

Department of Transportation
Urban Mass Transportation Administration
Washington, D.C. 20590

CIRCULAR

UMTA C 9400.1

January 19, 1981

SUBJECT: Design and Art in Public Transportation Projects

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1. PURPOSE. This circular provides guidance for the incorporation of design and artistic considerations into transit projects funded by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.
 2. REFERENCES. The following sources were used in developing this circular:
 - a. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
 - b. Environmental Message of the President; May 21, 1977
 - c. Report to the Secretary of Transportation; Design, Art, and Architecture in Transportation; U.S. Department of Transportation, September, 1977
 - d. Urban Policy Statement of the President; March 27, 1978
 - e. UMTA Statement on Design Quality; August, 1978
 - f. First Annual Report to the Secretary of Transportation; Design, Art, and Architecture in Transportation; U.S. Department of Transportation, December 1978
 - g. Second Annual Report to the Secretary of Transportation; Design, Art, and Architecture in Transportation; U.S. Department of Transportation, November, 1979
 - h. DOT Order 5610.1C: Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, September 18, 1979
 - i. Arts On The Line: Report by Cambridge Arts Council prepared for UMTA, March, 1980
 3. POLICY. The visual quality of our nation's mass transportation systems has a profound impact on transit patrons and the community at large. It has therefore been the practice of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration to fund the inclusion of design and artistic considerations in public transportation projects.

Design considerations can substantially enhance the appearance of a facility and make mass transit a more pleasant mode of travel. The sensitive use of design and art in transit systems can give vibrancy to public spaces and present an image of the local cultural and architectural heritage. Urban design,

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architecture, landscaping, graphic design, applied artworks, free-standing sculpture, and other related amenities can greatly upgrade both the appearance and the utility of a public transportation project.

The aesthetic and functional compatibility of a transit facility with its surroundings is a concomitant agency objective. In funding transit malls, intermodal transfer facilities and joint development ventures, this program seeks a sympathetic relationship between public transportation investments and broader development goals. Through these considerations, UMTA programs can serve not only to provide mobility, encourage desirable urban development, and achieve emergent agency objectives such as energy conservation and handicapped accessibility, but also to enhance the physical quality of the environment.

UMTA projects should integrate mass transportation-related design and artistic elements into the planning process. Artistic and design talents should be combined in an interdisciplinary approach in the planning, building, and maintenance of transportation systems. This process should begin at the earliest stages of project planning with the realization that transit facilities and equipment, old and new, offer a great potential for functional and aesthetic improvements which help beautify the environment as well as encourage transit patronage. Every effort should be made to involve citizen groups which may be interested in contributing ideas, time, and money, thereby ensuring community support and potentially reducing costs. The transit facility can consequently become a more integral component of the surrounding community. Urban design, architecture, landscaping, and graphic design are long-established elements of UMTA projects. Works of art however have not been so explicitly treated. Though the following section delineates promising areas of application for all the above concerns, the last two sections of this circular address issues peculiar to the use of art in public transportation projects. UMTA can participate in the acquisition costs of design and other artistic undertakings that are recognized by UMTA to be an integral part of a transit facility construction project.

4. AREAS OF APPLICATION. While most transit projects could benefit from the inclusion of design and artistic considerations, some areas offer greater potential for the inclusion of such aesthetic elements. Examples of projects which offer special promise in this area are:

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- a. Major Construction Projects. UMTA is undertaking new rail starts in a number of cities as well as Downtown People Mover demonstrations in several urban areas. These projects have visibility in their physical environments and provide opportunity for the incorporation of special architectural treatments, graphics, artwork, and sculpture in their design. Such elements should be carefully considered in the planning process for these systems.
- b. Rehabilitation Projects. A number of rapid transit and commuter rail systems are currently undertaking facility modernization projects. These projects present opportunities to demonstrate design excellence and to include works of art. Bus terminals in many cities are also in need of major renovation. In these areas, preservation of existing architectural styles may serve to reinforce their place in the modern urban setting. These stations can also serve as showplaces for local art exhibits, increasing their amenity as major public facilities. Administrative offices and support services can also be located in rehabilitated structures.
- c. Vehicle and Related Facility Improvements. Rail cars and paratransit vehicles can be made more attractive through the use of discriminating graphics and decor employed in a cost-effective manner. Since buses are the most prevalent form of mass transit, visual improvements concerning bus transportation could have a significant nation-wide impact. Most communities have a chronic need for additional bus shelters for protection from inclement weather. These shelters can be designed to complement their particular urban settings and also incorporate graphics or artwork.
- d. Pedestrian-Oriented Improvements. UMTA has given support, through its transit mall and auto-restricted-zone programs, to actions aimed at improving the urban environment in the central cities. This involves an upgrading of pedestrian facilities in these areas and some street closures. Sidewalks can be widened in these projects and concrete replaced with patterned brickwork. Additional amenities such as street furniture, sculpture, fountains, and special lighting can be included. In addition to improving walkways adjacent to city streets, such improvements can include the construction of grade-separated pedestrian facilities. These can take the form of underground walkways, climate-controlled skyways connecting buildings,

or unprotected above-grade walkways and bridges. All of these provide a means of separating pedestrian traffic from the street level congestion of cars and buses. Such traffic segregation leads to a greatly improved pedestrian environment, easier shopper access to stores, and less congested urban streets. In addition to making pedestrian movement more pleasant, these improvements can contribute to a renewal of the entire city environment.

- e. Program Development. Studies and other local activities to develop programs for artistic enhancement of transportation facilities and to obtain public participation can be included in the annual planning work programs that are assisted with UMTA funds.
5. INCORPORATING WORKS OF ART IN UMTA PROJECTS. Though facility design and construction activities are eligible UMTA project expenses covered under ongoing planning and capital grant programs works of art have not been specifically addressed as a component of this process. UMTA's Third Party Contracting Guidelines stipulate procedures for selecting architects for transit projects but do not specifically address the selection of artists. Therefore, the following sections covering eligibility criteria and the selection of artists and artworks are offered as general guidance in this area.
 - a. Eligibility. In order to promote local determination of appropriate transit-related art undertakings, UMTA has established broad, flexible guidelines for including these items in agency-funded projects. In general, such artistic undertakings should conform to the following criteria:
 - 1) Amounts spent on the artistic enhancement of projects should be reasonable and appropriate to the overall costs of the transit project. These amounts frequently range from one-half of one percent to two percent of the project construction costs. In the case of rail investments, one-half of one percent of station construction costs has usually been an appropriate figure. Although these are not firm limits, proposals which exceed two percent of construction cost require additional justification and

special review by UMTA.

- 2) Artistic items should be integral aspects of the public transportation project.
- 3) Costs are included in the relevant budget line items; i.e., in design and/or construction line items. These costs should be all-inclusive.
- 4) Artistic undertakings should concentrate on items and affects which provide the most impact for the monies spent.
- 5) Artistic undertakings that promote specific private or corporate business interests are ineligible for UMTA funding.
- 6) The local transit agency should provide for adequate administrative time and support to professionally develop and follow through the arts program.

- b. Selection of Artists. UMTA will not dictate the actual mechanics of the artist selection process. The ideal process could vary among projects depending on the resources of the community, State and local statutes, characteristics of the site, and the nature and scope of the project itself. Artists could be selected through open competition or limited competition. Alternatively, an invitation could be extended to a single artist to develop a proposal, or an existing art work could be purchased and installed directly on the site (a successful artist selection process was recently developed by the Cambridge Arts Council for incorporating works of arts on the Red Line Subway Extension project in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Copies of the Council's final report, entitled "Arts-on-the-line," are available from UMTA's Office of Policy, Budget, and Program Development.)

Whatever the mechanics of selection, it is recommended that the process be structured to assure the following:

- 1) All artists (local and non-local, and regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age) have an equal opportunity in the selection process.
- 2) Final selection of artists and artwork is done by persons experienced in contemporary public art in order to ensure

works of the highest quality.

- 3) The community surrounding the future art site is involved in some manner during the selection process.
- 4) Since public monies are being spent, an open process that can be justified in the face of possible challenge is used.

c. Selection of Artworks. In evaluating artworks, for selection, it is suggested that the following criteria be applied:

- 1) artistic excellence
- 2) appropriateness for site, scale, and desired image
- 3) durability of design materials
- 4) resistance of vandalism
- 5) minimum maintenance

6. LOCAL PARTICIPATION AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES. Participation by community groups, local business firms and individuals is necessary to create a successful design and art program in a transit system. Such participation is encouraged as a means of supplementing UMTA's program. Another source of additional funding, particularly for works of art, is the National Endowment for the Arts. The Endowment awards grants for artistic projects to cities, towns, other non-Federal government agencies, universities, and non-profit tax-exempt private groups. Thus, a combination interest, effort and imagination together with non-UMTA Federal funds can supplement UMTA's share of the costs for design and artistic enhancement of transit projects.


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