ReImagine Washtenaw Corridor
Public Art & Design Plan

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1 | REIMAGINE WASHTENAW PROJECT

1.1 | GOAL & VISION

In 2010, Washtenaw County applied for and was subsequently awarded the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant. A portion of the grand funds received by Washtenaw County is allocated for the ReImagine Washtenaw Avenue project.

The goal of ReImagine Washtenaw is to, “expand existing affordable and energy efficient housing options and connect residents to job centers, healthy food, and shopping options through an enhanced Washtenaw Avenue transportation corridor.”

The vision is a corridor that supports a high quality of life with walkable shopping options, a variety of housing choices, efficient transit service, great public spaces, bike paths and access to educational, cultural and employment centers.

1.2 | COMMITTEE/PARTNERS

Washtenaw Avenue spans four different jurisdictions including the city of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti Township, the City of Ypsilanti and Pittsfield Township and is also a federal road. The ReImagine Washtenaw Project includes not only transportation planning but also place-making and design concepts. Thus, a wide range of partners from several local agencies and organizations came together to work on the project including: City of Ann Arbor, Pittsfield Township, Ypsilanti Township, City of Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (The Ride), Washtenaw Area Transportation Study, Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce, The Arts Alliance and Michigan Department of Transportation.
1.3 | THE ARTS ALLIANCE

The Arts Alliance is a nonprofit organization established in 2008. As the organizational mission states:

The Arts Alliance advocates for and supports the Creative Sector in Washtenaw County—arts and cultural organizations and creative individuals and businesses—to ensure that our region remains a great place to create, live, work, learn, play and visit.

The Arts Alliance, commissioned by Washtenaw County, developed this *Reimagine Washtenaw Corridor Public Art and Design Plan* for the Reimagine Washtenaw Avenue project in accordance with the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant. The Arts Alliance engaged citizens and provided education on public art and placemaking, established public art criteria and recommended responsibility, stewardship and accountability for public art along the corridor. These are illustrated throughout this plan which will guide future decisions about who, where, when and how public art is selected, created and placed along the corridor, with the endorsement of our community members. Plan recommendations were informed by the data presented in section 3 of this plan and guided by reported best practices and research cited throughout.

The process used by the Arts Alliance to collect local input for this plan included the following elements:

- Engage the community to solicit their input for planning purposes
- Actively engage diverse participants
- Work with local artists to integrate art making into the community sessions to help break down barriers and find common ground among diverse participants
- Educate organizations, participants and the public on public art & design and placemaking
- Build common understanding of vocabulary, definitions and models of public art & design programs and funding
2 | PUBLIC ART AND DESIGN

2.1 | SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VALUE

Public art and design has the capacity to do all of the following:

Expresses community identity and values.  
Demonstrate pride in place.  
Increase the community's assets by creating images that help define a space.  
Add dimension to civic & public spaces.  
Affirm the educational environment.  
Differentiate neighborhoods and enhance way-finding.  
 Beautify transportation systems by enhancing roadides, pedestrian corridors and community gateways.  
Stimulate beneficial community dialogue and debate.  
Affect many sectors including business, environment, technology and creative.

Public Art and design has the ability to strengthen and transform communities. As published by Americans for the Arts Public Art Network Council:

It reflects and reveals our society, adds meaning to our cities and uniqueness to our communities. Public art humanizes the built environment and invigorates public spaces. It provides an intersection between past, present and future, between disciplines, and between ideas.1

The Arts Alliance believes that each community should aspire for its own identity and to be a place where people want to create, live, work, learn, play and visit. Public art is one way that cities, towns and neighborhoods can distinguish themselves while celebrating and embracing their history and reflecting the qualities that make their community unique. Public art expresses community identity and values while also demonstrating pride in place.

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1 Public Art Network Council: Green Paper. Americans for the Arts. Pg. 1
It is, after all, these iconic works of art that people often remember and associate with areas where they have lived or visited. For example, Chicago has the Cloud Gate also known as The Bean (left image below) and, more locally, the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) has Endover, known as The Cube (right image below).

![Cloud Gate](https://www.flickr.com/photos/aaron_in_denver/5197584230/)

![The Cube](https://www.flickr.com/photos/afagen/2692840859/)

These public art pieces are both examples of large interactive work that seems to defy reality. In the case of Cloud Gate it literally reflects the city, giving visitors a view of Chicago like no other. The Cube’s massive structure seems immovable; however, it spins on its axis with a gentle push. In both examples, hundreds of visitors and residents are drawn to, photograph and interact with these works each year. When reflecting upon Chicago or Ann Arbor, these works play a pivotal role in both distinguishing and identifying them.

Public art activates spaces by encouraging people to pay attention to their surroundings, use their imagination and more deeply perceive their environment. It encourages learning and self-awareness and reflection. Throughout the selection and installation process public art should engage the community and provide an outlet for social interaction. Furthermore:

> The effort of creating art for public space is not solitary: the public art process asks the artist to share his/her creative point of view and approach to art-making, and to collaborate with others throughout its development. In consequence, the work can reverberate throughout the community, thereby encouraging a sense of shared ownership and collective affiliation.\(^4\)

As is true with many things within the public realm, the resulting public art work should also spark conversation and debate within the community and among its visitors. Art has stimulated debate for centuries with people falling in love with works that others hate. Public art both benefits from and is challenged because of its high level of accessibility, making every passerby a critic. Good public art encourages vigorous community debate involving a variety of views and interpretations. “Something

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\(^2\) Photograph by Aaron Groote. [https://www.flickr.com/photos/aaron_in_denver/5197584230/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/aaron_in_denver/5197584230/)

\(^3\) Photograph by Adam Fagen. [https://www.flickr.com/photos/afagen/2692840859/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/afagen/2692840859/)

\(^4\) Ibid. Americans for the Arts. Pg. 2
happens when art goes public... Site specificity, community values, and notions of what constitutes ‘good art’ all come into play when art goes public5.”

2.2 | TYPES AND EXAMPLES

Public art and design encompasses a wide variety of work. Below are a few different examples, definitions and images of each to help illustrate the breadth of public art and design, with both distinct and shared goals. Sometimes works can fall under more than one of these categories or types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporary Art</th>
<th>Integrated Art</th>
<th>Placemaker Art</th>
<th>Transit &amp; Way-finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Short-term installations, often tied programmatically to the work or mission of an event or organization.</td>
<td>• Elements integrated into the construction of a facility, usually through a design team process.</td>
<td>• Defines a community gathering place.</td>
<td>• Provides orientation for travelers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installation Art</th>
<th>Gateways</th>
<th>Performance Art</th>
<th>Street Furniture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Site-specific art that temporarily transforms a space.</td>
<td>• Creates a sense of arrival.</td>
<td>• Interdisciplinary performance, often unscripted and usually presented only one time.</td>
<td>• Intentionally designed and functional elements such as streetlights, hatch covers, benches, gates, wall decoration, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More examples of public art that were mentioned by participants who took our survey can be found in Appendix A.

2.3 | OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Public art and design has the ability to express community identity and values, demonstrate pride in place, increase the community’s assets by creating images that help define a space, add dimension to civic spaces, affirm the educational environment, differentiate neighborhoods and enhance way-finding and beautify transportation systems by enhancing roadsides, pedestrian corridors and community gateways.

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5 [http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/public-art/](http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/public-art/)
Despite the potential for significant community benefit, public art and design projects also run the risk of community resistance. While individuals will always have their own personal opinions about works of art, general opposition from the community at large tends to stem from three roots: exclusion from the design and selection process, disagreement regarding the funding source and lack of understanding regarding the long-term purposes and benefits of public art.

Discussion can also become quite heated when public funds are involved. Ann Arbor’s Percent for Art program, after much scrutiny and debate, was eventually dissolved by a City Council vote. That said, regardless of how it is paid for, the surveys administered by the Arts Alliance in 2013/2014 showed that the vast majority of participants – 80% – believe that public art and design is an important element of a rich and vibrant community.

The Arts Alliance capitalized on the opportunity to educate the community on public art during outreach meetings. Presentations included information about the different types of public art and design, its purpose, various funding models and examples found locally in Washtenaw County. Participants were also asked to discuss their own communities and site examples of public spaces and/or art works that they enjoyed. Through these discussions unlikely partners were identified in order to reach a broad spectrum of the community.

2.4 | FUNDING MODELS

The method used to fund public art and design programs largely determines the quantity, type and character of the art that can be purchased and installed. Below are several different mechanisms for funding public art and design projects/programs.
### Public/Government Funding Models

**Percent-for-Art programs**
- When municipalities plan for a construction or remodel project, a percentage of their budget must be allocated for public art and design.
- Created in 1959, the first percent-for-art ordinance passed in the US and established the Philadelphia Percent-for-Art program.
- Currently about 300 cities, counties, states and federal agencies have adopted Percent-for-Art programs.
- This is the most popular and most common funding model.

**Local, state or federal grants**
- Local, state or federal agencies make government funds available through a call for proposals for the creation, installation and maintenance of public art and design work.

**Appropriations**
- Public funds are set aside to be used specifically on public art and design programs/projects.

**Taxes**
- All or a portion of specific taxes are used to fund public art and design.
  - Hotel/Lodging
  - Sales
  - Use
  - Sin
  - Millage

### Public-Private Funding Models

**Municipal projects that raise (at least in part) private contributions**
- Public art & design programs that receive public funds and are also engaged in entrepreneurial public art & design activities, i.e., fee-based consultation and project management.

### Private Funding Models

**Grants and gifts**
- Contributions of art or donations for the acquisition of art made to public agencies or foundations.

**Corporate sponsorships**
- Funding that comes from a corporation to support public art & design.

**Benefit events and sales**
- Revenue from events used to support public art & design activities, e.g., “Cows on Parade” in Chicago.

**Cultural trust**
- Fund established through the donation of private property in most cases.
3 | COMMUNITY OUTREACH & FEEDBACK

3.1 | OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

Community involvement is very important to public art and design projects in order to identify the values and priorities of area residents and visitors to ensure that the works reflect the community. For the ReImagine Washtenaw Project the Arts Alliance performed outreach to provide education opportunities, obtain feedback, and spread the word about public art and design and planning for the corridor.

3.2 | METHOD 1—COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETINGS & GATHERINGS

The Arts Alliance partnered with local organizations in Washtenaw County to cohost community gatherings which served as focus groups to gather data and provide basic “What is Public Art?” education. The community gathering partners were purposefully selected according to location and key demographics indicators such as age, ethnicity, gender identity and socioeconomic status. The community gatherings promoted social and civic engagement in convenient, safe and accessible locations that were close to and hopefully comfortable for local community members.

A total of 6 community gatherings were scheduled and convened. An ideal community gathering would include 8 to 10 participants and run approximately 90 minutes. Particular attention was given to providing a safe space for vulnerable populations to share ideas and input. The following entities were contacted to offer the opportunity to cohost a community gathering:

- arts and culture organizations
- neighborhood associations
- affordable housing providers
- Latino/a community centers
- low-income apartment complexes
- community gardening programs
- merchant associations
- health and wellness centers
- religious/spiritual establishments
- libraries
- senior centers

The Arts Alliance staff and interns provided education to community members on public art and design and skillfully facilitated discussion. A PowerPoint presentation helped guide the community gatherings and offered visual information and examples. The presentation included:

- meeting agenda
- introduction to the Arts Alliance
- top 10 reasons to support arts & culture according to Americans for the Arts
- introduction to public art and design
- examples of public art and design (local, state, national, and international)
- funding models for public art and design
Participants at Hikone Community Center work together to create their public art piece.

Strategically placed after the educational presentation, the art project was designed to encourage participants to explore public art and design, inspire creativity, foster interaction, and break down barriers amongst community members. The art project was designed and facilitated by a local arts administrator, Christine Bruxvoort from FLY Children’s Art Center, who asked the attendees to form teams to participate in their own Call for Art and use the knowledge gained during the introduction portion of the community gathering to design public art projects. Each group was given misshapen, cut, and recycled cardboard pieces, markers, and scissors and told to put them together to form their very own example of public art. No adhesives were provided, making the task a bit more challenging and encouraging participants to think outside of the box. Participants titled their work, provided the artists names, and an explanation for why their work should be selected.

Below are the questions that were used to facilitate the discussion portion of the meetings.

1) What area/places do you enjoy spending time in your community?

2) What assets beautify or distinguish your community? (Examples: sculptures, installations, architecture, historic sites, natural or open spaces, etc.)

3) What places in your community are sacred to you? What spaces do you want to share with visitors? Why?
4) What images or themes would you like to see represented in public art and design that will be located along Washtenaw Avenue? Emblems that characterize the city? Legends about the city? Personality of the community?

5) Do you have any other comments regarding the ReImagine Washtenaw Avenue project or public art and design in general?

6) How do we pay for your ideas?

Real-time data was displayed utilizing large note pads, maps, and post-its. The discussion was also recorded using a voice recorder and paper note-taking.

A total 6 community gatherings were cohosted with partner organizations including: FLY Children’s Art Center, Hikone Community Center, Ann Arbor Senior Center, Eastern Michigan University, Ann Arbor Art Center and Ann Arbor Public Library. An additional meeting was scheduled at Hamilton Crossing Apartments in Ypsilanti that was canceled due to weather. In addition to the 6 community gatherings, the Arts Alliance presented ReImagine Washtenaw Avenue public art and design materials at 5 additional meetings hosted by The Ride throughout Pittsfield Township. Meetings in partnership with The Ride were solely to increase awareness and educate the audience on public art and design; they did not include the art project or discussion, thus no information was collected during these meetings. The average attendance at meetings, not including the Pittsfield Township Gathering was approximately 9-10 participants.

The Arts Alliance also helped facilitate at Pittsfield Township’s Passport to Pittsfield Event (P2P). There children created their own buildings and public art and design projects based on examples they chose printed on cards. They created the works using recycled goods and once finished placed them on a large canvas map of Pittsfield township—creating their own city of buildings and public art and design pieces.

Below is a list of all the community outreach gatherings (including discussions and data collection) and meetings (only presentations with no discussion/data collection).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pittsfield Township Hall</td>
<td>January 23, 2014</td>
<td>6-8PM</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsfield Township Community Center</td>
<td>February 4, 2014</td>
<td>10-12PM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLY Children's Art Center</td>
<td>February 25, 2014</td>
<td>5:30-7:30PM</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter Elementary School</td>
<td>March 4, 2014</td>
<td>6:30-8:30PM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikone Community Center</td>
<td>March 7, 2014</td>
<td>3-5PM</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Arbor Senior Center</td>
<td>March 11, 2014</td>
<td>5:30-7PM</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest Elementary School</td>
<td>March 18, 2014</td>
<td>6-8PM</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan Univ.</td>
<td>April 14, 2014</td>
<td>4-5:30PM</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Arbor Art Center</td>
<td>April 16, 2014</td>
<td>5-7PM</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Arbor Public Library</td>
<td>May 6, 2014</td>
<td>7-8:30PM</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsfield Township-P2P</td>
<td>May 4, 2014</td>
<td>1-4PM</td>
<td>~200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 Total Meetings/Gatherings

- **Jan-May 2014**
- ~294 Total Participants
3.3 | METHOD 2-SURVEYS

The two online surveys comprised the secondary data collection method, using the Fluid Surveys online tool. Survey #1 launched Tuesday, November 26, 2013 and closed Tuesday, May 18, 2014. The goal of survey #1 was to gain widespread public input regarding public art and design potentially located along a new and improved Washtenaw Corridor.

Survey #1 was a 16 question survey featured 5 demographic questions and 11 subjective opinion questions. Multiple choice and open-ended questions were provided in the survey instrument to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. All data collected via online survey was anonymous and confidential.

Survey #2 launched Friday, July 11, 2014 and closed Monday, August 4, 2014. The goals of survey #2 was to offer the public an additional opportunity to share opinions, ask about funding for public art & design, and measure the impact of previous engagement (i.e. community gatherings, survey #1, and community meetings).

Survey #2 was designed to allow previous participants to complete one set of questions while new participants completed a different set of questions. The survey featured 5 demographic questions as well as subjective opinion questions. Multiple choice and open-ended questions were provided in the survey instrument to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

3.4 | PUBLICITY

The Arts Alliance publicized the community meetings primarily in the Arts Alliance bi-weekly eNewsletter and on the official Facebook page. Project partners, mentioned previously, also shared meeting dates and times with their communities using social media. Additionally host organizations reached out to their communities to invite participants as well.

Like the community meetings, Survey #1 was also publicized in the Arts Alliance bi-weekly eNewsletter and on the official Facebook page. Press releases and intentional communications provided the following entities with access to survey #1, and several of these shared the survey with their networks as well:

- Public
- Washtenaw County residents
- Artists, creative individuals, and arts and culture allies
- Public schools
- Local politicians and leaders
- Local government employees
- ReImagine Washtenaw Joint Technical Committee (JTC) partner organizations
The Arts Alliance publicized survey #2 primarily in the bi-weekly eNewsletter and on the official Facebook page. A press release was also sent to local news contacts and the piece was picked up by local news source, MLive in its July 16, 2014 publication. A copy of this publication can be found as Appendix D.

3.5 | PARTICIPANTS

Participation was open to all residents of Washtenaw County for the surveys, outreach meetings and gatherings. Select groups of Washtenaw County residents were purposefully encouraged to participate in the community gatherings to create space for a full representation of the diverse community voices. Disenfranchised and under resourced residents in particular were identified and invited to the community gatherings.

DEMOGRAPHICS

When the demographics of those surveyed and that participated at the outreach meetings were combined, the results showed a good range of ages and a proportionate amount of male vs. female participants. Additionally, while not exact, the ethnicity of those surveyed resembles the makeup of Washtenaw County, therefore displaying a good cross section of the population.
4 | LOCAL FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey results and community outreach meetings provided a lot of feedback regarding the direction the public would like to see for public art and design in their community. Some of the results were inconclusive while others provide a clear direction and understanding of the values of the community. What follows are The Arts Alliance’s findings, distilled from the community gatherings and surveys, and the recommendations for implementing public art and design into the ReImagine Washtenaw project as it moves forward.

4.1 | PROCESS

While capturing community input for the public art and design aspects of the ReImagine Washtenaw project, The Art Alliance strived to run a process that provided community education as well as multiple avenues for feedback. Each community gathering started with a brief description of the ReImagine Washtenaw project and goals, as well as a short presentation about public art and design and its variety, purposes and funding mechanisms. The survey introduction provided electronic links to ReImagine Washtenaw and public art and design resources. The goal was to provide participants with a basic understanding of public art and design and the ReImagine Washtenaw project so that they could provide feedback about how they hoped this work would positively impact their community.

From that point forward, the community gatherings and survey were dedicated entirely to capturing community member’s thoughts and feedback that should be integrated into a public art and design plan. All responses were heard, validated and noted. Having observed other public art and design selection and planning processes locally and throughout the country, providing community members with the opportunity to be heard and have their thoughts shape public art selection is key to community buy-in.

RECOMMENDATION

When selecting public art and design elements for the ReImagine Washtenaw project, it is important to have an inclusive and transparent process from the beginning to end. A community driven project that allows individuals to have input and participate with the process is essential to the success of installed pieces and design elements. While the entire community may not participate, active promotion and calls for participation that provide education and let the community know they are welcome to be part of the process, will significantly improve community acceptance and celebration of new works.

4.2 | VALUE

According to the survey data, residents of Washtenaw County value arts and culture as the 2nd most important component of their community. During community gathering discussions public artwork that was interactive in some way – from being touchable and kinetic, to serving as a performance space or exhibition space for other temporary art forms, to creating a gathering space – drew their appreciation and interest.

Survey participants also identified valuing diversity/people, arts and culture, followed by nature. In our conversations some participants who voiced an interest in celebrating and valuing the local area’s
diversity and culture also noted that there should be a consciousness to recognize both past and present history and culture. While the bomber plant, for example, should be noted as part of our community’s heritage, acknowledgement should also be paid to the history and culture of residents.

The community gatherings also reiterated residents’ appreciation for natural spaces, which was also noted in the survey. When participants were asked to name some of their current “sacred spaces” or community assets, green space was cited numerous times, including parks, walking trails and natural landscaping. Water was also mentioned on several occasions, as people voiced their pride and appreciation for rivers, creeks and even fountains.

Gathering spaces were also noted as a community asset and desired addition to future community planning. This included green gathering spaces – active parks and pocket parks – and urban areas – seating areas as well as businesses that have gathering areas and spark creative performance and conversation.

Q: WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY?

According to the survey data, residents of Washtenaw County value arts and culture as the 2nd most important component of their community with nature at a close third.
**RECOMMENDATION**

With these values in mind, the public art and design projects should seek to illustrate the rich diversity and history of Washtenaw County while also creating, highlighting or complimenting natural elements. Artwork integrated into the Super Stops, for example, should be mindful of the local community’s complete history and population, making spaces for some of the untold stories. Natural landscaping is also encouraged, and future construction should be mindful to preserve and create greenspace when possible.

### 4.3 | PUBLIC ART IDENTIFICATION

Survey and community gathering participants stated that they primarily recognize sculptures/statues and murals as the types of visible public art already found within Washtenaw County. It should be noted that, when asked to identify community assets or sacred spaces, many community gathering participants also mentioned a variety of design elements – from river access to parks to architectural elements – which should absolutely be considered in a community’s public art and design schema. What’s more, when citing examples of public art and design elements that they appreciate and enjoy anywhere in the world, many participants mentioned pieces that were either iconic – Cloud Gate in Chicago or the Space Needle in Seattle – or interactive, including both physical interaction – creative seating, accessible fountains or embedded sidewalk games – and community created temporary art installations such as yarnbombs or rotating displays of local poetry.

**Q: WHAT PUBLIC ART & DESIGN ALREADY EXISTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

The primary type of public art and design identified was sculptures/statues. Murals were the second most common with several other types identified as well.
RECOMMENDATION

The wide variety of the existing public art and design elements in the area need to be identified and publicized. Community education through a variety of avenues – as intentional as theatrical public art tours or as minimal as Facebook posts and advertisements – should strive to identify and celebrate the public art and design elements that currently exist, and encourage community members, developers and designers to think more creatively about how unique design elements, from paint colors to bike racks, can enrich the county by making public spaces more enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing.

Future public art and design projects should also consider how local community members can and will interact with the work – both during the creation process and upon completion. While truly iconic pieces often require a huge investment and may necessitate skills of artists and fabricators outside of our region, a vibrant, celebrated community can certainly be cultivated through smaller, well-designed and community supported projects.

It is recommended that any works installed along the Washtenaw Corridor be mapped using the Public Art mapping App created by the Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs, MI Art Tours. The Arts Alliance and MCACA Staff can add detailed information on pieces as well as images and users can identify all public art works near to their location. Works can also be identified as groups so that viewers can take “tours” of the works.

4.4 | PUBLIC ART TYPE

Many respondents have requested functional art, such as bus stops and benches. They prefer interactive works to those that you just observe. There is also a large demand for local artists and community input.

RECOMMENDATION

For every construction project within the ReImagine Washtenaw project, the following questions should always be asked:

- How can this functional object be redesigned to be more unique, memorable and aesthetically pleasing?
- Is there a way to integrate local artists or community members into the aesthetic elements of this project?
- How can public art and design elements become more interactive for all ages?

Recognizing that creativity often breeds creativity, an effort to use these questions, think outside of the box and seek out non-traditional types of public art and design should be explored soon in the design and construction of any projects along the Washtenaw Corridor, starting with the transportation Super Stops. The Super Stops provide an ideal and exciting opportunity to explore new types of public art and design not yet predominantly seen in the area. Elements to consider for unique, interactive, aesthetically pleasing and functional yet fun design elements include street furniture, lighting elements and way-finding indicators.
4.5 | PUBLIC ART AND DESIGN LOCATIONS

Because public art and design is found in public spaces, it is unique in that it is free and accessible to all. Thus it increases the public’s access to the arts by providing equal access and opportunity to enjoy the work. Similarly, the public transportation system, The Ride that connects all four of the communities along the corridor has as its vision to “enhance the quality of life for Washtenaw County stakeholders while promoting the economy, safeguarding the environment, and strengthening communities”. Because public art and design project initiatives closely align with this vision it is very fitting that the location identified by the Joint Technical Committee for the ReImagine Project for these projects are the Super Stops. These Super Stops are multimodal bus hubs along the corridor that are filled with additional amenities to better facilitate riders and help them enjoy their commute.

Above is an example of what a typical Super Stop along the Corridor may look like, as designed by project partner SmithGroupJJR.

With a total of eight, these Super Stops are equally distributed and fall within each of the four communities along the corridor.

RECOMMENDATION

Although the Super Stops might be an ideal place to begin locating public art and design pieces, works need not be limited to these site locations and could be incorporated in various places along the length of the entire corridor.
4.6 | FUNDING

Overall, people are hopeful and excited about the integration of public art and design into the ReImagine Washtenaw Project. However, some people have concerns regarding funding, especially those that do not want the project to be paid for by taxpayer dollars. As for how the project should be funded, people are evenly split across three main sources; therefore there is no one best funding source identified. Of the options explored public/government funding, private funds and a combination of public and private funding were identified as the top three ways.

RECOMMENDATION

Because the community identified three main sources for funding – a combination of public/private funds, private funds, and public/government funds – it is recommended that a combination of these three sources are explored to fund the project. Additionally, public art and design should be considered very early in the planning stages of any construction projects. By making creative and aesthetically pleasing designs part of the very fabric of any future build or landscaping, the cost of the design elements will easily be justified by the overall increased community value of the work.

How should public art and design in Washtenaw County be funded?

- Crowdsourcing/fundraising; Art fair fees increased; Designated arts millage; Builders/developers; U of M students/donations from university; Make private art public; Sell bonds; Donation option on taxes, All <1%
- A combination of public/private, 32.25%
- Public/government (percent-for-art programs, appropriations, taxes, local, state or federal grants, etc.), 29.53%
- Private (grants, gifts, corporate sponsorships, individual donations, etc.), 33.33%

Overall, people are hopeful and excited about the integration of public art and design into the ReImagine Washtenaw Project. However, some people have concerns regarding funding, especially those that do not want the project to be paid for by taxpayer dollars. As for how the project should be funded, people are evenly split across three main sources; therefore there is no one best funding source identified. Of the options explored public/government funding, private funds and a combination of public and private funding were identified as the top three ways.

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5 | CONCLUSION

This plan, through its research, suggestions, best practices and examples, should help inform and guide the direction of future public art and design installations along the Washtenaw Corridor as they relate to the ReImagine Washtenaw project. By utilizing the above recommendations as guidelines, our expectation is that this plan will assist with decision-making to help facilitate and pave the way for public art and design along the Washtenaw Corridor, whether it involves creative and attractive design in functional elements, or the installation of public art pieces. Very notably, we strongly hope that designers and planners will take to heart the importance of having the community well engaged in the selection and planning process for public art and design installations. Community involvement is key to sparking community buy-in, appreciation and preservation of public artworks. The Arts Alliance is able and eager to help with these processes going forward. Collaborating with ReImagine Washtenaw project partners we hope to continue to enhance public spaces, promote economic vitality and increase access to cultural and educational features along the corridor.