



Legislation Text

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A Resolution Approving the City of Colorado Springs Public Art Master Plan

Presenter:

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Summary:

The City began developing the Public Art Master Plan (herein referred to as the “Plan”) in December 2018. Through a competitive process, the Denver-based Arts Management and Planning Associates, Inc., was selected as the lead consulting firm, with Kendall Peterson of ThereSquared LLC, as the project manager. The full list of consultants can be found on the plan cover sheet. Nearly 80% of the planning cost was covered by the Conservation Trust Fund and private donations from the Bee Vradenburg Foundation, Cultural Office, and others. The rest was from the General Fund.

The Plan is a Citywide master plan and is adopted by resolution. The Plan was developed in response to and as a recommendation of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, PlanCOS.

The Plan was developed through an iterative process that sought active participation from the community. The public engagement effort began in May 2019. It included one-on-one or small group meetings with over 30 community stakeholders representing elected officials, developers, artists, arts organization leadership, and City staff. Additionally, 929 residents responded to an 18-question survey. The budget did not allow this to be a scientific poll, but every effort was made to push the questionnaire beyond the “arts bubble.” Finally, engagement activities were held during the What If Festival, Festival of Lights and other community events.

The planning process was led by a steering committee with representatives from the Public Art Commission, Cultural Office, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Community Ventures, artists, cultural leaders, and City staff. Through analysis of community input and evaluation of current policies, the plan identifies nine key findings about the current state of the City’s public art program. In response to this, seven goals and numerous strategies are outlined to address the opportunities and challenges reflected in these findings. The goals are structured so the first three are most urgent. The other four goals are still important, but they are less time sensitive and more likely to be influenced by work done on the first goals.

A copy of the entire plan is attached for reference. There are additional materials provided as attachments to the plan. This includes a “Toolkit” with simple policies and documents and an “Appendix” with complete survey data and other items. These materials are available at www.coloradosprings.gov/publicartcos.

Background:

Colorado Springs was established in 1871 to take advantage of the extraordinary scenic beauty of its surroundings. The landscape and growing population attracted generations of artists, including Katharine Lee Bates, author of “America the Beautiful.” As a result, arts and culture have played a major role in establishing community identity from the very beginning.

The City of Colorado Springs has long had responsibility for public art installations. The earliest of these include the 1907 Geologic Column on the northern edge of Monument Valley Park, and the 1929 equestrian statue of William Jackson Palmer on Nevada Avenue. Up until the 1980s, a small number of art pieces were given to the City. In 1982, growing community interest led City Council to create a Public Art Commission to provide recommendations about proposed donations of public art, particularly outdoor sculptures. Since that time, the permanent public art collection has grown to 100 pieces. Five new sculptures have been added since 2017. The most recent addition is the War Dog Memorial in Memorial Park, dedicated in September 2020.

The City of Colorado Springs currently provides no general fund support for the development or creation of public art pieces. All of the sculptures in the City’s collection have been created with funds donated by individuals or organizations. The Public Art Commission has established criteria for evaluation of these donations. These criteria were most recently updated in 2016 by Resolution 141-16. Since approximately 2002, public art donors have been required to contribute a 10% maintenance fund for the ongoing care and preservation of sculptural pieces. These funds are held in restricted gift trust accounts. Also since 2002, the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum has been responsible for the management, care, and preservation of the permanent public art collection.

The City undertook this master planning study in order to develop a more strategic approach to this long-standing program, to evaluate how the City’s efforts compare to best practices used around the country, and to identify ways to expand the presence and sustainability of public art in the community.

Previous Council Action:

None. In September 2020, individual City Council Members were offered the opportunity to have a briefing on the plan and to ask questions of City staff.

Financial Implications:

As an advisory planning document, the Plan does not commit the City to any fiscal obligations.

The Plan highlights the need for resources to support the enhancement and sustainability of the public art program. This includes a recommendation for administrative support to help guide the program. The language accompanying these recommendations is purposefully generalized in regard to funding choices or priorities. Any initiatives will be evaluated through departmental work plans and considered through the City’s budgeting processes.

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

On September 15, 2020, the Public Art Commission reviewed the Plan and recommended adoption of it as proposed. The Colorado Springs Planning Commission reviewed it on September 17, 2020, and offered enthusiastic encouragement for City Council adoption. On October 8, 2020, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board also offered unanimous endorsement of the Plan.

Included in the attachments are letters of support from the Public Art Commission, Parks Board, and the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum Board. Planning Commission minutes reflecting their action

will also be provided.

Stakeholder Process:

The eighteen-month process of community engagement was inclusive and multi-faceted. The engagement efforts undertaken for this project are highlighted in the PowerPoint presentation accompanying this item, in the summary above, and in the Appendix of the Plan that is available at www.coloradosprings.gov/publicartcos. Following approval by the Public Art Commission, City Communication distributed a press release with a link to the approved documents.

Alternatives:

City Council could choose to approve, deny, or modify the proposed Resolution.

Proposed Motion:

Adopt a resolution approving the City of Colorado Springs Public Art Master Plan.

N/A