

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 14, 2005

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #44 : PUBLIC ART FUNDING

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This memorandum responds to Councilman Gaines' request for information regarding the City's current funding of public art, as well as options available for establishing a dedicated funding source for public art.

At this time, the operating budget includes \$25,000 for the acquisition of public art. This funding was added to the Recreation Administration budget in FY 2003, by City Council through the add-delete process.

With regard to dedicated funding for public art, one of the techniques used by other jurisdictions is a required contribution by developers, based on the cost of building projects (similar to the affordable housing trust fund contribution). Other jurisdictions, especially in California, dedicate a percentage of their own capital improvement program budget for public buildings for public art. Arlington County's policy has been to set aside a percentage of each capital project for public art. Alternatively, rather than fix on a rigid percentage, a budgeted amount for art could be included in each year of the City's Capital Improvement Program as are many other on-going City projects such as bike trails. Private donations of funding are also solicited for the acquisition and installation of public art.

It is contemplated that some portion of the increased revenue from a proposed admissions tax would benefit the Arts Commission, which has been tasked with studying the issue of public art.