

City of Madison Sidewalk Poetry Program

Purpose

As part of the City's effort to incorporate art into public works projects, the City may print poems in city sidewalks during street reconstruction projects. The purpose of this program is to enhance the city's pedestrian experience and encourage neighborhood place making. Under this program, the City decides whether to place any poetry in sidewalks and controls the content of poetry placed in the sidewalks. The City is not opening up the physical structure of the city's sidewalks as a forum for public expression.

Poem Selection

Poems used in this sidewalk poetry program shall be selected by the Madison Arts Commission (MAC) following a public meeting, subject to the following guidelines:

1. Selected poems must be written by a City of Madison Poet Laureate.
2. Selected poems may not contain religious content or commercial, political, hate, or public issue speech.
3. Selected poems may not be obscene or contain profanity.
4. Selected poems may contain only text (no images).
5. Selected poems may be no longer than 10 lines in length with up to 40 characters per line including spaces. Poems may be no more than 250 characters total including titles, spaces, and punctuations.

Poem Placement

When the City decides to print poems in sidewalks during a street reconstruction project, the City Engineering Department will provide MAC with the specific location of sidewalk panels available for imprintation. From those panels, MAC will select the specific location for the poems. Poems shall not be placed in sidewalks immediately adjacent to a property if the owner of that property objects to such placement.

Public Meeting

Prior to selecting poems, MAC shall place the item on the agenda of one of its regular public meetings so that neighborhood feedback regarding poem selection and placement may be considered.

The City retains final authority over poem selection and placement.

Removal of Sidewalk Poetry

The City reserves the right to remove any sidewalk panel stamped with poetry at any time and for any reason.