

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Discussion of the Proposed Business Mini-Grant Program		
DEPARTMENT:	Economic Development		
PRESENTED BY:	Dan Eernissee, Economic Development Manager		
ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Motion
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing	

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

The 2013 Proposed Budget includes \$10,000 for a pilot Business Mini-Grant program. The pilot Business Mini-Grant program will provide a new cost-effective way of supporting existing Shoreline businesses and thereby fostering long-term economic health.

Council discussed the Business Mini-Grant at the December 3rd meeting, and it directed Staff to bring specifics of the artist-business collaboration program back at a future meeting.

Attachment A to this staff report provides examples of IRRIGATE projects that the grant funding may generate.

RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The 2013 Adopted Budget includes \$10,000 for a pilot Business Mini-Grant program.

RECOMMENDATION

No formal action is required by the Council this evening, as this item is for discussion. Staff does recommend direction to staff to draft a Resolution authorizing Business Mini-Grants including criteria for approval program.

Approved By: City Manager **JU**

City Attorney **IS**

INTRODUCTION

The pilot Business Mini-Grant program will provide a new cost-effective way of supporting existing Shoreline businesses and thereby fostering long-term economic health. In addition, it provides a vehicle to engage artists in the Shoreline community.

BACKGROUND

During the 2012 budget process the Economic Development Manager was tasked with proposing ways to implement a Business Mini-Grant program for Council consideration. After consultation with the City Attorney and other members of staff, it was concluded that the grant would need to conform to three general criteria:

- a) The project would need to provide general public benefit rather than simply benefit one business.
- b) The project(s) would need to be completed early enough in 2013 that its results could be evaluated for future years.
- c) The project should help carry out the Economic Development Strategic Plan, specifically helping with place-making in neighborhoods and along the Aurora Corridor.

After the initial discussion before Council at its meeting on December 3, 2012, Staff was directed to expand on a Business and Artist Collaboration program which is similar to a program created in St. Paul, MN, called IRRIGATE. The program offers grants to artists that create art installations or events on the premises of collaborating businesses (<http://irrigatearts.org>).

Attachment A to this staff report provides examples of IRRIGATE projects that the grant funding may generate.

DISCUSSION

The Business and Artist Collaboration program is designed to contribute to the Office of Economic Development's place-making initiative by changing both businesses and artists' sense of what is possible in Shoreline. Staff also anticipates the following impacts:

- a) *Increased social capital:* Businesses and the City would gain new contacts in the artist-community (and vice versa), creating opportunities for similar collaboration in the future.
- b) *Positive stories:* In its first year alone, IRRIGATE generated over 100 positive media stories. These stories will help build confidence in the Shoreline community that the City's economic future is bright. Of course, these media stories are in addition to the many stories that undoubtedly were shared by individuals involved first-hand.
- c) *Business' vitality and viability:* Artist projects will serve as both marketing and revenue-building tools for participating business.
- d) *Self-perpetuating artist engagement with business:* This program will demonstrate the profitability and goodwill possible through artist-business partnerships. It is staff's hope that it will lead to non-subsidized collaborative projects in the future.

The Business and Artist Collaboration program builds on and complements the success of the *Piano Fresco* project initiated by the City in 2012, and it will benefit from the active participation and support of Ros Bird, the Shoreline Public Art Coordinator. Ms. Bird will be available to provide artistic direction for the program.

Types of projects anticipated with the Business-Artist Collaboration Projects

The Office of Economic Development recommends that the Business Mini-Grant program support both tangible and performance-based projects. At the December 3rd meeting, Council stated that tangible art projects were supportable, but it needed more information to support performance-based project.

Staff interviewed Laura Zabel, Executive Director of IRRIGATE, who indicated that some of the most successful revenue-generating projects were performance-based art in businesses that had not previously hosted such events. Ms. Zabel stated that criteria was used in the application that ensured that businesses only received grants for new projects; grant funding was not used to subsidize on-going programming. Three examples from the IRRIGATE project that are similar to those we envision happening in Shoreline are included in Attachment A.

Staff, therefore, recommends that both tangible and performance-based projects be funded, but that the funding be limited to projects that are new to the businesses.

Proposed Criteria for Projects

- Provide public benefit and be available to all community members.
- Build stronger businesses by attracting new customers and providing a better customer experience.
- Promote collaboration between business owners, community members, and the city.
- Provide a new experience for the business; mini-grant funding will not be used to finance what the business is already doing.
- If the project is a performance event, the event shall be free to the public.
- The business cannot be the artist's own business.
- The project must be able to be undertaken and completed within 3 months.
- If the project is a tangible improvement it shall be located on public property, or a private common area open to the public and secured by license, lease or covenant, and the proposal shall include a plan for extended maintenance.

Process for Making Awards

The following is a draft outline of the process:

- 1) Artist will attend a free one-day creative training workshop, after which artists will be eligible for mini-grant support through an application process. The

session will train the artist in place-making, engagement with the community, and basic business practices. The training will be run as a special *QuickStart* workshop. The goal of the training is to expand the artist's vision of the possibilities of doing his or her art in Shoreline.

- 2) Artists will find and partner with a local business. The Office of Economic Development will maintain a list of interested business owners; however, the artists will ultimately be responsible for finding a partner business.
- 3) The artist will collaborate with the partner business to submit an Interest Letter and eventually a Business Mini-Grant application.
- 4) The application will ask for a complete explanation of the project including scope of work, timeline for completion, demonstration of public benefit, proof that the project is "new and different," and all necessary permits or authorizations required to complete the project.
- 5) Once a complete application is received, the Office of Economic Development will coordinate review by a Business Mini-Grant Review Team and recommendation for approval by the City Manager. The approval process may take up to one month.
- 6) Once a project is approved by the City Manager, the applicant will receive instructions on submitting funding requests and tracking matching contributions.
- 7) Applications should be submitted before May 31, 2013. Applications received after this date will be accepted if an extension is granted. Funding is available to qualified proposals on a first come, first served basis.
- 8) Both artists and businesses will be asked to conduct an exit survey following the completion of the project.

Business Mini-Grants will be reviewed to ensure that they meet the program criteria discussed earlier in this report and that they comply with City Council and Economic Development Strategic Plan goals. Staff recommends that in the pilot year the City match two dollars to each dollar contributed by the artist or business.

Business Mini-Grants will principally be reviewed by a City staff team assembled by the Economic Development Office. The team will include review and input from other Departments—if needed—specific to an individual project (e.g. Public Art direction, permitting, right-of-way issues, etc.). Once the project is reviewed and approved by the review team, all qualified Business Mini-Grants will be forwarded to the City Manager for approval as funds allow.

Promotion of the Program

Promotion of the Business Mini-grant will be multifaceted:

- *Currents* articles and reminders of the application process and coverage of successful projects.
- Press releases to news providers.
- City website articles, photos, and reminders.
- *QuickStart* Workshop for interested participants
- Coordination and advertisement through community partners

- Recruitment of known likely participants through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, emails, and direct mail.

RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2013 Adopted Budget includes \$10,000 for the pilot Business Mini-Grant program.

In addition, staff time will be used in promoting, evaluating, and overseeing the implementation of the program. The Office of Economic Development has recruited a college intern specifically to coordinate the Business Mini-Grant program.

RECOMMENDATION

No formal action is required by the Council this evening, as this item is for discussion. Staff does recommend direction to staff to draft a Resolution authorizing Business Mini-Grants including criteria for approval program.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Examples of IRRIGATE projects

ATTACHMENT A

The following IRRIGATE projects are similar to those that may happen in Shoreline with the Business and Artist Collaboration program.

Jazz on the Line – A St. Paul musician partnered with her local Chamber of Commerce, Asian Economic Development Association, and two businesses to host an evening of live music. This event promoted a healthy economy by attracting new patrons to the businesses, and by fostering new connections between the musician and the businesses. The musician drove promotion for the event, and helped introduce these two businesses to the “how to” of live-performance events. <http://irrigatearts.org/site/4faadc7a3ab07>



Black Dog LRT Cultural Ambassador – Two artists partnered with The Black Dog Café to build a large scale, two-person puppet of a Big Black Dog. The artists toured the puppet around Farmers’ Markets and other community events. A social media campaign documented the events, and generated communication between the café and the community. <http://irrigatearts.org/site/4fc679010dc62>



Footprints – A visual artist and writer created two pieces of artwork, one stenciled on the pavement outside Golden’s Deli, and the other installed inside the Deli. The external piece welcomed patrons into the Deli with “hello” translated into different languages, and a depiction of St. Paul’s city skyline. <http://irrigatearts.org/site/4f3d8f53ab993>



Supporting Black Businesses – A local artist partnered with multiple business owners to create posters and tee shirts mapping out black businesses along the corridor. The posters were visible in the storefronts of many businesses, and tee shirts with the image were given to the employees of each participating business.

<http://irrigatearts.org/site/4f5fb569c0c10>



Sculptural Mobile Units – A high school art teacher and her students collaborated with a local non-profit to bring the lessons of their school's community garden to their community.

<http://irrigatearts.org/site/4f5fb910bf367>

