Arbor Downtown Historical Exhibits. Don Hammond was the graphic designer for the Downtown Historical Exhibits and John was tasked to reach out to Mr. Hammond so he might recommend a first step.

There was also discussion about the value of asking a public relations representative to address the art commission to suggest ways commissioners might engage public criticism. The challenge is would this be perceived as strategies for conflict resolution or talking points for media spin.

## Meeting with Don Hammond:

John met with Don Hammond February 11 to discuss how the art commission might approach our goal of identifying and promoting public art.

### Background:

Don is the graphic designer for the Downtown Historic Street Exhibit Program. He also has considerable experience working with UM, DDA, and local businesses.

### He recommended:

#### 1. Define the project and its goals

The value of an overarching program concept: creating a mission statement, aligning public art with other cultural elements, connecting strategic partners, as well as short and a long-range goals.

#### 2. Define the process of the project implementation

Launching the project in phases: design charrette, pilot project, select rollout, etc.

#### 3. Define and expand the meaning of "public art"

Expand the definition of public art to include design projects that exist as part of our physical environment, such as alternative energy projects, stormwater management projects, wayfinding and placemaking, pedestrian safety, etc.

This attempts to align the cultural elements of public spaces, including ecological and sustainability projects, within an overall coherent program that recognizes the diverse array of public art and design projects in Ann Arbor. Promoting public art and other projects within a coherent overall program could create stakeholder synergy.

This could be done with simple ID tags leading to online digital narratives. Expanding a promotional campaign that incorporated public art with wayfinding, alt energy, and pedestrian safety would promote a type of thoughtful design for Ann Arbor's public spaces moving forward. This could leverage stakeholders who might not be as enthusiastic if we just limited the promotional campaign to public "fine art"—paintings, murals, mosaics, sculpture, etc.

The physical ID markers and the online portal for all public art and design projects would look very similar. This expansion to a concept that includes all examples of public art and design would also serve to reinforce our mission of incorporating creative design in municipal construction projects.

#### 4. Collaborate with educational institutions

Connect with educational institutions like U-M Stamps School of Art & Design to investigate possible collaboration. Faculty-led student teams could plan and design media elements that would be incorporated into our promotional campaign for public art. These elements would be real-world projects published to an online portal promoting Ann Arbor's public art and design. Real world projects embedded into class assignments is the gold standard for instructional design.

#### 5. Plan efficient and appropriate on-site identification

Minimizing the physical labels to title, artist, number, and a QR code. This QR code would keep the physical label simple but allow for a portal to an online explanation/presentation/encyclopedia. This online digital media could be edited and expanded as needed. Since most of the work under this concept would be digital, it could be built in phases without noticeable changes to the physical label.

#### 6. Planning for professional involvement

Front loading the cost of the project as an initial design fee could be attractive to a business (e.g. Duo Security) or a foundation (e.g. AA Community Foundation) as a major donation while locating the ongoing administration and production of media projects to a educational partner. Municipal oversight could be distributed throughout existing staff. This might be a way of managing costs to get professional results without burdening the City's general fund.

Don is willing to offer a simple outline of how we might move forward but it will not be a fully developed plan. To get a professional plan we need to pay a professional fee; which may be a part of our recommendation to staff.

More discussion will be held in the working group before making a recommendation.

**Recommendation:** We do not have any recommendations to make at this time.

: 5.6.2019

## Public art program components

The program to identify and promote public art in Ann Arbor should include two major components: an identifying label or tag that is placed in close proximity to the work of art, and city-hosted web pages that are reached via a QR code on the labels as well as through normal internet access. Print information may be valuable in the form of rack cards or pamphlets that are also provided online as downloadable and printable PDFs.

### Label

Exact size to be determined, but final dimensions and placement should be chosen to maximize accessibility wherever possible. Labels can include some or all of the following information:

- Name of work of art or installation
- Name of artist/designer
- Date of creation/installation
- Media/materials
- Dimensions of art
- QR code readable by smart phones and tablets
- Includes city logo



### Web pages

The program web pages can reside within the city of Ann Arbor website, and be administered and updated by city staff. The web pages can include the following:

Home or main page:

- Text: program overview
- Link(s) to projects, perhaps organized by type and/or location
- Link to list of artists
- Link to location map of works of art

Work of art pages:

- Name of work of art
- Artist name
- Description of work of art
- Date created and/or installed
- Media/materials and dimensions

### Print information

Print information can be provided via small-quantity digital printing and as downloadable/printable PDFs available online. Can be as simple as a single card that fits inside a typical counter rack and #10 envelope; could be a multiple-panel pamphlet if more space is needed for information

- Content would include program overview and description of project types covered in program
- Could mention notable artists who have created public art
- Image of label and web pages included to help audience identify main program components