



To: Mayor and Council

Agenda Item #: V. B.

From: Jordan Gilgenbach, Communications Coordinator

Action

Date: Aug. 19, 2014

Discussion

Subject: July "Speak Up, Edina" Report

Information

Action Requested:

Receive report on July 2014 "Speak Up, Edina" discussion about spending on public art

Information / Background:

Since June 2012, the City of Edina has used the online engagement website, www.SpeakUpEdina.org, to collect ideas and opinions from residents. One of the City Council's six strategic priorities for 2014-2015 is Communication and Engagement: "To clearly understand community needs, expectations and opinions, the City will consistently seek the input of a broad range of stakeholders in meaningful and interactive communication." A goal of that is to host a monthly discussion on www.SpeakUp.Edina.org. In July 2014, the discussion topic centered on public spending on public art. In this online discussion, the City posed the following questions:

- How should permanent public art be purchased? Would you support the City spending public money on public art throughout the City?
- Where would you like to see public art expanded?
- If the City purchased public art, how much should the City spend: per piece? Per year?

The discussion was open for comments between July 1 and Aug. 1. During that time, 34 comments were made. Additionally, 645 people visited the site 890 times, garnering 3,288 page views. About half of all visitors to the site during that period were from Edina (according to their internet provider).

The discussion was promoted through various means, including a press release, Facebook, Twitter and NextDoor posts, City Extra messages and direct outreach.

Attached are the comments on this topic.

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This Discussion channel is currently closed.

Discussion: [Spending on Public Art](#)

The City is interested to find out how the community feels about spending on public art.

Note: The City is not proposing a change at this time. By using this online discussion, feedback on topics will be compiled and given to the City Council as informational only.

3 Topics 34 Answers Closed 2014-08-01

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Purchasing Art](#)

How should permanent public art be purchased? Would you support the City sending public money on public art throughout the City?

22 Responses

22 Responses



[Tom Brewitz](#) about 1 month ago

City budgets are supported by taxpayers. A public installation, while enjoyed by all, could nonetheless be supported and maybe should be funded by private donations.

When the public has a say so into the spending of their tax dollars, at least in my experience, they most often lean toward budgets that do not affect their bottom line. They may see projects outside the necessary duties as government as grandiose, extravagant or extraneous and exceeding a city's responsibility and what they wish to pay for.

When a piece of art is needed for a public space, involving the community as much as possible in the decision process would be my recommendation. They are likely to have an opinion on; artwork selection, funding options, artists chosen (local or not), longevity of the art itself, and even the meaning of the work.

Again in my experience, objections occur regarding how city funds are spent wisely. Even non-artistic endeavors are seen as exceeding essential services and objections are raise as to how their tax dollars are used to the fullest without waste or worse.

Involve the community, seek outside funding, attempt to please as many community members as possible and thank the taxpayers if their money is used.

4 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Tom Brewitz



[Diane Lacy](#) about 1 month ago

The arts in general are important to every community. Just look at what Bloomington has done to fund their endeavors. The use of both public and private funds is essential to fund art, but when public money is used we the people also need to feel like we are in some way part of the selection process.

3 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Diane Lacy



[Betty Hemstad](#) about 1 month ago

Support for the arts will tell you a lot about the priorities of a city. Many cities across America recognize the role that art plays in the "good life" and every new project undertaken has a % for the arts built right in the original contracts...no discussion necessary.

Volunteers in the art community should not be asked to search for the funds to pay for public art. Ideally, Edina would have an annual art budget just as we have budgets for playgrounds and other activities that we deem essential.

We should pride ourselves that through Public Art we provide inspiration and reflection to nourish the whole person--body, mind and spirit for all our citizens and guests visiting our city.

3 Supports



[Matt Glatzel](#) about 1 month ago

"Volunteers in the art community should not be asked to search for the funds to pay for public art. Ideally, Edina would have an annual art budget just as we have budgets for playgrounds and other activities that we deem essential."

Agree 100%. This should be a municipal budget item, like the parks system, that does seek citizen input, but ultimately makes their own decisions about how to manage public budget and private donations.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Matt Glatzel

comment...

Reply to Betty Hemstad



[Barbara La Vallée](#) about 1 month ago

There are many options for buying art for our permanent collection. Generous donors lead the list of which there are many and for whom we are most grateful - too many to note here! That said, I would definitely support the City spending public money on public art where appropriate. There are several new initiatives - like the Phase Four expansion of The Promenade scheduled for Spring 2015 and redesign of Pentagon Park, a multi-year plan - which are perfect examples. The Promenade Phase Four expansion calls for a water feature with two ponds joined by a narrow brook with two or three new sculpture pods. An educational component about storm water and rain garden for youth and adults to learn more about the importance of water in our eco system will enhance The Promenade and provide a destination for classrooms and groups to learn. It would certainly be an enhancement and appropriate use of city funds to include the purchase of two or three smaller sculptures to highlight that expansion which will undoubtedly draw more visitors to our City. I would love to see the return of Oxymoron by Bruce Stillman, the kinetic piece which was the first place People's Choice Award Winner in 2012 and was a perfect cornerstone to The Promenade. The park deserves this signature piece. I agree with Betty Hemstad about the value of a Percentage for Arts Ordinance. See more comments below.

4 Supports

comment...

Reply to Barbara La Vallée



[Joel Stegner](#) about 1 month ago

What Edina is lacking is a place to go to enjoy the all the arts - an art center - all year long. Outdoor art realistically get enjoyed only during the day and when the weather is nice. Hopkins and Bloomington have both taken this step and so should Edina. .

1 Support



[Jordan Gilgenbach](#) admin about 1 month ago

Hi Joel! Thanks for your comments! The Edina Art Center has a gallery that features several shows throughout the year, in addition to having a store and class offerings (www.EdinaArtCenter.com). Does that fit the desire for an indoor space to enjoy art?

0 Supports



[Joel Stegner](#) about 1 month ago

I'm very aware of the Edina Art Center. I'm also interested in music, theatre, dance and the other arts - a larger performing arts center. Edina can spend millions on sports facilities - it is time for the arts supporters of the community to band together to create the kind of facility our neighbors in Hopkins and Bloomington enjoy.

1 Support



[Jordan Gilgenbach](#) admin about 1 month ago

Ah! Got it. I figured you were familiar with the Art Center. Thanks for clarifying! A place for performing arts is a missing piece in Edina's art scene.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach

comment...

Reply to Joel Stegner



[Chip Jones](#) about 1 month ago

I believe that the city should focus on providing a showcase for sculpture, but NOT purchase those pieces. I would provide space for sculptures and continue the current review process before a piece is accepted for public display. Doing it this way would ensure that the collection would be rotated and refreshed every year or two, which I feel would create a much more interesting showcase throughout the years.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Chip Jones



[Arnold Bigbee](#) about 1 month ago

Public Art is encouraged by the City with support from businesses, residents and visitors. Continuing the public contributions recognition as tax deductible via the Edina Community iFoundation is essential. Perhaps an annual recognition of donors would be the best contribution for the City to make as its contribution.

2 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Arnold Bigbee



[Lois Ring](#) about 1 month ago

With all the new construction going on in the city include a % in the building project for public art.

2 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Lois Ring



[Heidi Dorfmeister](#) about 1 month ago

I feel there should be a variety of sources for public art to include a percentage dedicated to art, private donations, and grant opportunities. The art pieces on loan (eg. Promenade) need to have more money attached to cover artists expenses. More locations for public art need to be designated.

0 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Heidi Dorfmeister



[Phil Johnson](#) 30 days ago

The current funding via utility bill added donations needs to be hyped periodically. Heidi and Lois have a good idea. A very small percentage of construction spending dedicated to enhancing our community would yield significant sums for public art and would benefit those individuals and companies as well.

0 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Phil Johnson



[Deb McKnight](#) 24 days ago

I like the current practice of displaying pieces temporarily but I'd also like to see some public funding for permanent purchases. The number and placement of purchased pieces could be decided as part of the larger process of, for example, creating a park or developing the promenade, etc.

0 Supports



[Jordan Gilgenbach](#) admin 19 days ago

Thanks for your comment, Deb! Barbara made a good point above about the next phase of the Promenade relating to permanent public art. To your point, it's also nice to have the temporary pieces, so public spaces remain fresh and every changing. It's finding that balance between permanent and temporary public art.

0 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach](#)

comment...

[Reply to Deb McKnight](#)



[Sue Keator](#) 20 days ago

comment...Art should be purchased with private funds only. Garden Council, Edina Foundation, etc. No tax money should be used.

1 Support



[Jordan Gilgenbach](#) admin 19 days ago

Thanks for weighing in, Sue!

0 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach](#)

comment...

[Reply to Sue Keator](#)



[Chris Bremer](#) 20 days ago

I support a budget for art, including a percentage of construction costs for public buildings. I would like to see more public art all across Edina, not just in neighborhoods where people can more easily afford it. I am not sure where the line is between art and beautification, but we need both.

0 Supports

comment . . .

Reply to Chris Bremer



Judith Felker 19 days ago

I agree with those who want public art supported with private funds and foundations. Though Edina has many whose earnings exceed their needs, who can well afford higher taxation for public art, there are also many who cannot, and higher taxation could drive them from our city. I would much rather public funds used to support cleaner air through wind and solar energy sources, with subsidies for solar panels on roof tops and driveways.

0 Supports

comment . . .

Reply to Judith Felker



Thomas x at July 31, 2014 at 4:53pm CDT

I think the city has an obligation to care about quality of life, including all the usual amenities like snow plowing, public safety and parks and recreation. Recreation must include both physical activity and emotional/cultural/artistic activity. The emphasis here is on activity. In my view it would be a mistake to focus only on "permanent public art". The occasional sculpture here and there, while certainly nice to look at (in most cases), does nothing for the quality of life unless there is life around it. What we need is a more holistic approach, don't just look at funding a sculpture, fund a sculpture and make sure there is space (and money) to create a lively community around it.

Here are a few examples: The city invited a few residents to participate in the development of the next phase of the promenade. That effort led to a design that is much more than "a bunch of sculptures", it is a place where people can gather and stay a while, meeting each other, communicating. Sculptures can be bought, rented, leased or donated later, more importantly, there is room for community life to happen in the space.

The other example is the current "Music in the Park" series in Rosland Park. For three Friday nights between two and three hundred people have gathered in Rosland Park to listen to music organized by the Arts and Culture Commission, with the generous support of the city. A piece of "permanent public art" would not have elicited the same level of interaction and community get together.

So what is my point? By all means should the city fund public art, but let's not stop at the hardware, it takes software to make things come to life.

For those interested, here is a view at public art that goes far beyond the traditional view reflected in the question here.

<http://publicartnow.com/2013/12/12/the-new-rules-of-public-art/>

0 Supports



Jordan Gilgenbach admin at August 01, 2014 at 8:45am CDT

Thomas, thanks for your comments about including all forms of public art, like performance or music.

0 Supports

comment . . .

Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach

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Discussion: Spending on Public Art

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3 Topics 34 Answers Closed 2014-08-01

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Locations](#)

Public art is currently displayed along the Edina Promenade, at 50th & France, Grandview Square Park and at Edina City Hall. Where else would you like to see public art expanded?

7 Responses

7 Responses



[Betty Hemsfad](#) about 1 month ago

Edina is encouraging areas in our city to form neighborhood associations. Why not suggest that each area might think of a piece of art to define their neighborhood? Could the City provide matching funds or a percentage of the cost to encourage action? If this plan were implemented, you would have each neighborhood becoming involved at the grass roots level in the art selection for art in their own neighborhood.

I'd like to see panels of art installed on the railroad bridge crossing 44th street at Brookside Avenue. Or would it be difficult to get the approval from the railroad? The art would not weaken the bridge in any way. It would have the possibility of turning rusty panels into a thing of beauty.

3 Supports

Reply to Betty Hemstad



[Barbara La Valleur](#) about 1 month ago

Public Art can also be viewed at the Senior Center (numerous paintings, photos and the small glass sculpture The Wave by David Wight), Edinborough Park (The Otter by Jeffrey Birch donated by Ron & Betty Hemstad), Centennial Lakes Park (the iconic Pinecone by Marcia McEachron commissioned by John and Jean Hedberg plus Reflecting on Friendship by Nick Legeros and donated by Dick and Suzie Crockett), outside the Edina Library, the two-story sculpture installed in the 1950's inside Southdale, the Edina Art Center (Adama Sow's mosaic fountain and the Phoenix by Tom Montemurro), the bike mosaics on the York Avenue Bridge and more. While not officially in the public art collection, if you drive Industrial Boulevard, you'll discover many modern sculptures in front of several businesses. As Chair of Public Art Edina and someone who is passionate about art and the City in which I live, I've attended numerous meetings - public and private - which include public art in plans for, to give two examples, the Southdale Hospital Emergency expansion and the Pentagon Park complex. I'd love to see creative bike racks, benches, artistic directional signage to Centennial Lakes, Edinborough Park, The Promenade, Grandview Square Park and 50th & France sculptures etc. Statistics show that public art enhances the quality of life in a community.

1 Support



[Jordan Gilgenbach](#) admin about 1 month ago

Barbara, Thanks for your comments! Edina is very fortunate to have so many places to enjoy public art, and have businesses, new and old, that want to incorporate them into their business. Thanks for chiming in!

0 Supports

Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach

Reply to Barbara La Valleur



[Arnold Bigbee](#) about 1 month ago

As we begin to see art everywhere, more citizens will become aware of its presence - and importance. For instance, what if the City developed an "Art Partnership" with the Edina school district. Donors may have an opportunity to support (adopt?) a school arts initiative. Imagine an entire generation of our kids who experience being on their own "Public Art Committee" beginning in elementary school! That investment could pay huge dividends for future generations.

1 Support



[Jordan Gilgenbach](#) admin about 1 month ago

Arnold, very interesting comment. After reading it, I began to think about how different the City would be if all the public art didn't exist -- very bland! It's definitely something I take for granted. Incorporating public art into the school curriculum is a great idea. Thanks for sharing!

0 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach](#)

comment...

[Reply to Arnold Bigbee](#)



[Lois Ring](#) about 1 month ago

With the refurbishing of the city parking ramps - wonderful wall art could add color. A children's group could be formed - perhaps through the library or the schools.

0 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Lois Ring](#)



[Joel Stegner](#) 21 days ago

No one has mentioned City Hall. What more obvious way for the city to show that it values art. It could be located at the front entrance, in the Council Chambers and throughout the building.

0 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Joel Stegner](#)

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Topic: [Amount to Spend](#)

If the City purchased public art, how much should the City spend: per piece? Per year?

5 Responses

5 Responses



[Lois Ring](#) about 1 month ago

comment...This question depends on the quality of art. If the City would raise the loan payment tot he artist to \$1,000 the art would be of higher quality. \$500 merely covers the expense of the artist for install.

1 Support

comment . . .

Reply to Lois Ring



[Diane Lacy](#) about 1 month ago

Funding quality and durable art work should be the criteria. A limited number of pieces should be purchased based on the amount of funds raised yearly. If funding is inadequate in one year, make no purchases and roll over the funds into the following year. Try to choose big bold pieces that bring conversation when viewed by the public.

2 Supports

comment . . .

Reply to Diane Lacy



[Barbara La Valleur](#) about 1 month ago

I would not limit nor qualify the plan as a per piece per year. Currently, the City supports Public Art with a \$10,000 budget. Typically, we have 10-12 new sculptures in our annual rotating exhibit. That money is used to give \$500 stipends to artist whose sculptures are chosen; they must install, de-install and have their sculpture on display for one year. If they are one of the top three People's Choice Award winners, they receive \$1,000, \$750 or \$500 plus an invitation to display their sculptures for an additional year for which they are paid a stipend of \$500. Another budget item is plaques for each new sculpture. Both Public Art Edina and the Arts and Culture Commission, of which public art is a working group, are researching and discussing the possibility of a Percentage for Art Program in the form of a City Ordinance. Many cities in the country (St. Paul and Duluth in Minnesota) and indeed throughout the world, find this is a smart, efficient and effective way to fund public art projects and have had ordinances for years. Typically, a percentage for art program is managed by the municipal finance department. In St. Paul, the City Council "believes that planning and development decisions should give aesthetic and social value equal weight with any project's functional and economic values. Public art strengthens public places and enhances and promotes St. Paul's identity as a livable and creative city and desirable place to live, work and visit." The ordinance established the principle that artists should be involved from the earliest stages of conceptual planning, and continue through project design and implementation. This funding model is municipal only which means that for all capital projects funded by eligible sources resulting in a property to be operated by the City, 1% of eligible project costs is used for public art. An additional one-half of 1% of City's annual capital improvement budget pays for maintenance. There are other cities who have a public and private percentage for arts ordinance.

1 Support

comment . . .

Reply to Barbara La Valleur



[Matt Glatzel](#) about 1 month ago

Barbara's comments are spot on. I would recommend upping the ante a little bit though. The City of Seattle sets aside 1% of their annual budget for public art. This has led to the much lauded Seattle Sculpture Garden, Japanese Gardens and several other large-scale installations that bring life and character to

