

Memo

To: Arts Commission

From: Ray Heitner, City Planner and Arts Commission Liaison

Date: November 20, 2024

Re: Asphalt Art Initiative Grant

Bloomberg Philanthropies is currently issuing a grant application for cities with more than 50,000 residents to fund visual art on roadways, pedestrian spaces, and public infrastructure in cities with primary goals to improve street and pedestrian activity, activate underutilized public space, and promote civic engagement in local communities. An array of examples from past awards can be found in the [grant link](#). At this time, staff would like to know if the Arts Commission has interest in applying for this grant. Grant applications are due by January 31, 2025.

Applicants are required to formulate a team which would include a lead city agency and other collaborative partners, such as local nonprofit community or arts organizations, and/or individual artists or consultants. Each application must have a site identified for the proposed project. Applications need to define a significant challenge with the site that can be addressed by an asphalt art initiative intervention, such as difficulty for access, lack of useful public space, and increasing safety on streets with a high volume of pedestrians and cyclists. Projects must be designed to last at least two years. A decommissioning plan for each proposed site is also required. Grant awards are expected to range between \$25,000 and \$100,000. A budget outlining proposed expenses is also required in the application.

Should the Arts Commission express in interest in pursuing the grant, staff will discuss feasible locations for potential project sites. Any site that is included in the application will require pre-approval from the City's Public Works Department. Streets that are under IDOT control will likely not be eligible for the 2025 grant window, due to a lack of discussion with IDOT on this matter. Depending on the location of the proposed artwork, certain local neighborhood organizations may be a better fit to partner on the grant.

For the November Arts Commission meeting, City staff will need to know whether the Commission would like to have the city apply for the grant, and if so, whether there are locations citywide that meet the outlined criteria that the Commission would like city to explore.