

Information and Discussion

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Bellevue Arts Commission

1E-109 or Zoom Meeting, 4:30 pm

City of Bellevue, WA

Eastrail Arts Principles Update

At today's meeting, the Arts Commission will be presented an update on the existing plans for art along the Eastrail in Bellevue and neighboring jurisdictions, and plans for future public art along the trail.

Background

The Eastrail is a 42-mile pedestrian and bicycle trail that will eventually connect Renton to Snohomish, including a long section through the City of Bellevue, which is owned and maintained by King County Parks. Eastrail Partners is the nonprofit organization supporting and unifying the trail. In 2022, we collaborated with multiple trail jurisdictions to create the "Eastrail Public Art Principles" to support trail owners and local jurisdictions developing or considering public art along or near the Eastrail.



Since the creation of the Public Art Principles, several major public art installations have happened in Bellevue, including Isan Bellevue's murals on the NE 8th Overcrossing, and a nearby container mural by Nikita Ares, unveiled in Fall 2024 (left). Additionally, Eastrail Partners has collaborated with other community groups on public art projects in Kirkland, including a, now annual, summer performance series at Feriton Spur Park. Included in this work was a collaboration with Eastside for All and a consortium of local CBOs to develop an "Inclusive Call for Artists," which we piloted during the call for the most recent mural project in Wilburton.

Next Steps

With future trail projects opening in Redmond, Bellevue, and Woodinville over the next 5 years, we hope to continue to lift up the art principles and are actively looking for funding and opportunities to bring public art to the trail corridor. Several ideas in Bellevue include: murals at key underpasses near Northup Way and 520 in North Bellevue, wraps on former railroad infrastructure near Newcastle Beach Park, and trail-facing "graffiti arts" programs on the future I-90 steel bridge restoration.

Attachments

Attachment A: Eastrail Public Art Principles (finalized January 2023)

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Eastrail Public Art Principles

Finalized and approved January 2023

Public Art along the Eastrail corridor can provide opportunities to link people to their city and to each other, and to create meaningful ways to ensure the Eastrail is welcoming for all. The Eastrail connects many different county, city, and private entities, each with their own processes and policies related to public art along the corridor. A shared approach for art along the entire Eastrail corridor connects many of the Regional Advisory Council's (RAC) goals for Eastrail, which are highlighted in the guiding principles outlined in this document.

Goals:

- Create a more unified user experience;
- Create meaningful and impactful ways for communities to be involved in Eastrail planning;
- Support art coordinators and commissions from different jurisdictions to collaborate and incorporate trail-adjacent work that takes advantage of the linear nature of the corridor;
- Help synthesize existing public arts plans and programs from member entities;.
- Provide guidelines and strategies towards expanding the current vision for arts and cultural initiatives along the corridor.

These different processes will continue to shape public art along the trail, and the RAC is excited to continue to see development of public art throughout the Eastrail. In the interest of continuity across the trail corridor, the RAC commits to the following principles as they continue to work within the Eastrail's respective communities on the development and implementation of public art along the Eastrail:

Eastrail Public Art Guiding Principles

Equity: All processes for commissioning, obtaining, promoting, and activating public art along the Eastrail should be rooted in equitable practices. This requires intentionally disrupting unjust practices, rooting out bias, and engaging diverse communities in all processes related to public art.

Inclusion and Belonging: Art along the Eastrail should represent and reflect the diverse communities along the Eastrail corridor, and work to actively disrupt historical injustices by centering and encouraging the experiences of those furthest from justice. We will work to reduce barriers to access and involvement in arts along the trail.

Context and Interconnection: Art should engage with and complement natural environments; neighborhood and regional elements; and other location-specific attributes of the trail.

Collaboration: As Eastrail weaves through so many different jurisdictions, parks, schools, private businesses, and residences, we commit to intentional, proactive, complimentary collaboration wherever possible. We seek to share resources and engage with all communities and stakeholders outside of our regional jurisdictions.

Cohesion: We recognize that different entities will engage their own processes to create unique artwork in their respective jurisdictions. Where possible, we seek to find consistencies that will support trail users' identification of the Eastrail corridor.

More than Visual Art: Public Art for the Eastrail can include: visual arts, like sculpture and murals; gateways giving a sense of place; wayfinding; placemaking, such as stages or places for performing arts activation; infrastructure for public spaces and access, like trailheads; installations, including mobile or temporary work or events.

Making the Mandatory Extraordinary: When installing infrastructure like benches, bridges, light fixtures, etc., we should strive to "make the required inspired." As possible artists should be considered for inclusion on the team for significant capital projects.

Eastrail Public Art Processes

Where possible, Eastrail RAC entities should seek to coordinate the planning of arts to ensure effective use of the Eastrail corridor as a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive place, using agreed-upon guiding principles.

RAC entities should coordinate the partner planning process for the trail, high-capacity transit, and utility uses in planning for public arts along the corridor. Where a RAC entity may be developing a portion of the trail in another jurisdiction, affected cities shall be involved with local planning and development of arts projects.

When there is the possibility of developing public art across multiple entities, we should seek to coordinate on design, development, and funding, to bring meaningful community engagement and public art opportunities with an eye on the complete Eastrail corridor.

Jurisdictions will follow their already-defined arts processes while keeping these principles as a lens in their work.