



Legislation Text

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Report on Public Art at the Ann Arbor Bridges Reconstruction Public Forum

The public art project at the Ann Arbor Bridges Reconstruction held a public forum in conjunction with the visit to Ann Arbor by the four artist finalists. The artists attended a walkthrough of the site during the afternoon of April 1st and later in the evening attended a public forum at the Ann Arbor Senior Center. The meeting format was an open house and was dubbed as an event to “meet the artists.”

The meeting’s format was modeled after an open house, such one as an art gallery might offer, and as such, did not include a presentation produced for everyone attending the meeting. Attendees received information from multiple sources and were asked to provide feedback and input in several different ways.

The Public Art Administrator welcomed attendees at the entrance and gave an overview of how they could participate in the meeting. A slideshow of the all four artist’s past work was being screened and looping in the center of the room. Each artist had organized a display of their body of work at four individual locations. Residents spoke directly to the artists about their past artwork and work in public spaces.

Public input was collected in three different ways: written upon a feedback form that was given to residents as they signed in; three display boards were set-up to accept written answers to the questions on display; and the artists communicated with residents one-on-one.

The feedback form and the display boards included the following questions:

- How does the community interact with, or use, the location?
- What do you like, or dislike, about the specific areas that are proposed for use with the public art installation?
- What do the artists need to know about the city?
- What do the artists need to know about the location of the installation?
- What do the artists need to know about the community?

Written feedback included:

- References to the student population, Pioneer and U-M students, who are engaged in the area

- Mention of the view from the bridge of the beautiful sunset
- The renovations to the Crisler Center and the scoreboard at Michigan Stadium
- The traffic on football game days
- Graffiti needed to be considered
- Bikers and joggers regularly use the site

Upon speaking with the artists immediately following the event, they all were very appreciative of the opportunity to speak with the community about their artwork and about the project. They each said they received several suggestions and general feedback that they found valuable that they would consider when working on their proposed designs.

There were approximately 25 people who attended the event, including members of the Public Art Commission. Nineteen people signed in.

The artists' finalists for the public art project are:

- Vulcan Alkanoglu, nominated in 2006 for the Young Architect of the Year Award in the UK and is a faculty member at Southern California Institute of Architecture.
- Sheila Klein, a Pacific Northwest artist who designed *Underground Girl*, a subway station in Hollywood, in 2000, that continues to be recognized as an award winning artwork.
- Rebar Group / Matt Passmore, a California firm, recognized as inventing *PARK(ing) Day*, a temporary event that transforms metered parking spaces into a park.
- Catherine Widgery, a Massachusetts artist who has created several works with public infrastructure, including bridges, and has been recognized multiple times for creating an outstanding public artwork by the Americans for the Arts.

The meeting was promoted using: direct mailing of postcards to the surrounding residents; an email to the A2 Bridges GovDelivery list; an email to the Public Art GovDelivery list; an email to the Lower Burns Park Neighborhood list; a post on the A2 Bridges and AAPAC website; a post to the AAPAC Facebook and Twitter account; and a press release was forwarded to the media by email.

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