

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY JULY 13, 2016 7:34 PM

Miami planners want more public art — and developers to help pay for it

HIGHLIGHTS

City planners propose taking over management of public art from Miami-Dade County's successful Art in Public Places program

The plan would also require private developers to set aside project funds for art

City commission will consider the proposal, which has received pushback from builders, on Thursday





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Hoping to further boost Miami's growing cultural heft, city planners are proposing enactment of a far-reaching public-art program that would require private developers to set aside a percentage of project budgets for the installation of creative works in places across town where regular people can enjoy them.

The plan, which goes to the city commission on Thursday, would build on Miami-Dade County's long-running Art in Public Places program. Considered one of the most successful in the country, the county program has placed hundreds of sculptures, installations, murals, paintings and photographs at sites ranging from Miami International Airport to PortMiami, transit stations, libraries, housing developments and parks.

The city's proposal, initiated and drafted by its planning department, is to take over management of the county program — which requires funding set-asides from public projects only — within Miami boundaries, and to extend the requirement to private development projects of over \$1 million. Private developers would have to spend 1.25 percent of a project's hard construction costs to commission or acquire artworks to be installed on site, or, alternatively, pay one percent of costs into a new city arts trust fund.

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To judge the quality, value and appropriateness of the art, the city would also, like the county, create a panel of experts in various fields, including fine arts, design and architecture as well as real-estate development.

The proposal comes as Miami-Dade has been pushing municipalities to take over management of public art inside their boundaries from the county, said Miami assistant planning and zoning director Luciana Gonzalez. Several municipalities have done so, while at the same time also adopting similar requirements for private participation, including Doral, Coral Gables and Homestead, she said. Miami Beach has its own established program as well, but it's limited to public projects.

A Miami city planner with expertise in public art programs, Efren Nuñez, spent a year developing the new ordinance, consulting with county and municipal officials here and in other cities with programs regarded as national models, in particular Los Angeles. Some 1,000 cities and towns now have public-art programs as the idea has mushroomed across the country, the planners said.

The plan has received some pushback from the building industry amid worries it could make construction more expensive. Gonzalez said the city allayed some concerns laid out by the Builders Association of South Florida by limiting the percentage to hard costs, and not “soft” costs such as design.

But the association also asked “at the last minute” for a dollar cap on the amount a developer would have to pay, something planners have not had a chance to evaluate, she said. Association executive vice president Truly Burton was in meetings Wednesday and could not be reached for comment.

Developer and art patron Craig Robins, who has made public art integral to his extensive projects in Miami’s Design District, said developers and elected officials would be wise to support the proposal. Public art, he said, increases the value of development as much as it benefits the public.

“Having interesting art and design all around is positive,” he said. “It’s amazing in the Design District — every day I see people doing selfies all around the design objects. It gives people a sense of place, and ultimately it’s a frontier on which mankind advances.”

The city proposal also requires development of a public-art master plan that would guide placement and selection of art in neighborhoods and public facilities. That would also include taking inventory of public art the city already owns — a previous city public-art program went dormant in 1988 — but doesn’t have a solid accounting of, as well as a plan for restoring some deteriorated works and maintaining its stock into the future, Nuñez said.

In a novel twist for Miami-Dade, the city’s program would also allow art trust-fund money to underwrite performances in public places, he said. Conservative projections are the city fund could raise \$13 million from private developers annually.



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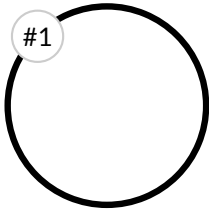
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