

COUNTY OF ERIE

LOCAL LAW INTRO. NO. 2-1 -2023

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THE PUBLIC ART ACT OF ERIE COUNTY

A Local Law providing for public financial support for public art in the County of Erie.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the County of Erie as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent

The Erie County Legislature desires to support and promote worthwhile initiatives that help to promote the public good and improve the quality of life of our community. Like many other municipalities and local governments around the country, the Legislature wishes to further develop the County's financial support of public art through the County's construction of new infrastructure. This initiative seeks to make art accessible to all Erie County residents and visitors and to foster a sense of community connection and civic pride.

The County already has a robust financial contribution and commitment to arts and cultural institutions, through annual budgetary funding and occasional, one-time capital or operational funding for cultural assets. In addition, the County has been funding a position of Public Art Curator located at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery for several years.

The County also values artists and believes that artists should be compensated in a manner consistent with their experience. This will ensure that artists' expenses and labor on public art projects are adequately compensated and will strengthen our public art artists community by properly valuing their need in Erie County.

As contrasted with annual operational funding for the County's cultural assets (which are already financially subsidized and supported by the County of Erie), this initiative proposes to create a funding mechanism for public art related to certain Erie County capital construction projects. Under the proposal, depending on the size and type of the project, the County would allocate 1% of the cost of a building construction project (up to a maximum of \$10,000 allocated). The Committee will decide where in Erie County the public art will be installed in an annual Public Art Master Plan. Art won't need to be implemented where every capital improvement exists. All the 1% monies collected from the previous year's capital improvements will be allocated to fund the design, supplies and commission of the next year's Public Master Art Plan.

Section 2. Funding

Capital projects on buildings that are \$250,000 or greater, whether funded by capital (bonded) funds or operating funds, shall include the appropriation of funds equal to 1% of the cost of the

project, with said funds to be appropriated for the acquisition, maintenance and management of public art, except where the appropriating resolution, bond resolution or budget may provide otherwise; provided, however, that, where applicable, such amount shall be reduced to the extent that state or federal government funds are not authorized to be used for such purpose. The maximum allocated for public art shall be \$10,000 from each eligible capital project.

A "Public Art Fund" shall be created by the Division of Budget and Management to hold funds for implementation of the projects finalized in the Master Public Art Plan and/or projects chosen by the Arts in Public Places Committee.

The use of any funds appropriated for any project for public art purposes shall be in accordance with the Master Public Art Plan, except that any such funds provided from the proceeds of County serial bonds or notes shall be used only for public art purposes related to the project for which such bonds or notes were authorized. To the extent the total appropriation of a project is not used for the acquisition of works of art for said project, upon the approval of the County Legislature, the remainder may be used for:

1. Arts program administrative costs, insurance costs or for the repair and maintenance of any works of art acquired under this law; or
2. Supplementing other appropriations for the acquisition of works of art under this law or to place works of art in or near government facilities which have already been constructed.

Section 3. Definitions

As used in this law, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

"Public Art" includes any application of skill and taste to production of tangible objects according to aesthetic principles, including but not limited to paintings, sculptures, engravings, carvings, frescoes, mobiles, murals, collages, mosaics, statues, bas-reliefs, tapestries, photographs, fountains, streetscapes, drawings and ceramics, as well as decorative seating, topiary, and other decorative public use features.

"Capital Projects" includes: (a) new construction of a building or of additional space added to a building; and/or (b) any reconstruction or renovation of a building or part of a building, whether financed through the issuance of bonds or pay-as-you-go funding or other (non-County) sources of funds.

"Projects" shall not include those which are solely for rehabilitation of equipment.

"Cost of a Project" includes design, architectural and engineering fees, site work, construction, and contingency allowances for a project.

"Public Art Fund" means the new fund to which 1% of the value of a new capital project will be allocated to pursue Public Art initiatives (to a maximum of \$10,000 for each capital project).

“Committee” refers to the Arts in Public Places Committee.

“Master Public Art Plan” (“Plan”) means the annual plan created by the Committee by March 1 to ensure a coherent acquisition program and implementation guidelines for Public Art.

Section 4. The Arts in Public Places Committee

A. There shall be an Arts in Public Places Committee, hereinafter referred to as the “Committee,” consisting of five (5) members. The County Executive shall appoint three (3) members, and the Majority Caucus and Minority Caucus of the Legislature shall each appoint one member. All five members shall be subject to Legislature confirmation. The Chairperson of such Committee shall be selected from the members of the Committee for a term of one year.

B. The five (5) members shall be experts in the fields of art, art history, architecture or architectural history and must be Erie County residents and may not serve on any other County advisory board or be a County employee or officer. The members shall be professionally associated with local visual arts groups, such as art galleries or art schools, or have at least ten (10) years’ experience in creating professional art.

C. In addition to the five (5) voting members of the Committee, The County Executive, the Chairperson of the Legislature, the Chairperson of the Legislature’s Community Enrichment Committee, the Legislature Minority Leader, and the Commissioner of Public Works or their designees, shall serve as ex officio non-voting members of the Committee.

D. The Committee shall choose the methods of acquisition of public art for each project. Such methods of acquisition may include but are not limited to projects of preexisting art, direct commission, art competition, request for proposals, or acceptance of donations.

E. The Committee may, for each project, convene a project panel comprised of at least three members of the Committee, one of whom shall be designated Chairperson. The Committee may also appoint additional art experts as members of the project panel. The Committee may appoint additional members to the panel to serve as advisors, who may be community representatives, County employees, project managers or others who will have frequent contact with the public art when it is completed. An architect or engineer shall be an ex officio member of each panel. The panel shall review the scope of each project and shall make recommendations to the Committee on the nature of the public art to be considered for the project, on the method of acquisition for each project, on the specific artist and the specific art for each project and what portion of the budget for each project shall be used for refurbishing or restoring existing works of art or to be set aside for the maintenance of a work of art.

F. The acquisition and siting of all art work shall be approved by the County Executive and the County Legislature.

G. Ownership and title of all works of public art acquired by the County under this section shall be vested in the County of Erie.

H. The Committee shall create by-laws which will govern the conduct and operations of the Committee.

I. The Erie County Department of Environment and Planning shall serve as coordinator for the program and provide staff support to the Committee.

J. The Committee shall deliver an annual report to the County Executive and the County Legislature detailing its operations, Plan and art created under its auspices.

Section 5. Master Public Art Plan

The Committee shall prepare a Master Public Art Plan ("Plan") annually to ensure a coherent acquisition program and implementation guidelines, which shall be approved by the Erie County Legislature. The Committee shall hold a public hearing on the Plan prior to its approval. The Plan shall be approved by the Committee and submitted to the Legislature annually by March 1.

1. All acquisitions and sales of public art shall be in accordance with the Master Public Art Plan. The Committee shall recommend acquisitions, the hiring of artists, and shall oversee the public education and curatorial aspects of the acquisition program.
2. The Plan shall make affirmative efforts to be equitable and diverse and to include artists selected for public art projects who are racially and ethnically diverse. The siting of such art projects shall be throughout the County, but with efforts undertaken to place art in areas of diversity.
3. The Plan shall strive to use artists that are County residents.
4. The Plan shall emphasize the importance of adequate compensation of artists.
5. The Plan shall be voted on by the Legislature and presented to the Department of Environment and Planning by May 1st annually.
6. The Committee shall, through the Plan and its acquisition efforts, make efforts to call for artist submissions and publicize the intention to find appropriate art within thirty (30) days of the Plan's approval annually.
7. Final contracts for authorizing public art contracts and hiring of artists are subject to approval by the Erie County Legislature.

Section 6. Effective Date

This Local Law shall take effect upon filing with the New York State Secretary of State.

Section 7. Severability

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this law or the application thereof to any person, individual, corporation, firm, partnership, or business shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder thereof but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this law, or in its specific application.

Sponsors:

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