

Public Artist In Residence

PAIR PILOT PROGRAM

Executive Summary • Evaluation Report 2025



A Municipal Residency • Milwaukee, WI • 2022-2024

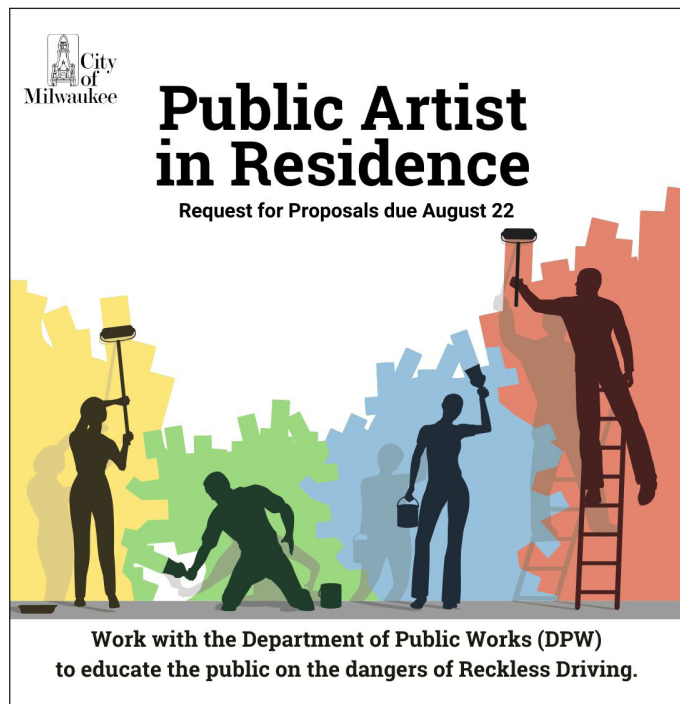
Commissioned by the Public Art Subcommittee of the Milwaukee Arts Board

Conducted by Paul Druecke

Introduction

The City of Milwaukee Public Artist In Residence Program (PAIR) invests in the city's cultural producers by leveraging the knowledge, practices and creative tool kits of local artists to build a better community for Milwaukee residents. The residency program pairs an artist with a city department to leverage the benefits of collaboration and interdisciplinary problem-solving. It draws on a history of municipal residencies from across the country while fostering Milwaukee's unique response to issues of civic importance.

MAB approved the PAIR Pilot Program in February of 2022. The program would be funded from MAB's Public Art Fund. The Department of City Development (DCD) was chosen to administer the program. The Department of Public Works (DPW) was selected as the partner agency based on their Statement of Interest, which proposed a thematic focus that would "raise awareness around the dangers of reckless driving and create a culture where lives are valued and safe driving is the responsibility of everyone." Echoing the Pilot Program's goals of integrating artists into city government in service of improving the lives of Milwaukeeans; assessing community needs and using creative problem-solving to develop/improve programs and initiatives; and working across sectors for the social good. The residency would be an opportunity for the public to learn about contemporary art, the role of creative problem-solving, and Milwaukee's creative community while contributing to the conversation.



PAIR Pilot Program: Quick Facts



Artist: Sarah Davitt

Liaison: Angie Livermore

Host Department: Department of Public Works

Duration: One Year (which was extended to approx. 18 months)

Total Program Spending: \$81,360.78

Administrator: Sally Svetic, Department of City Development and Polly Morris, Chair, MAB Public Art Subcommittee

Evaluation Reports Focus and Goals

The Evaluation Report (ER) establishes a forward-thinking framework for future PAIR iterations. To this end, the report focuses on PAIR's programmatic structure rather than the artwork it produced. The Executive Summary highlights two major questions, which are given more detailed treatment in the full report.

1. What recommendations, based on detailed assessment of the Pilot Program, will help improve the program going forward?
2. What were the Pilot Program's strengths that will benefit future iterations?

Milwaukee unveils artwork to address reckless driving

By: CBS 58 Newsroom

Posted: Aug 14, 2024 12:06 PM CDT

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Recommendations

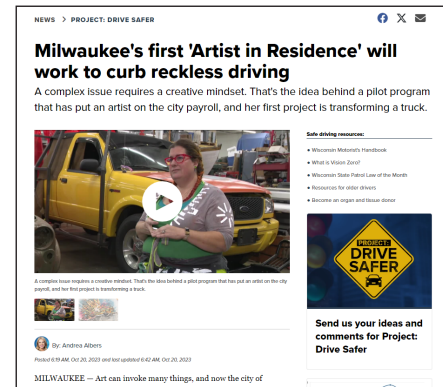
The following recommendations envision a sustainable PAIR Program that will benefit Milwaukee and its citizens. It is helpful to note that productive frictions and areas highlighted for improvement are in many ways the Pilot's strengths. They are integral in mapping out the program's future. It is also important to note the challenges of working with a single data sample, which necessitates the ER qualifying the tendency of positive and negative assessments to predict future residency dynamics.

1. The ER highly recommends structuring the first three months (minimum) as a time for introductions, immersion, and learning without any major decision being made. This period is crucial to PAIR's story. It's a time when the public can meet the artist as well as city departments and employees. The ER recommends highlighting the value of these initial meetings. As the artist learns about city processes, and city employees learn about the artist's approach to problem solving, those experiences are shared with the public who learn about both. One major goal in such an approach is to inspire more community engagement throughout the residency.

2. The ER recommends all PAIR iterations include two or more residencies within the same cycle. They could overlap or run consecutively. For example, the RFP for a new residency could be released as the current residency is winding down. It is crucial for a successful program to enact its own future. Downtime between programmatic cycles will ultimately require more effort to sustain.

3. The ER recommends refining the Liaison role so as to offer more logistical support for DCD staff. The liaison's role should include an evaluative component, making notes in real time that will contribute to the program's evaluation. In that capacity, the liaison's role should have the potential, and be well-positioned, to consult and help problem-solve across the entire spectrum of PAIR activities.

4. The ER recommends broadening the program's core team, supporters, and advocates to include a diverse range of community leaders, business owners, and Milwaukee enthusiasts. The goal is to expand the notion of stakeholders so as to support overall workload while allowing the program to better tell its story to the broadest possible audience.



Program Strengths

1. The PAIR Pilot Program began with a well-defined structure that included research, community engagement, testing, production, and implementation. The different phases were adapted in real-time based on specific needs and collaborative dynamics. The combination of structure and malleability was a major success that created a productive environment with largely positive experiences by all parties.



2. In the wake of critical feedback following the Art Car's unveiling, the PAIR Team and their supporters emphasized the program's strengths and intentions, highlighted misinformation and continued to promote the Art Car's communal value.

3. The working relationship between the MAB's Public Art Subcommittee, Milwaukee's Department of City Development, and independent artists highlights the benefits of partnering with others to generate fresh ideas regarding the traditional roles of government and private sector. Administrative logistics are integral to such partnerships. Many people, including PAS Chair Polly Morris and subcommittee members are quick to credit Sally Svetic, PAIR's main contact within the DCD, as a major factor in the successful pilot.

Conclusion

The PAIR Pilot Program was a successful residency that actualized many of its goals while establishing a base line from which future improvement can be made. The data, quotes, observations, and recommendation that make up the report shed much light on the Pilot residency and PAIR's path forward. The Pilot Program made clear that the full potential for municipal residency's civic benefit can only be achieved through serial implementation.

The ER concludes that the best use of PAIR's initial investment in Milwaukee's cultural community, is to build on the Program's successes and learn from those areas that can be improved. An ongoing PAIR Program will continue to foster dialogue and interdisciplinary efforts that uplift the city's neighbors and neighborhoods.

