



Legislation Text

File #: R-2021-116, **Version:** 1

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF RESOLUTION R-2021-116: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, ENDORSING AN APPLICATION TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE CITY OF NORMAN AND THE NORMAN ARTS COUNCIL FOR A BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES ASPHALT ART INITIATIVE GRANT.

BACKGROUND: On March 4, 2021, Mayor Clark was contacted by the Chief Executive Officer for Bloomberg Philanthropies and was invited to submit an application for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Initiative Grant for 2021. The Bloomberg Philanthropies intends to award as many as twenty grants to U.S. cities of up to \$25,000 each. The deadline for the grant application submittal is April 30, 2021.

The Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative responds to the growing number of cities around the world embracing art as an effective and relatively low-cost strategy to activate their streets. While cities incorporate art into public spaces in a variety of ways, the focus of this initiative is what they term asphalt art. These are visual interventions on roadways (intersections and crosswalks), pedestrian spaces (plazas and sidewalks), and vertical infrastructure (utility boxes, traffic barriers and underpasses).

The Asphalt Art Initiative grant program is supporting pilot projects in U.S. cities to demonstrate the impact of asphalt art projects and to encourage cities to develop their own processes for implementing these low-cost activations effectively. Sixteen winning cities were announced in June 2020, and projects will be installed in 2020 and 2021. Applications are currently open for the next round of applications. Some examples of last year's projects can be seen at <https://asphaltart.bloomberg.org>.

DISCUSSION: Upon receipt of the e-mail, Mayor Clark then reached out to Ms. Erinn Gavaghan, Executive Director of the Norman Arts Council, to inform her about the opportunity for a grant application for on-street public art. This spurred a meeting between the Norman Arts Council and the Public Works Department. In that meeting, it was decided that the Norman Arts Council would prepare the grant application and co-submit with the City of Norman. This decision was reached because the grant guidelines stipulate that each application requires a city agency as its principal applicant.

The purpose of the grant is to help cities create arts-driven street redesigns that can improve traffic safety, develop vibrant public spaces, and engage residents of their respective communities. While the pandemic has fundamentally changed how citizens interact with their communities and landscape, the grants provide an opportunity for cities to activate a key public resource-city streets-in a way that celebrates the creativity of residents and offers chances to safely collaborate and connect with others.

The City of Norman will be undertaking the Porter Avenue Streetscape Project between Robinson Street and Alameda Street in fall 2021 as part of the City's 2019 Transportation Bond Program. This project, which utilizes federal funding for a large portion of the project costs, will be eligible for bidding by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation as early as October 2021. During the meeting with the Norman Arts Council, it was suggested that this grant application should focus on the Porter Corridor, most likely in the vicinity of the Johnson Street intersection. This would allow for collaboration with Norman Regional Health System as well as the City's Senior Wellness Facility.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that City Council adopt Resolution R-2021-116 endorsing the grant application for submission to the Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Initiative no later than Friday, April 30, 2021. Grants will be announced sometime in the fall 2021 with project installation to occur during calendar year 2022