

CITY OF COOS BAY WORK SESSION - PARKS COMMISSION

Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
August 6, 2026	3.a

TO: Chair Lyons & Commissioners

FROM: Greg Hamblet, Operations Administrator

THROUGH: Jennifer Wirsing, Public Works Director

ISSUE: Public Art and Sculpture Installations in City Parks Discussion

SUMMARY:

The City has received interest regarding the placement of sculptures, artwork, and other forms of public art within City parks and public spaces; however, there are currently no established guidelines addressing the review, acceptance, ownership, or maintenance of such installations. Staff is bringing this topic forward for Parks Commission discussion to gather input regarding potential opportunities, challenges, and considerations associated with public art installations and whether additional guidelines or procedures may be beneficial.

ACTION REQUESTED:

If it please the Commission, Staff requests that the Parks Commission discuss the potential placement of sculptures and other forms of public art within City parks and provide feedback regarding:

- The role public art may play in enhancing City parks and public spaces;
- Appropriate locations and types of installations;
- Potential operational, maintenance, and ownership considerations;
- Whether additional evaluation, guidelines, or procedures should be developed for future public art proposals.

No formal action is requested at this time.

BACKGROUND:

Public art installations, including sculptures, murals, and interactive artwork, are commonly used by municipalities to enhance public spaces, support community identity, and create additional opportunities for cultural and educational engagement.

Many communities have established processes for considering public art proposals. These approaches vary depending on the size of the community, available resources, and desired level of oversight. Common approaches include:

- Establishing public art committees or advisory groups;
- Utilizing existing parks or public property review processes;
- Creating donation and installation agreements for privately funded artwork;
- Developing formal public art policies establishing criteria and procedures.

Staff was able to review a few of the Oregon coastal communities and finds that most cities do not regulate sculptures through a standalone ordinance. Instead, communities generally rely on administrative processes, advisory groups, or project-specific agreements.

Examples include:

City	Approach
• Newport	Utilizes a Public Arts Committee to provide guidance on public art activities and initiatives
• Florence	Uses a Public Arts Committee to support development of public art opportunities and identify locations for artwork
• Bandon	Incorporates artwork and sculpture into public spaces through community-supported efforts
• Astoria	Utilizes existing city processes for improvements to civic and waterfront areas

If the City were to consider allowing sculptures or other public art installations in parks, several factors would require consideration, including:

Location Considerations: Different City parks have different purposes, uses, and characteristics. Potential artwork locations would need to be evaluated based on compatibility with existing park functions.

Mingus Park

- Highly utilized community park with recreational amenities and public gathering areas;
- Potential opportunities for artwork that complements existing park uses and community events.

John Topits Park

- Large natural area with significant ecological value;
- Any installations would require consideration of natural resource protection, trail impacts, and compatibility with the park's natural character.

Coastal Environment Considerations

Due to Coos Bay's coastal location, artwork installations would require additional consideration related to durability and long-term maintenance. Exposure to saltwater, moisture, wind, and other coastal conditions may impact material selection and structural performance.

Potential considerations include:

- Corrosion-resistant materials;
- Structural stability and anchoring requirements;
- Wind exposure and safety considerations;
- Accessibility;
- Routine inspection and maintenance needs;
- Installation impacts to existing park infrastructure;
- Potential impacts to environmentally sensitive areas.

Ownership and Maintenance Considerations

Before accepting or approving artwork installations, the City would need to consider responsibilities associated with ownership, maintenance, and long-term stewardship.

Potential considerations include:

- Ownership transfer;
- Installation responsibilities;

- Maintenance expectations;
- Repair obligations;
- Insurance and liability;
- Removal procedures if artwork becomes unsafe, deteriorated, or inconsistent with future park needs.

Temporary vs. Permanent Installations

Another consideration is whether future opportunities should include temporary installations, permanent installations, or both. Temporary installations may provide opportunities for rotating exhibits and community engagement while limiting long-term maintenance obligations. Permanent installations may provide lasting community assets but require greater consideration regarding ownership, maintenance, and future removal.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

At this time, there are no direct budget implications associated with this discussion.

If the City were to establish a process for accepting and managing public art installations in the future, potential financial considerations could include:

- Staff time associated with reviewing proposals and coordinating installations;
- Engineering or site review requirements;
- Installation costs;
- Foundation or anchoring improvements;
- Long-term maintenance and repair responsibilities;
- Potential removal or relocation costs.

Future public art installations could potentially be funded through private donations, sponsorships, grants, community partnerships, or other funding sources. Any future proposal requiring City funding or ongoing maintenance obligations would require separate review and approval.

ATTACHMENT(S):