



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – October 14, 2020 Agenda Item 3

Voting Session

Resolution Releasing the FY21 Public Arts funding

Recommended Council Action

Approve the Resolution

Context with Key Issues

In the first Budget Amendment for FY21, Ordinance 2020-23, Council included the following language: “the Public Arts funds will not be expended without Council discussion and direction.” On September 23, the Arts and Humanities coordinator, Brendan Smith, presented the Public Art Works plan, a new initiative to incorporate public art into new public works projects, along with the needed maintenance of existing public art installations.

The Public Art Works plan advances the City’s five-year cultural plan, titled *Empowering A Creative Community*, adopted by Council in December 2018. The Cultural Plan seeks to expand the City’s art efforts through new and existing programming, public outreach efforts, and an emphasis on multicultural understanding. The Public Art Works plan distributes public art across the City, thus expanding the impact of art on all residents, and strengthens proactive planning between several City departments by incorporate public art into other work happening in public space in the City, such as poems in sidewalks or art in bus shelters.

The Arts and Humanities Commission, established by Council in 2003, supports the Public Art Works plan and maintenance of installed public art.

Staff requests Council approval for expenditures for public art installations in FY21.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All
Engaged, Responsive & Service Oriented Government

Environmental Considerations

No environmental impacts are expected but each site identified for public art will be studied for environmental considerations.

Fiscal Considerations

In Ordinance No. 2020-23, FY 2021 Budget Amendment No. 1, approved by Council on July 29, 2020, the Council appropriated \$49,000 for Public Art funds with the following requirement: “Public Arts funds will not be expended without Council discussion and direction.”

Racial Equity Considerations

The Cultural Plan identifies as a goal the provision and promotion of “programming that is diverse, multicultural, and accessible to all audiences regardless of age, ability, economic status, race, or

country of origin." This work plan will expand the installation of art across the City, making it more available to all residents in Takoma Park, including in areas with higher percentages of people of color.

Attachments and Links

- Draft Resolution
- Public Art Works plan
- Public Art expenditure plan
- Arts and Humanities Commission Resolution
- Public Art: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/arts-and-humanities/public-art/>
- Cultural Arts Plan: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/cultural-plan/>

Introduced by:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

Resolution No. 2020-

Resolution Releasing the Hold on the Public Arts Budget

- WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park celebrates the rich mix of cultural expression of its residents and its multicultural heritage; and
- WHEREAS, the Council adopted the City's five-year cultural plan, titled *Empowering A Creative Community* in December 2018, which seeks to expand the City's art efforts through new and existing programming, public outreach efforts, and an emphasis on multicultural understanding, providing guidance to local policymakers and community leaders as they consider the allocation of resources and encourage the strategic development of programs and partnerships; and
- WHEREAS, the City's Arts and Humanities Division presented to Council a new Public Art Works initiative to incorporate public art into new public works and public space projects, and to maintain existing public art installations; and
- WHEREAS, the plan involves proactive planning between several City departments; and allows for greater distribution of public art throughout the City as part of the City's racial equity emphasis; and
- WHEREAS, the Council shares the Commission's interest in making the arts and humanities, in their many forms, a part of daily life in Takoma Park; and
- WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 2020-23, FY 2021 Budget Amendment No. 1, approved by Council on July 29, 2020, the Council appropriated \$49,000 for Public Art funds with the following requirement: "Public Arts funds will not be expended without Council discussion and direction;" and
- WHEREAS, staff presented the Public Art Works proposal to Council on September 23, and discussed the work plan for the expenditure of the funds for installation and maintenance of public art in the City; and
- WHEREAS, part of the presentation included discussion of a proposal to pay for the cleaning and restoration of the damaged mural in the B.Y. Morrison Park gazebo, but Council indicated a reluctance to undertake the work at this time so staff recommends removing the mural for its protection.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park approves expenditures for public art installations in FY21 as detailed in the Public Art Works installation and maintenance plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council authorizes the removal of the deteriorating mural at B.Y. Morrison Park and returning it to the artist.

Adopted this 14th day of October 2020.

Attest:

PUBLIC ART WORKS PROPOSAL

Submitted by Arts and Humanities Coordinator Brendan Smith

The Arts and Humanities Division is proposing that public art be incorporated into new public works projects through an initiative called *Public Art Works*. Public Works Director Daryl Braithwaite supports this initiative. The plan could increase racial equity by locating public art across the city, provide for proactive planning, and ensure steady funding for public art as part of the City's commitment to supporting the local arts community which stimulates local businesses, generates tax revenue, and improves the quality of life for local residents.

Racial Equity

Many City-funded public art projects traditionally have been located in the downtown area or historic district where the residents are predominantly white, wealthier, and older than residents in other parts of the city. While some public art has been located downtown for logistical reasons, a greater emphasis is needed for locating public art across the wards of the city.

Public art is even more vital during times of crisis because it provides a creative outlet, emotional support for the community, and a means of protest for social justice and racial equity. Public art also is available for everyone to enjoy even while art museums and galleries are closed. The *Takoma Park Arts* art exhibitions at the Takoma Park Community Center which feature a diverse range of artists also have been postponed because the building is closed.

The Arts and Humanities Division is already pushing for racial equity through two recent public art projects that are nearing completion. Five new Little Free Library boxes that were painted by two local artists will be installed this summer in areas outside the downtown and historic district. While the historic district has many little libraries, there is a critical absence of little libraries in some parts of the city where residents don't have access to free books. The new little libraries feature portraits and inspiring quotes from groundbreaking female authors and activists who are people of color.

In another project, paintings featuring vintage scenes representing Takoma Park were installed on City kiosks and gateway signs across the city a decade ago. Those aging signs will be replaced with more durable aluminum panels featuring the same designs from the original artists.

Proactive Planning and Coordination

In this initiative, the Arts and Humanities Division would coordinate with the Public Works Department to incorporate public art into public works projects from their inception as an integral part of the projects rather than treating public art as a later addition. We will work together to analyze a list of upcoming public works projects to identify projects that could be suitable for the inclusion of public art. Some potential projects could include:

Sidewalk Art

Public art can be incorporated into sidewalks through imprinted designs or [poetry](#), tile borders such as the one along Carroll Avenue in the historic district, stenciled children's games like hopscotch, or even [amusing faux shadows](#).

Crosswalks and Streets

Thermoplastic can be used on streets to create designs that celebrate immigrant communities such as [traditional Chinese symbols](#) on crosswalks in Washington, D.C. or whimsical designs like [piano keys](#) in Long Beach, CA. [Paint the Pavement](#) projects have used professional artists and volunteers to paint colorful street designs which also serve as [traffic calming measures that may help reduce pedestrian deaths](#). The [Asphalt Art Initiative](#) has funded similar projects.

Bus Shelters

The Housing and Community Development Department has applied for a AARP grant to fund two new bus shelters that would include public art, similar to a [program in Arlington](#). The King County Metro system in Seattle, Wash., has included murals on [more than 3,000 bus shelters](#) which have encouraged community engagement and reduced vandalism. Public art could be installed on more bus shelters across Takoma Park to encourage public transportation.

Storm Drains

Local artists and volunteers could paint stormwater drains to highlight the environmental damage to local waterways when people dispose of trash or chemicals in the street. Similar projects have been done in [Blacksburg, Va.](#) and other cities across the country.

Bike Racks

As part of the City's commitment to fight climate change, new bike racks would encourage bicycling as an environmentally friendly means of transportation. Artistic bike racks also can help revitalize neighborhoods and bring visitors to local businesses, such as these projects in [Pittsburgh](#) and [Nashville](#).

Funding Commitments

None of these projects will be possible without City funding. The entire FY 21 public art budget was eliminated during budget negotiations, but there are some remaining FY 20 public art funds because allocated public art projects were postponed. The City Council could approve the carryover of those funds to FY 21 without any costs to the City.

Appropriations also could be made later in FY 21 if funding is available. Expenses for public art also possibly could be incorporated into the budgets for upcoming public works projects.

With adequate funding, there are many opportunities to provide public art across the city in a proactive way that will create a greater sense of racial equity, inclusion, and support for the arts.

Public Art Works Projects	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Sidewalk Poetry Project	4 Sidewalk Stamps	2 Sidewalk Stamps	2 Sidewalk Stamps
Fabrication of Sidewalk Stamps (\$900 each)		3,600	1,800
Graphic Designer Fees (\$500 each)		2,000	1,000
Installation (\$500 each)		2,000	1,000
Promotion (\$200)		200	200
Estimated Total:		7,800	4,000
Bike Racks			
Artist Commission, Fabrication and Installation \$10,000 each	2 Bike Racks	1 Bike Rack	1 Bike Rack
		20,000	10,000
Public Art Vinyl Designs for Bus Shelters			
Artist Commission, Fabrication and Installation \$6,000 for each bus shelter	2 Bus Shelter Designs	1 Bus Shelter Design	1 Bus Shelter Design
		12,000	6,000
Public Art Maintenance		8,000	8,000
TOTAL:		47,800	28,000

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

TAKOMA PARK ARTS AND HUMANITIES COMMISSION

Resolution Urging the Takoma Park City Council to Provide Public Art Funding

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council has charged the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission to “serve in an official advisory role to the City Council on all matters related to the arts” and to “advise the City Council on ways in which the City might best serve the public with regard to matters involving the arts”; and

WHEREAS, public art is a vital component of public life in Takoma Park, especially during times of crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic; and

WHEREAS, public art supports local artists, stimulates local businesses, generates tax revenue, encourages tourism, and improves the quality of life; and

WHEREAS, public art meets people where they live in their neighborhoods and provides inspiration, a creative outlet, and source of solace; and

WHEREAS, public art provides positive media coverage which promotes Takoma Park as an arts-friendly city; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has eliminated the FY 21 public art budget and placed a hold on FY 20 public art funds that were already approved for carry over to FY 21; and

WHEREAS, the continued delay in City funding jeopardizes the development and completion of various public art projects across the city.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission unanimously advises the City Council to lift the hold on the available public art funding without further delays or restrictions.

Adopted this 6th day of October, 2020