



EDITORS PICK

Madison to consider 'Percent for Art' program

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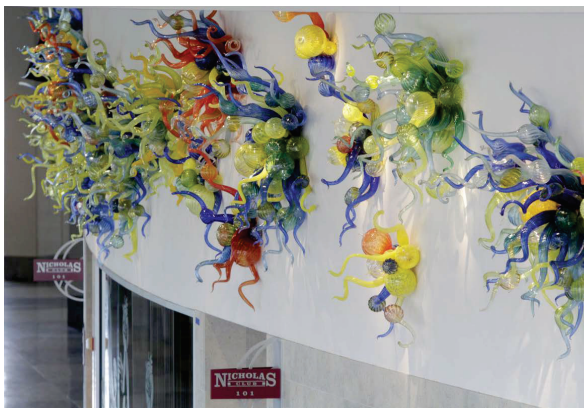


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Public art in Madison could receive a new stream of funding and greater prioritization under a proposed program that would dedicate a portion of some city-funded construction projects to new artwork.

Under the proposed ordinance sponsored by Mayor Paul Soglin and five alders, 1 percent of capital projects that have adopted budgets of \$5 million or more in construction costs would be appropriated for public art projects. The proposed ordinance would become effective two years after it is adopted.

"Establishing an ordinance that will allocate a percent of the budget of some major capital projects towards the creation of site specific art will ensure that the city has the lead time and the funding necessary for art to be incorporated in our major public buildings and places," said Karin Wolf, Madison Arts Program administrator.

The program, called **Percent for Art**, is common across other municipalities and states. Wisconsin's Percent for Art Program, which dedicated 0.2 percent of the construction budget for public

art projects in selected new state buildings or renovation projects, was active for about three decades before it was repealed in 2011.

Before the state program ended, it led to some works both beloved and derided, such as Dale Chihuly's glass "Mendota Wall" in the Kohl Center on UW-Madison's campus and Donald Lipski's "Nail's Tales" sculpture outside of the Camp Randall stadium.

Wolf said creating a mechanism of dedicated funding for public art prioritizes projects that have the potential to express community values and lets the community "make meaning together."

"Throughout Madison's history, the city has commissioned art for public places as a way of enhancing our common spaces and buildings, celebrating our community's openness and collectively making meaning out of our common history," Wolf said.

Expanding the community's experience with public art can also create a forum for discussion, Wolf said.

"I think it's important when we have a society with so many difficult issues of poverty and racism and big things that we're grappling with, to have a way to approach those issues," Wolf said.

Projects in Madison that would be eligible under the proposed program include construction of a new city facility, renovation or remodeling of at least half of the square footage of a city-owned or leased facility and improvement of any city-owned or leased outdoor site improvement project. It would not apply to Madison Water and Sewer Utility areas, repair of parking structures and landfill remediation projects.

The program would also create separate funds for new art projects and maintenance of current public art in the city.

Ald. Mike Verveer, District 4, expressed enthusiasm for the program and is a sponsor of the proposed ordinance. He previously advocated for the program when he was a member of the Madison Arts Commission and said implementing the program is "overdue."

"I had hoped that we had a law like this in place a long time ago," Verveer said. "Not that the city hasn't included some public art in our building projects over the years but not to the extent that I wish we had and would have if we had an ordinance in place."

The Percent for Art ordinance will be introduced at the Council's 6:30 p.m. meeting Tuesday in Room 201 of the City-County Building, located at 210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Tags

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