

# A Five-Year Municipal Art Plan for the City of Olympia

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**Olympia Oyster** by Colleen Cotey,  
Percival Plinth Peoples' Choice Winner 2015

# **The mission of the Olympia Arts Commission is to help enrich the lives of the people of the region by making visual, performing and literary arts vital elements in the life of our community.**

The Commission's purpose is to promote and encourage public programs to further development, public awareness, and interest in fine and performing arts and cultural heritage, and to advise City Council in connection with these. The Olympia Arts Commission (OAC) was created to provide expertise regarding the visual and performing arts and cultural heritage, and to reach out within and beyond the community to expand artistic and cultural programs and services for the citizens of Olympia. (Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) 2.100.100, 2.100.110)

Supported by City staff, the OAC pursues this mission through a public art program that includes programming and events, services, outreach, education and networking, and the purchase and placement of works of art in the community.

## **1. Municipal Art Plan: What and Why**

The MAP is the annual budget and spending plan for the Municipal Art Fund, and it provides direction and accountability for the use of public resources in support of the arts.

City Ordinance calls for the OAC to "prepare and recommend to the City Council for approval a plan and guidelines to carry out the City's art program," (OMC 2.100.140) and notes that a municipal arts plan should prescribe the projects to be funded from the municipal arts fund. "*Municipal Arts Plan* means a plan outlining the City expenditures of designated funds for public art projects for a one-year period." (OMC 2.100.160)

Olympia's public art programs and purchases have historically been funded through two sources: a \$1 per Capita allocation from the City's General Fund that was initiated in 1990, and a 1% for Art set-aside for City construction projects over \$500,000 in value. Funds from these sources are deposited in a Municipal Arts Fund (MAF). The MAP establishes budgets for new public art projects undertaken by the City, whether in conjunction with new capital projects or independent of them. Projects range from small (less than \$15k) to major (over \$50k) installations involving design teams, and may include visual, literary and performing arts.

## **2. Planning for Public Art**

The OAC develops an Annual Work Plan that details program initiatives and activities of the City's art program to promote the work of local artists and the arts within our community, and for the purchase of public art (including paid performances) to enhance and enliven the community. These public art purchases are the focus of the MAP.

To develop funding projections for the MAF and budgets for individual projects, City staff reviews the Capital Facility Plan to identify projects that trigger the 1% for Art set-aside. These projects and their

locations, impacts, and estimated public art budgets are initially reviewed by the Art in Public Places Committee (APP) of the OAC, and then considered by the full Commission. The Commission generates a complete project list that includes planned capital-funded purchases as well as other projects identified in the Commission's Annual Work Plan. This project list forms the core of the Municipal Art Plan, which the Commission then recommends to City Council for approval.

In developing plans for public art projects, a number of conditions and values are considered to determine the best use of available resources for the benefit of the arts and the community. As a starting point, capital project-generated funds are considered for art projects at or near the site of the construction to enhance the public improvement, or to mitigate for the impact of the improvements.

The funding for art generated by small capital projects is often too small to be very effective. In these cases, funds from multiple projects may be combined, or \$1 per Capita funds added when available, to create a viable public art project budget. Balancing opportunities for multiple small projects versus fewer, more significant projects is an important planning consideration. Combining funds can bring a significant installation of public art to a capital improvement project that is too small to generate funds on its own, but which may be desirable because of location or community access. In selecting projects and works of art, the OAC will consider how proposals accomplish the following:

- **Contribute to broad distribution of public art throughout Olympia.**  
Commissioners will consider the relative representation of art among City neighborhoods, and seek to distribute public art broadly throughout the community.
- **Provide for diverse forms of art within the public collection.**  
While every piece in the collection may not resonate for every citizen, a wide range of style, media, subjects and viewpoints will offer perspective and interest for everyone.
- **Bring new ideas, innovation, or thinking to the community.**
- **Achieve a balanced city collection that includes a strong local base but also has regional and national reach.**
- **Maintainable and safe.**
- **Well-suited to chosen site or venue.**

### 3. Project List for 2016

The following slate of projects is diverse in arts disciplines – sculpture, painting/drawing, music - and are located throughout Olympia. These investments in the arts support current and future endeavors, care for the collection we have and offer opportunity for local and regional artists, from youth through professional, to benefit the community and change the atmosphere of our built environment. Together, this slate of initiatives will contribute to the creative and cultural arts in Olympia in the following ways:

- Supporting several facets of the arts, including music
- Pushing the arts deeper into our neighborhoods and beyond the downtown core
- Investing in the future of the arts and artists in our community
- Continuing with successful programs that are embraced by the community

Traffic Box Wrap - \$11,000 – Following the work begun in 2015, and working in partnership with Public Works, 10 transit boxes on the east side of Olympia will be wrapped with artwork by local artists of all

ages, printed on vinyl in 2016. As vinyl is expected to last up to 3 years, wraps may be replaced in following years, depending on project evaluation.

Music Out Loud - Artwork - \$22,440 - Honoring past musicians and celebrating today's music, this project pairs artistic elements incorporated into the ground plane of several sidewalks in downtown Olympia, with a summer series of music performances. Completion of artwork is expected in late 2016.

Music Out Loud - Performance- \$6,433 - Funds to be used for three performances per three sites (9 performances total) during the summer months, once artwork is completed. Per Council direction, the first year will be a pilot project.

Percival Plinth Project – \$22,100 – This ongoing project hosts loaned sculpture (up to 15) for an exhibition of one year along Percival Landing. During the month of August the public is invited to vote for the sculpture they wish for the City to purchase.

Harrison/Black Lake Tree Guards - \$23,000 - In 2008, designs for a series of five tree guards along Black Lake Boulevard at Harrison were acquired through a selective process. The structures were never fabricated. Now the formerly vacant lot has been developed into the West Central Park, and the time seems appropriate to pursue this neighborhood-scaled project.

City Gateways - \$50,000 – Pending Council approval, 2016 could be a planning year for the Arts Commission and Planning Commission to work with a consultant to develop a Master Plan to prepare for signature artworks at key city gateways, as called for in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan calls for gateways that can include welcoming signage, and for the involvement of citizens, neighborhoods, and City departments and officials in shaping a "distinctive special environmental setting" for these civic gateways.

City Hall Rotating Exhibit Support - \$6000 - Install display infrastructure (exhibition stands and picture rails) and curatorial services, to support rotating exhibits of visual art and cultural artifacts for public interest and enjoyment, inside City Hall.

Olympia Artspace Alliance - \$50,000 – To support OAA's efforts to secure and build-out a facility/site for artists' studios and related programming in downtown Olympia. This item is a placeholder – actual funding is contingent upon Council approval of a specific proposal.

Poet Laureate (\$1,000 annually) – Biennial Poet Laureate program, pending Council approval.

(Future years) Eastside/22<sup>nd</sup> Sidewalk Project - \$43,764 - The third of three public art projects anticipated for sidewalks, this project will build off neighborhood walking experiences to tell the story of the area and encourage pedestrian use. Scheduling of this project is dependent on the Public Works schedule for completion.

#### **4. Five-Year Planning Context**

In 2015, the OAC developed a five-year budget plan for the first time. The five-year planning horizon was intended to allow a longer look ahead to more easily consider and track prospective capital project income, to show how funding for some projects will be phased over time, and to account for the ongoing operating cost associated with others.

The five-year context for our 2016 budget and project list includes a re-commitment of funding for the arts, following six years of restricted funding necessitated by the economic recession. From 2009 to 2015 no \$1 per Capita funding was made available for the MAF, and city spending for the arts was curtailed. In 2015 however, a restoration of funding began with the dedication of \$50,000 in City year-end funds to the MAF.

In 2016 City Council has continued to renew its support for the arts with a welcomed return to \$1 per Capita funding. This is an essential component of the MAF. Additionally, with the adoption of the 2016 Parks Plan, the City has committed .75 fte to support City's Arts program beginning in 2017. This critically-needed staffing will allow us to move ahead more quickly with projects planned or underway, take better care of our existing art inventory, and feed the healthy creative appetite and cultural demands of a growing community.

The five-year-forward look from 2016 is a positive one. It gives us the confidence to propose launching a multi-year project to study, plan for, and then implement a City Gateways project coordinating with the City Planning Commission and following the vision expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. We are venturing into new programs, with proposals for rotating exhibits in City Hall, a City Poet Laureate, and Music Out Loud performances in sidewalk spaces that call out our City's musical legacy. We also continue our support for popular and ongoing programs such as the Plinth Project and Arts Walk that have become signatures for Olympia and a source of pride and tradition.

## 5. Summary Spreadsheet

### FIVE YEAR MUNICIPAL ART PLAN

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
<b>INCOME</b>							
Available balance	298,850						298,850
\$1 per capita	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
Capital projects % for art	0	180,000	6,500	60,000		0	246,500
<b>5-year projected total</b>							<b>795,350</b>
<b>PLANNED EXPENDITURE</b>							
<b>Committed Funds</b>							
West Bay Sidewalk	13,900						13,900
<b>Proposed Projects</b>							
Traffic Box Wrap		11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000	55,000
Music Out Loud - Artwork			37,800				37,800
Music Out Loud - Performance			6,433	6,433	6,433	6,433	25,732
Percival Plinth Project		22,100	22,100	22,100	22,100	22,100	110,500
Tree Guards			23,000				23,000
Olympia Artspace Alliance			50,000				50,000
City Gateways			50,000	75,000	60,000	50,000	235,000
City Hall Rotating Exhibit Support			6,000				6,000
Eastside/22nd Sidewalk				43,764			43,764
Poet Laureate (biennial)				1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>13,900</b>	<b>33,100</b>	<b>206,333</b>	<b>159,297</b>	<b>100,533</b>	<b>90,533</b>	<b>603,696</b>
<b>Balance</b>							<b>191,654</b>

Projected 1%: Boulevard/Morse Merriman Roundabout

Projected 1%: Sidewalk Construction

Pending Council Approval

## 6. Other Activities

Maintenance and conservation efforts are necessary to preserve the integrity of the City's collection for the benefit of the community. Funding for conservation and maintenance is provided from interest drawn on the MAF. Commissioners visit each piece in the collection on a yearly basis, both to get to know the collection and to flag issues for staff review. Interest earned on the MAF will continue to provide a fund source for needed treatment and conservation care.

Public Works Tribute – Estimated \$4,000 - Provide repair and pedestals for City-owned artwork to be installed in City Hall. In 1990, as a tribute to his co-workers, former Parks Maintenance employee Charlie Mitchell created a set of painted wood sculptures of Public Works employees in action: emerging from hatch covers, tending to solid waste and sweeping the pathway in a small green space near the City's maintenance buildings. Due to environmental deterioration, the sculptures were removed, and stabilized. Conserved artwork will be installed at City Hall near Public Works offices, to be unveiled during Public Works Week in May.