



Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

July 14, 2020

Subject: VPIS Comments on Draft Public Art Policy (PAP) of June 2020

The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) Board of Directors strongly supports the maintenance and expansion of public art throughout the City and offers the following comments on the draft City of Falls Church Art Policy.

1. The UVA Graduate Student report is interesting and provides ideas from many other jurisdictions from around the country. We suggest disconnecting the UVA student report from the City policy and allowing it to stand for what it is, a student supporting report.
2. This policy (starting on page 62) reads more like a supporting document and not the policy in which we would expect to find the ordinance language. The language speaks about the policy in the future tense.
3. The policy starts with goals, visions, core values in a way that should be less confusing and more streamlined.
4. Section 1.4 has a definition of public art and includes in the definition that it is located within the public domain. We can foresee many cases where public art is not within the public domain, and such examples are listed in the inventory earlier. This definition needs to be rethought. Section 1.6 provides a direct contradiction stating that public art can be on private property if it has public access. We would agree with that statement.
5. Section 2.3 is titled the Goals of the Public Art Policy and appears to be a repetition of Section 1.4 Definition of Public Art. What is missing is a goal for public art or intended purpose. Text for that was provided earlier by the committee (such as the version provided by Irene Chambers Reid).
6. Section 3.3 states that the PAP contains an inventory of the current artworks. The policy can call for the inventory to be maintained but the inventory would not be **in** the policy.
7. Section 3.7 calls for a Percent-for-Art as a requirement for private development and we agree this is the most likely source of funds for significant public art for the City. However, we need to make clear the percentage (such as 1%), how that is calculated, and when it would be paid to make this concept effective.
8. Section 6.2 has the Arts and Humanities Council making a recommendation to the Planning Department. As with any other process, boards and commissions should be making recommendations to the Planning Commission.

9. Section 6.2 indicates that the art should be maintained for 30 years. We suggest for murals twenty (20) years may be the normal expected life of current materials used for murals. Beyond that, a maintenance fund would need to be established, or funding to remove the art at the end of the intended life.
10. Appendix B has the Percent-for-Art as part of the City's CIP process and that the funds will be appropriated by the City Council. If there is City funded public art, this source should be named differently from the requirement for commercial developers to provide or fund public art.

In summary, the policy document starting at page 62 is a very good start towards a policy and ordinance for public art but needs much more work before it is ready for City Council consideration. We volunteer to work on this effort to move this policy forward.