2/3/2026

Public Art Program

February 3, 2026

Background

Develop a Public Art Program is a Priority Action Item

Description - Project Consists of Creating a Public Art Program to Address Program Management and Governance, Funding, Project Selection, Community Engagement and Program Evaluation

This project can likely be completed according to the schedule if the art program is operated by the Village (the Village will purchase the art and place it on Village-owned properties)

Initial Phase - Village Operated Program Focusing on the Downtown Flexible Amenity Areas.



Village of Downers Grove

STREETSCAPES PLAN

ADOPTED | April 8, 2025

1 STREETSCAPE FUNCTION AND CHARACTER

For all areas, the streetscape is functional but lacks a distinctive image and identity representing the community. Stakeholders raised the question if the Downtown Area and Fairview Focus Area should have the same character for consistency within the community, or if the Fairview Focus Area could have its own unique neighborhood style.

The Downtown and Fairview Focus Area streetscape improvements first establish baseline functional improvements, with additional components identified to add character. The resulting improvements create a community-wide style, while allowing the Fairview Focus Area to have its own neighborhood identity.

The streetscape style leans towards traditional given comments received through community input, although innovative elements, products, and materials are included as a progressive solution, consistent with community sustainability goals.

2 EXPANDED FLEXIBLE AMENITY AREAS

Streetscapes need to provide a balance between pedestrian and vehicular uses, which are not always clear and obvious. Several situations exist where pedestrian and vehicular uses compete for the same space. As of 2025, the Village allows seasonal outdoor dining to use on-street parking spaces in certain permitted areas. Permanent modifications provide additional pedestrian space by converting vehicular areas and strategically determined on-street parking spaces to pedestrian use. These additional pedestrian areas are designed to be flexible for a variety of uses including outdoor dining, cultural amenities, additional landscaping, and common seating areas.

Additional crosswalks, curb bump-outs, and traffic calming devices are included to improve pedestrian safety.

3 PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES AND PROGRAMMED EVENTS

Streetscape areas and parks and open spaces are frequently used as public gathering spaces for programmed events. The commuter parking lot is used for the Downtown Downers Grove Market and Rotary Grove Fest. Parks and plazas are used to host a variety of events. Friends Corner and Linda Kunze Plaza are owned and operated by the Village, while Fishel Park is owned and operated by the Park District. Programmed events contribute to the success of the community and the streetscape environment is designed to accommodate functional and operational requirements. Locations, temporary conditions, timing of events, infrastructure, and management expectations impact the design of these spaces.

Specifically, Linda Kunze Plaza and the public space on the north side of the railroad tracks at Main Street can be improved to better accommodate public gathering and programmed events. A public space is created in the Fairview Focus Area at the commuter lot along with connecting the pocket park on Fairview Avenue and to the Fairview Metra Station area.

4 CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

Currently there are limited cultural or public art components within the streetscapes. There is an opportunity to better represent the character of the community by including cultural references and public art within the streetscape environment. Numerous stakeholders brought up the desire to incorporate public art, seasonal installations, and historical and cultural references, not only as a sense of pride for the community, but also as an attraction to help local businesses.

Opportunities are identified to incorporate public art components, along with ways to incorporate historical and cultural references and considerations for temporary or seasonal attractions to draw local and out of town visitors.

Downtown gateways and wayfinding signage that reflect the culture of the community can be designed in a tasteful way and implemented tactfully so that it does not become too cluttered.

Village of DOWNERS GROVE FOUNDED IN 1832

Public Art Program Elements

- Type & Location of Art
- Governance
- Funding
- Project Selection
- Community Engagement

Recent Discussions

- August / September ‘25 Long Range Plan
  - Established Project Description
  - Confirmed Phased Approach (Flexible Amenity Areas First)
- November 18, ‘25 Council Meeting
  - Direction on Guiding Principles
- January 20, ‘26 Council Meeting
  - Do Not Purchase Art
  - Acceptable to Have Empty Art Pedestals for Some Time

Requested VC Direction

- Implement the Initial Phase of the Program
- Issue a Request for Proposal
- Confirm Process and Schedule

Issue a Request for Proposal

- Open to Artists, Firms and Organizations
- Expanded Publication Platforms to Maximize Reach to Potential Proposers
- Art for Three Flexible Amenity Areas and Linda Kunze Plaza
- Adhere to Guiding Principles
- Project Budget of $400,000 ($200,000 for Amenity Areas, $200,000 for Kunze Plaza)
- Expanded Public / Stakeholder Visioning Sessions
- Selection Criteria and Qualifications of Successful Proposers
- Anticipated Schedule

Process & Schedule

- Use the Same Process as Blackburn Civil Rights Plaza
  - Selected Firm/Artist Will Present the VC with Vision/Direction
  - VC will Provide Feedback and Direction on the Vision/Direction
  - Staff will Implement VC Direction and Work with the Selected Firm/Artist on Final Design and Installation
- Schedule
  - February - Request for Proposal Published
  - March - Proposals Due
  - April - Village Council Award of Contract
  - May - Public Visioning Sessions
  - Summer 2026 - VC Direction on the Vision/Direction
  - Late 2026 / Early 2027 - Installation of Art

Location of Art

Burlington & Main (SE corner)



Main Street (West Side)





Linda Kunze Plaza



Curtiss & Main (NE corner)



RFP Excerpt

Background

The Village of Downers Grove has a vibrant downtown with a variety of shops, restaurants, entertainment destinations, and one of the busiest commuter train stations in the region. Downtown Downers Grove is also home to several special events including the Fine Arts Festival, Rotary Grove Fest, and the Downtown Downers Grove Market. Between the many people that live in and around the downtown area, and downtown being a destination, hundreds of thousands of people visit, shop, work, and dine in downtown Downers Grove annually.

In 2025, the Village completed Guiding DG, a significant community planning effort that describes a vision of Downers Grove for decades to come. Across the Guiding DG suite of plans are several goals and recommendations that will further enhance and activate public spaces within the downtown area. More specifically, the Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan provides a detailed vision, including concept drawings, that will guide the installation of new Flexible Amenity Areas and a reimagined Linda Kunze Plaza that will expand public spaces for outdoor dining, gathering, additional landscaping, signage, and ***public art***.

RFP Excerpt

Summary of Scope of Services

The Village is seeking a firm, organization, or artist(s) to coordinate and manage the design and installation of four art pieces for the locations listed above. This can be accomplished through the selection and procurement of existing artwork, design and fabrication of new artworks, or a combination of both processes. Selected firms or individuals are also expected to engage the public and Village throughout the process using engagement strategies that have proven successful in other communities implementing public art programs.

RFP Excerpt

Guidelines for Public Art

Through multiple public workshops, including Guiding DG, the Village has established the following desired attributes to guide the selection of public art:

- Is Relative to Downers Grove, Unique to Downers Grove
- Is Authentic and Timeless
- Is Vibrant, Attractive
- Is Welcoming and Inclusive to All Visitors
- Is Suitable for Viewing by All Ages
- Creates Placemaking and Sense of Belonging
- Reflects a Balance between Tradition and Progress
- Is Durable, Resilient in Design & Composition, Withstands Extreme Weather
- Looks Great All Year
- Requires Little Maintenance
- Fits On or In the Art Space within the Flexible Amenity Areas
- Is of an Appropriate Scale for Its Location
- Is Non-Controversial - Avoids Negative Attention
- Allows for Interaction with the Public
- Is suitable/desirable for Photos and Posting on Social Media

RFP Excerpt

Locations

The initial phase of construction for projects identified in Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan will commence in 2026 and include Flexible Amenity Areas located on or in proximity to Main Street between Burlington Avenue and Maple Avenue, as well as the reconstruction of Linda Kunze Plaza outside the Main Street Train Station. In total, the concept plans for the locations in the 2026 phase of construction include four locations for public art:

1. Linda Kunze Plaza
2. Southeast corner of Main Street and Burlington Avenue
3. West side of Main Street between Burlington Avenue and Curtiss Street
4. Northeast corner of Main Street and Curtiss Street

Each location will include an installed foundation for the installation of artworks. The foundations will be embedded three feet (3.0’) in the ground and flush with the surrounding landscaping beds. Any base for the art is to be included in the design to be affixed to the foundation. The foundation will be two and a half feet (2.5’) by two and a half feet (2.5’) in size.

RFP Excerpt

Submittal Requirements

The Village recognizes that there are multiple strategies for completing the Scope of Services. As such, the Village welcomes proposals from firms that provide public art consulting services, galleries and curators, artists, and any organization capable of providing the described Scope of Services. All proposals should include the following at minimum:

- Contact Information: Name, Address, Telephone, Email
- Resume/CV for all individuals to be included in providing the Scope of Services
- Written narrative describing the anticipated process for completing the Scope of Services
- Proposed budget and timeline for completion of the project
- Visual examples of relevant projects completed in the past
- List of references

Successful Respondents

The Village plans on selecting a firm, organization, or artist(s) that best meets the Village's needs. The Village's award determination will be based, in part, on the following:

- Experience in successfully producing and placing outdoor public art
- Demonstrated ability to establish and adhere to a schedule for the art installation
- Proven ability to produce art consistent with the guiding principles

Public Art Program

February 3, 2026