

Ann Arbor Public Art Commission Annual Report for 2016-2017

Overview

The City of Ann Arbor's public art program has made considerable strides in the last year. We have added 4 new members, developed evaluation criteria for CIP projects, identified 11 additional CIP projects for enhancement, and hosted 8 presenters at our televised meetings.

This CIP evaluation process will allow staff to better incorporate public art into municipal construction projects. Public art incorporated into construction projects can be an important and cost-effective part of our public art program. We should build our cultural infrastructure as we build our physical infrastructure.

We also believe education is important. We need to better understand why creative placemaking improves our city. This is why we have requested our meetings be televised and why we invited presenters to discuss the opportunities, challenges and economic benefits of public art. We are building a better informed art commission and hopefully a better informed community.

Finally, citizen volunteers can develop a public art program only so far. Professional staff leadership is necessary to sustain our accomplishments. We encourage Council to recognize the value of staff support as a cost-effective measure that sustains the hard work of volunteer art commissioners.

Accomplishments

New Members

These new commissioners have volunteered energy and perspective in service to a more creative Ann Arbor. We hope you appreciate their civic effort as much as we do.

1. Allison Buck – Ann Arbor Film Festival, Operations Manager
2. Colleen Crawley – Motawi Tile, Senior Project Designer
3. David Esau – Cornerstone Design, Principal Architect
4. David Zinn - Artist

Education/promotion

- Televised meetings in Council Chambers
- Adapted social media for public art promotion
- Televised Meeting Presenters:
 - A. Our first group discussed Local Public Art and included speakers that were local Public Art Artists/Administrators.
 1. Omari Rush – Ann Arbor Art Center, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
 2. Mary Thiefels – Tree Town Murals, Principal Artist

3. Marsha Chamberlin – Art Consultant
 4. Adriana Zardus – Festifools, Producer
- B. The second group discussed the economic impact of the arts and arts funding.
1. Laura Berarducci – Visit Ann Arbor/Ypsi Real, CTA, Director of Marketing
 2. John Bracey – Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, Executive Director
 3. Jillian Rosen – Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Director of Community Investment
- C. The third presentation featured a group of installation artists.
1. Arbor Lase – a local group of laser artists who plan to “paint” Tower Plaza with laser art during next year’s Art Fair. This is a self-funded public/private collaboration.

Projects in Progress

- Council Chambers art gallery
- Access Cover artwork (CIP)
- Stadium Boulevard retaining wall artwork (CIP)
- Relocation of Coleman Jewett Memorial Chair (CIP)
- Contract extension for Victoria Fuller’s Canoe Fan

CIP Evaluation Criteria (submitted and waiting Council approval)

Per Chapter 24 of the City Code, the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission is tasked with making recommendations to City Council for evaluation criteria that can be used by staff or others to suggest capital investment projects which may be suitable for enhancement with public art. Our recommendations are as follows; they take the form of progressive steps to narrow down the long CIP list to a more manageable list that can be evaluated in more detail.

We have tried to make the criteria as objective as possible. However, we hasten to note that this is still a subjective process, and evaluators should be open to other suggestions. Examples would be input from staff who know the projects better than we do and may have ideas about how art can fit into designs and funding models, or from efforts to distribute public art widely across the city or to serve other goals. These criteria guided our recent effort to suggest enhancements to the 2018-2023 CIP, but were not completely determinative.

Written criteria to evaluate City of Ann Arbor Capital Improvements Projects for enhancement with public art:

First Pass:

Projects which are to occur in the first two years of the CIP should be omitted, unless there are special circumstances suggesting inclusion. Projects scheduled in the first two years are already into the budgeting and planning phases, and inclusion of enhancements would be unlikely.

Second Pass:

The following will generally not be considered for enhancement:

1. Projects which are primarily studies, assessments, master plans, or similar documents (although the documents should be prepared with any eye to inclusion of public art in whatever potential project is being studied).
2. Minor building renovations and maintenance.
3. Street and/or sidewalk repair or replacement, except for any extensive retaining walls, guardrails, and/or street lighting as described above.
4. Utility work, including replacement of water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer piping, but not including water towers.
5. Projects which are primarily replacements of building systems (mechanical, electrical, elevators, generators, etc.).
6. Projects which are purely purchases of land, buildings, or capital equipment, but do not yet include development or renovation of those assets.

Third Pass:

Projects shall be large enough (at least \$500,000, probably \$1 million+) to support an enhancement for selection and purchase of artwork. Exceptions would be when the artwork can be incorporated at minimal extra expense, and/or when it serves an important need such as allowing public art to reach underserved neighborhoods, or acting as a strong community- building project. Also consider funding sources: projects mostly funded by federal or state grants (utility work, etc.) probably have little opportunity for enhancement, while projects funded by dedicated city millages (streets, parks) are more likely candidates.

The remaining projects shall be reviewed in more detail, and the following shall be strongly considered for enhancement:

1. New building construction, additions, and substantial renovations, except where the work will have minimal public exposure.
 - a. Examples of projects having minimal public exposure would include city maintenance facilities, water and sewer processing facilities, and jails.
 - b. Fire station projects could be considered candidates for enhancement, especially on the building exterior or site, due to occasional public events and civic prominence.
2. Park construction and substantial renovations, such as to play areas, picnic shelters, and/or groupings of five or more picnic tables.
3. Streetscape projects.
4. Water tower construction and/or repainting.

5. Bridge replacement and/or substantial renovation.
6. Street and/or sidewalk repair or replacement, specifically related to any extensive retaining walls (30' or longer of at least 3' high), guardrails (30' or longer), and/or street lighting (10 or more poles).
7. Pedestrian trails, bridges, underpasses, and similar projects.
8. Publicly visible aspects of projects that would not otherwise be considered, may be considered where enhancement of already-included work can be accomplished for no more than 10% additional cost per item; an example would be manhole covers which can be cast in a city-specific (but repetitively used) design.
9. Storm sewer projects, to the extent that they include extensive visible landscape enhancement (ponds, berms, etc.).

Priority will be given to projects (and specific artwork locations within projects) which meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Are visible and accessible to the public.
2. Are located in areas with heavy pedestrian or other non-motorized transportation traffic, or...
3. Are located in areas of the city which are relatively underserved by existing public art pieces, or...
4. Are located such that the artwork would create or enhance a gateway into the City.
5. Are funded or are reasonably anticipated to be funded in the near future.
6. Are not yet fully designed so that art can be integrated into the design.
7. The potential artwork will contribute to placemaking (making an otherwise nondescript space more interesting and/or memorable), and/or...
8. The potential artwork will contribute to wayfinding (provides direction to another site, service, or feature). Wayfinding may also be enhanced through placemaking that provides landmarks along the way to other destinations.

CIP Recommended Enhancements (submitted and waiting Council approval)

Per Chapter 24 of the City Code, one of the primary responsibilities of the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission is to make recommendations to City Council for capital investment projects which may be suitable for enhancement with public art. After extensive work with City staff, to whom we offer thanks for their time and input, we present the following list for your consideration.

Our understanding is that once this report is formally accepted by City Council (and not just received), the acceptance will provide staff with authority to include the art enhancement in the project budget as it moves forward toward design and construction. As such, we strongly encourage your acceptance of this report. There are, of course, numerous other opportunities to refine the project budgets including the enhancement amounts as projects move toward reality.

We fully understand that this list is based on very limited information in the current Capital Improvements Plan. Some of the projects will not move ahead; others will end up with funding sources with which enhancement is not possible. For some projects, it will be determined once we know more about the scope that there is no place for art, or that it would not be widely enough seen to make sense for funding. That said, all of the following seem, based on what we know now, to be appropriate for enhancement. Where we have thoughts on an appropriate enhancement, and/or a possible budget for the enhancement, we have included that with each item. Budgets are in most cases based on about 1% of the project budget without enhancement unless we felt a smaller amount was sufficient for the project, or a larger amount was needed to provide a reasonable enhancement.

The following projects were included in a previous report, and we recommend they be continued with enhancement:

1. CIP Project Number UT-SN-16-12, Sanitary Manhole Lid and Sealing, and UT-SN-10-05, Manhole Rehabilitation Project; both were recommended for the custom manhole covers; our understanding is that this project is in process.
2. TR-AT-13-01, Annual Sidewalk Repair Program, was recommended for artistic stamps in the concrete. We understand there may be technical issues to work out, but if possible would like to see this proceed. A 1% enhancement budget would be about \$10,000 per year for upcoming years.
3. TR-SC-14-07 Fifth Avenue Street/streetscape project: Our discussions with staff suggest that enhancement funding would likely be for relocation and sheltering of the Jewett Chairs (bronze sculptures). We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$50,000 be added to the \$2,250,000 project budget.
4. TR-SC-06-05, Detroit Street Brick Road Pavement Reconstruction: Possibly custom cast bricks or a design created with the pavers. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$50,000 be added to the \$3,000,000 project budget.
5. TR-AT-01-07, Arboretum/Gallup Underpass. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$150,000 be added to the \$2,200,000 project budget.
6. MF-SW-06-03, New Drop-off station. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$55,000 (1%) be added to the roughly \$5,500,000 project budget.
7. TR-AT-14-07, Ann Arbor Station Construction (Amtrak). We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$650,000 (1%) be added to the \$65,000,000 project budget.

New projects we recommend for enhancement are:

6. MF-CB-14-01: Fire Station #2 Reconstruction. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$30,000 (1%) be added to the \$3,000,000 project budget.

7. MF-CB-18-03: New Fire Station A. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$43,000 (1%) be added to the \$4,350,000 project budget.
8. MF-CB-18-05: New Fire Station B. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$27,000 (1%) be added to the \$2,700,000 project budget.
9. MF-PR-10-01: Playgrounds and Neighborhood Parks. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$5,000 be added to each of the annual \$100,000 project budgets for upcoming years.
10. TR-AP-99-11: Terminal Expansion at A2 Airport. The scope of the project is apparently still to be determined, but if it involves a public area the possibilities for flight-themed artwork seem worth pursuing. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$20,000 be added to the \$776,000 project budget.
11. TR-AT-18-22: Expansion of the Border to Border trail in the Fuller/Maiden Lane area. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$50,000 be added to the \$1,750,000 project budget.
12. TR-SC-08-01: Intersection improvement of Fuller/Maiden Lane area near the Medical Center. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$100,000 be added to the roughly \$4,600,000 project budget.
13. TR-AT-10-38, Connector; TR-AT-10-22, Downtown Wally Station. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$500,000 be added to the \$143,360,000 project budget.
14. TR-AT-08-03, Plymouth Road Wally Station. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$50,000 be added to the \$920,000 project budget.
15. TR-OT-18-11, TR-OT-18-10, TR-OT-18-08, TR-OT-18-02, TR-OT-18-12, TR-OT-18-07, and TR-OT-18-13: Downtown streetscape projects. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of 1% be added to each project budget.
16. UT-WS-16-17: Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project. We understand the plant itself is not open to the public for security reasons, but art on or by the fence around the plant could be a welcome improvement to the neighborhood. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$150,000 be added to the \$82,400,000 project budget.
17. TR-SC-18-02 and TR-SC-18-19: Two phases of road reconstruction of the Springwater neighborhood in southeast Ann Arbor (the project also includes multiple other utility projects). This is a relatively modest income area of Ann Arbor that would not be served by other public art. We recommend a preliminary enhancement budget of \$65,000 be added to the project budget; this appears to be about 1% of the coordinated road and utility projects.

We look forward to working with City staff to help these projects move forward.

Respectively submitted, Ann Arbor Public Art Commission