

Public Artist In Residence

PAIR PILOT PROGRAM

Evaluation Report 2025



A Municipal Residency • Milwaukee, WI • 2022-2024

Commissioned by the Public Art Subcommittee of the Milwaukee Arts Board
Conducted by Paul Druecke

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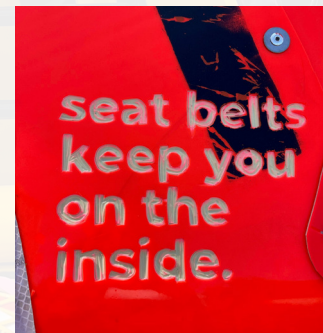


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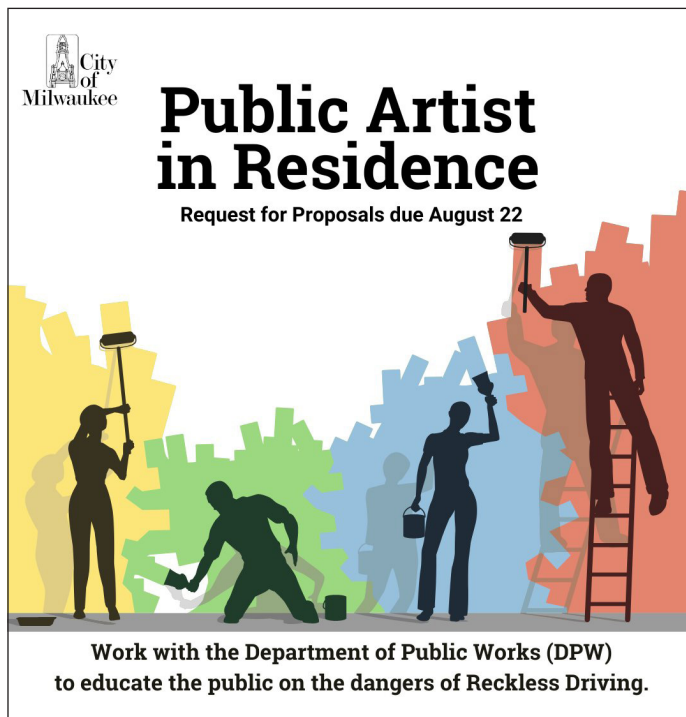
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Introduction

The City of Milwaukee Public Artist In Residence Program (PAIR) invests in the city's cultural producers by leveraging the knowledge, practices and creative tool kits of local artists to build a better community for Milwaukee residents. The residency program pairs an artist with a city department to leverage the benefits of collaboration and interdisciplinary problem-solving. It draws on a history of municipal residencies from across the country while fostering Milwaukee's unique response to issues of civic importance.

Milwaukee's first-ever municipal interdepartmental residency originated as an initiative of the Milwaukee Arts Board's (MAB) Public Art Subcommittee (PAS). PAS members Polly Morris, Emilia Layden, and Christina Klose began discussing a municipal residency in October 2020. After extended discussions regarding the benefits of supporting a local artist while finding new ways to harness creative problem-solving, MAB approved the PAIR Pilot Program in February of 2022. The program would be funded from MAB's Public Art Fund. The Department of City Development (DCD) was chosen to administer the program and quickly began the process to solicit Statements of Interest from city departments. Following the selection of the Department of Public Works as the partner agency, a public RFP was released and Milwaukee artists were invited to apply.



Through a public application process, artist Sarah Davitt was selected to work with the City of Milwaukee's Department of Public Works (DPW). The residency was to last for one year, giving artist and city employees an opportunity to learn from one another and collaborate. The Pilot Program's goals included "integrating artists into city government in service of improving the lives of Milwaukeeans." Another goal was to assess community needs and use creative problem-solving to develop/improve programs and initiatives. The residency was an opportunity to work across sectors for the social good. Throughout the process, the residency would be an opportunity for the public to learn about contemporary art, the role of creative problem-solving, and Milwaukee's creative community while also contributing to the conversation.

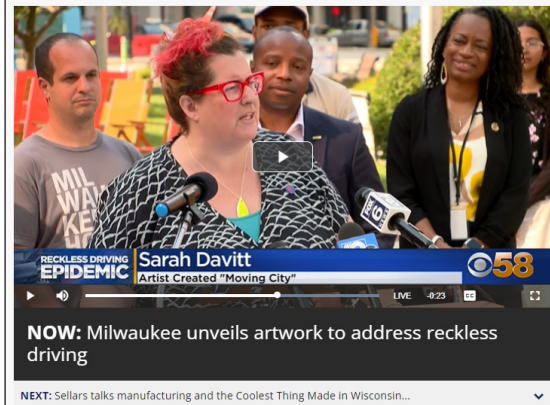
This evaluation analyzes the PAIR Pilot Program based on review of internal documentation as well as news and media coverage. Ten interviews were conducted with a wide range of individuals, most of whom had connections to the program. The report begins with data and selected metrics that provide a statistical overview of the program. The report then focuses on key areas to better understand where the program was successful in delivering on its goals and how it might be improved in future iterations. The report concludes with summary findings and recommendations. The Evaluation Report (ER) focuses on PAIR's programmatic structure rather than the artwork it produced. The ER's primary goal is to establish a forward-thinking framework for future PAIR iterations.

Milwaukee unveils artwork to address reckless driving

By: CBS 58 Newsroom

Posted: Aug 14, 2024 12:06 PM CDT

[FACEBOOK](#) [TWITTER](#) [EMAIL](#)



Statistical Overview

Synopsis

In 2022, the Milwaukee Arts Board’s PAIR Pilot Program contracted Sarah Davitt, a Milwaukee Artist, to work with the Department of Public Works (DPW). The thematic focus of the city’s first municipal residency was “to raise awareness around the dangers of reckless driving and create a culture where lives are valued and safe driving is the responsibility of everyone,” which was determined by DPW in their initial Statement of Interest. The resulting project, an art car titled The Moving City, was unveiled in fall of 2024. It was met with celebration and applause from elected officials and citizens. At the same time many were celebrating, other elected officials and citizens were critical of the program and resulting art. Much of the criticism, and ensuing misinformation, focused on the program’s budget, the art car’s lifespan, and the project’s ability to achieve tangible results regarding transportation safety. Since it’s unveiling, the Art Car is managed by Vision Zero (VZ) and continues to be showcased at a variety of public events where it used as a conversation starter for “raising awareness about the role that every driver can play to make roads safer.”



Budget

Total Budget = \$93,000

The PAIR budget came from three sources:

- 1. Public Art Funding = \$68,000 (allocated from MAB’s public art fund, unused from previous years)
- 2. Greater Milwaukee Foundation Grant = \$20,000
- 3. Department of Public Works (DPW) Allocation = \$5,000

Final Expenses:

\$81,360.78 of the Total Budget was spent to complete the PAIR Pilot Program.

Final Expense breakdown:

PAIR Hours Billed = \$42,957 (Primarily artist’s compensation)
Liaison Hours Billed = \$16,177.20
Project Expenses = \$17,926.58 (Material and contracting costs)
DPW Vehicle allocation and Maintenance = \$4,300



FUNDING	BUDGET	ACTUAL
\$68,000 in unspent Public Art Funds from previous years (remainder will go to other projects)	\$68,000	\$57,060
Department of Public Works (includes repair)	\$5,000	\$4,300
Subtotal Public Funds	\$73,000	\$61,360
Greater Milwaukee Foundation Grant Fund	\$20,000	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$93,000	\$81,295

Timeline

2020, October • first internal MAB discussions regarding a public artist in residency

2021 • MAB and DCD research PAIR feasibility, budget, similar programs to be used as example

2022, February • MAB approves PAIR Pilot Program, to be funded from public art fund.

The Department of City Development (DCD) will coordinate the program with the primary contact being Sally Svetic. The first step is to solicit Statements of Interest from city departments.

- **April** MAB selects DPW as city department partner, adopts language from DPW's Statement of Interest regarding the Residency's focus on reckless driving.
- **July** RFP and RFQ for Artist and Artist's Liaison made public
- **October** Artist and Liaison selected by MAB

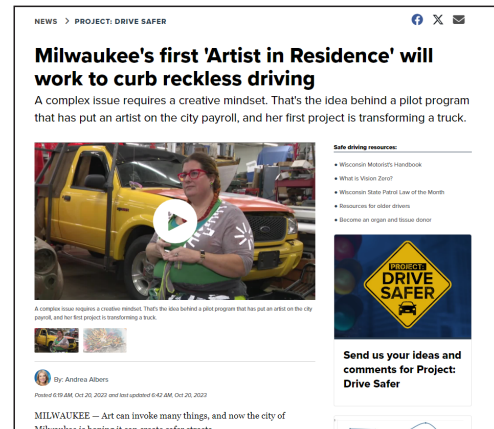
2023, February • Artist Contract Finalized

- **February** First PAIR Team Meeting (Sarah, Angie, Sally, and Kate), Establish roles.
- **March** Thematic focus on Art Car determined by end of month
- **April-August** Prototyping and field testing
- **November** First Outreach/Community Engagement Event (Makerfaire-Visibility Patches)

2024, April • DPW's Fleet Dept. assisting with car alterations

- **August** Art Car Unveiled at City Hall
- **September** Social Media backlash after Alderperson Westmoreland and others criticize the costs and results of PAIR
- **September** The Art Car breaks down further fueling unfavorable mainstream and social media coverage

2025 • Milwaukee's Vision Zero (Department of Administration) adopts Art Car and continues to use it for public events focusing on Milwaukee transportation



The Moving City ART CAR

AUGUST SCHEDULE

- **WED, AUG 14 • 11:30AM-1PM**
Heart(beat)s of the City at Red Arrow Park
- **WED, AUG 14 • 4-6PM**
Milwaukee Night Market at Vel R. Phillips Plaza
- **SAT, AUG 17 • 11AM-7PM**
Center Street Daze between Holton & Humboldt
- **WED, AUG 21 • 4-10PM**
Summer of Soul, Marcus Performing Arts Center
- **SAT, AUG 24 • 7:30-11AM**
Run Back to School at MPS, 5225 W. Vliet St.
- **WED, AUG 28 • 5-10PM**
Washington Park Wednesday concert series

MILWAUKEE VISION ZERO
ZERO TRAFFIC DEATHS

milwaukee.gov/VisionZero

City of Milwaukee

Applicant Pool

Information on the applicant pool acknowledges the challenges of attracting applicants to a pilot program that, by definition, has no history. It is included in the statistical overview as an informative benchmark for future iterations.

Number of Applicants to PAIR's RFP:

Five artists submitted proposals to be the Artist in Residence

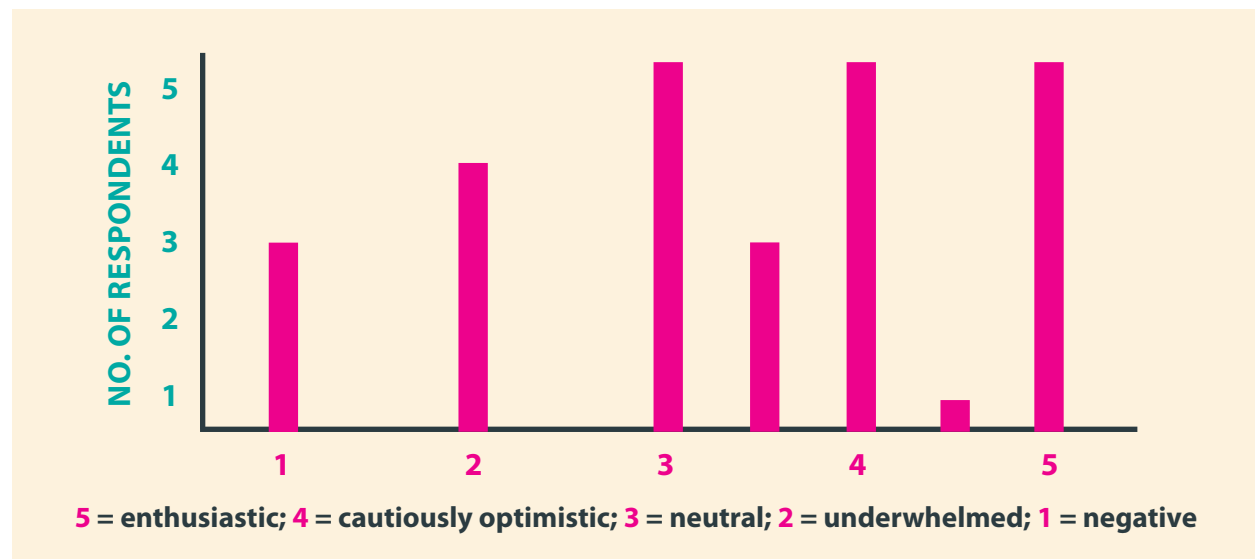
Number of Applicants to PAIR's RFQ:

Seven people submitted their qualifications to be the Artist's Liaison

Limited-scope Survey

As part of the evaluation, a selected pool of people responded to the question:

"On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel about the project today?"



Total Respondents: 26* — Average response: 3.3

** Seven individuals did not know about PAIR when asked to respond to the survey. They are not included in total respondents nor the numerical average outcome. The individuals were invited with the assumption they would be familiar with PAIR as each had connections to Milwaukee's creative community. This note is included as an informative factor for considering PAIR's public outreach.*



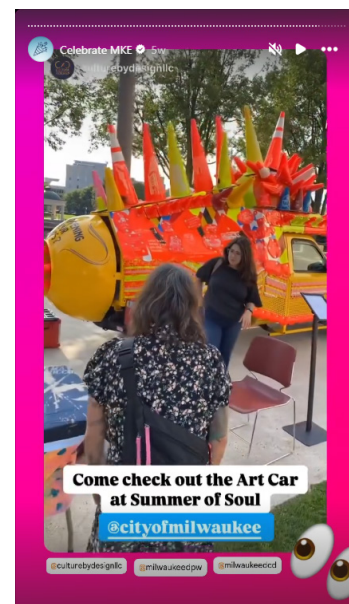
Interviewee List and other Key Individuals

The following people were interviewed between March and June, 2025:

- Sarah Davitt—PAIR Pilot Artist
- Angie Livermore—PAIR Liaison
- Christina Klose—Brand and Creative Services Officer, City of Milwaukee, Department of Administration (DOA); Member, Milwaukee Arts Board and Public Art Subcommittee
- Kate Riordan—Former DPW employee, City of Milwaukee, Lead Contact for PAIR Pilot Program
- Jessica Wineberg—Executive Director, Vision Zero, City of Milwaukee, Department of Administration
- Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs—Chair, Milwaukee Arts Board
- CK Ledesma—Civically-engaged artist and former Milwaukee Artist of the Year
- Tim Murphy—Member, Milwaukee Arts Board and Public Art Subcommittee
- Sally Svetic—Neighborhood Business Development Specialist, DCD, City of Milwaukee, Administrative Lead for PAIR Pilot Program
- Polly Morris—Vice-Chair, Milwaukee Arts Board and Chair, Public Art Subcommittee

Other individuals who played a role in the PAIR Pilot Program and its reception:

- Mayor Cavalier Johnson
- Alderman Lamont Westmoreland



City of Milwaukee Social Media: Instagram Story / Highlight examples

PAIR Program Background and Framework (See also Timeline)

As noted in the introduction, The Milwaukee Arts Board voted to fund the PAIR Pilot Program in February, 2022. At that time, it was determined the program would be administered by the DCD with Sally Svetic as the main contact and connector. The first step was to solicit Statements of Interest from city departments who wanted to host the artist-in-residence. The MAB selected the DPW as partner agency. They had proposed focusing on “raising awareness around the dangers of reckless driving and create a culture where lives are valued and safe driving is as the responsibility of everyone” in their statement of interest and that language was included in subsequent outreach and promotion.



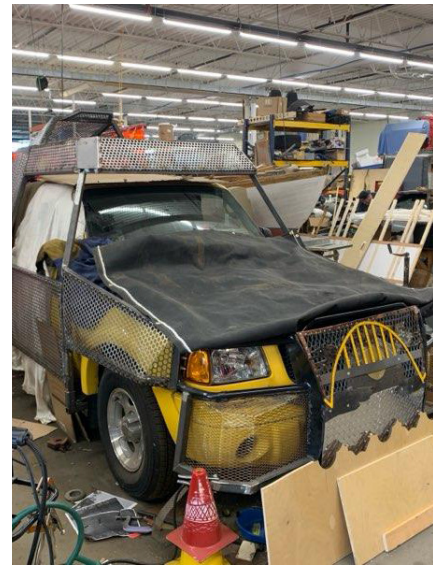
The next step was a public application process. The Artist’s RFP listed the budget as \$43,000 in Artist fees and \$25,000 for development and implementation of the project.

A detailed timeline was included: Phase 1 – Research and department familiarization (3 months); Phase 2 - Prototyping project and field testing (3 months); Phase 3 – Project implementation (5 months); Phase 4 – Program evaluation (1 month). The RFQ for the position of Liaison listed a budget of \$20,000. Artist, Sarah Davitt, and Liaison, Angie Livermore, were selected in October 2022. It took several months to work through contractual logistics such as insurance requirements for Sarah as well as Memorandums of Understanding between DCD and DPW. The first Team Meeting took place in February 2023 and included Sarah Davitt, Angie Livermore, Sally Svetic, and Kate Riordan, DPW staff who would serve as the main contact and connector between PAIR and DPW.

PAIR Pilot Overview

Sarah Davitt’s application emphasized bringing fun into the process of art and community engagement. At the initial team meeting the description of her role included “Growing artistic craft while developing artistic strategies. Working towards outcomes, raising awareness and behavior change.” She restated her interest in bringing fun into the process. Shortly after the initial team meeting, Sarah proposes an art car as a way to raise awareness around the dangers of reckless driving. In April, one month into the residency, MAB is updated as to Sarah’s idea to create an art car and the residency’s focus shifts to prototype and field-testing options. It follows the major thematic and formal components, from the language around “reckless driving” to the medium of art car and were determined with little to no time for interactions between Sarah, Angie, DPW staff, nor engagement with the larger community.

While key components of the residency are decided surprisingly early based on Phase One's timeline, the art car's production and other community outreach activities achieve the program's stated goals of showcasing artist's processes, creative problem-solving, and harnessing the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration. The DPW and, in particular its Fleet Services Team, are integral in acquisition, engineering design, and fabrication of the art car. Throughout the production, testing, and implementation, which stretches through 2023 into 2024, the invested parties report positive experiences related to collaborative problem solving. In addition to the art car, Sarah and Angie work on adjacent outreach activities that culminate in a public Patch Making table that travels to a variety of events. A second outreach initiative, called Open Eyes, is developed and ready for public installation but does not receive the necessary city permits and is the cause of interpersonal fallout within the core team. With time, these issues are worked through and everybody is on the same page moving into 2024.



The Moving City: Art Car was unveiled in August of 2024. It is currently used by Vision Zero as part of their ongoing programming related to “raising awareness about the role that every driver can play to make roads safer.”



Areas of Evaluative Focus

Goals and Objectives

1. “The fact that PAIR happened is a success for the city and is one of the program’s highlights.” —Alderswoman Milele A. Coggs, Co-chair, MAB, (This sentiment was expressed by many individuals interviewed for this evaluation.)
2. “For me personally, PAIR’s strength is its ability to focus on what artists do as opposed to what they make.” —Polly Morris, Co-Chair MAB, Chair, Public Art Subcommittee
3. “I believe in the benefits of getting city government to think and work differently.” —Sally Svetic, Neighborhood Business Development Specialist, DCD, City of Milwaukee

Observations:

- A general consensus among individuals connected to PAIR is that the creation, oversight of, participation in, and completion of Milwaukee’s first public, interdepartmental residency amount to a resounding success. On this point it’s helpful to note that PAIR was a unique undertaking, every aspect of the program had to be created from scratch. As with any pilot program, there were many hurdles and a significant learning curve to navigate.
- The PAIR program set ambitious and far-reaching goals for itself in press releases and other public announcements. The idealistic goal of “improving the lives of all Milwaukeeans” stands out. While this type of language is common in cultural frameworks, overstating what is possible for artists during any given residency is unnecessary and potentially unproductive. In the worst case scenario, such language establishes an impossible goal and invites disappointments.
- The Pilot Program’s thematic focus on “reckless driving,” compounds the unrealistic expectations noted above. By many accounts it was an unfortunate choice of words that created unnecessary challenges throughout the program, in particular with community engagement. The term “reckless driving” was adopted with no artist nor community input.
- The Pilot Program’s mission to foster conversation was successful in a variety of ways. A number of interviewees noted that—in response to critical response following the Art Car’s unveiling (see introduction)—the bottom line is people were talking and engaging with civic issues. These conversations have the potential to strengthen the city’s cultural fabric.

Recommendations:

The ER recommends focusing on the social and transactional benefits for artists and city workers to learn about another. Telling this story effectively and in real time is a way for the public to also learn about artists, city processes, and collaborative problem solving. By setting realistic goals, the program allows itself and the artist to succeed. Conversely, unrealistic goals create unrealistic expectations for artists and program.

The ER recommends that the thematic focus for any given residency be determined during Phase One of Research and Introductions. In this way it is part of collaborative discussions between artist and city department. If there is any predetermined focus, it should be open and broad enough to benefit from the artist's input. For example, the Pilot Program's thematic focus on "reckless driving," could have been an invitation for the artist in residence to consider transportation safety during the residency.

Timeline

1. "The detailed timeline initially provided helpful structure but became less beneficial as the project unfolded. I wish we could have extended the timeline." —Sarah Davitt, PAIR Artist
2. "I would recommend more flexibility regarding when any given phase begins or concludes." Angie Livermore, Creative Liaison for PAIR Pilot Program
3. "The strength of the program hinges on interaction between the artist and city employees. This could be facilitated by a series of luncheon meet and greets during the residency's earliest stages." —Kate Riordan

Observations:

- Internal documentation indicates that the timeline was adapted as necessary throughout the process. But it's also clear from the quotes that the two people most closely aligned with PAIR's creative production wish they had more time/flexibility. One take-away here is the complexity of accounting for differing perceptions, including any given person, or artist, as seeing the structure as both beneficial and problematic. (See note below.)



- The Pilot Program included a comprehensive timeline within the artist's contractual agreement, which established an upfront professional tone. Sarah made it clear that she appreciated the detailed schedule breakdown as a sign that the invested parties were serious about the residency while also feeling constrained by the same timeline at certain points of the residency.
- In reviewing key moments within the residency, I noted that major artistic decisions were made within one month after the first team meeting, and likely before the artist had spent much, if any, time getting to know people and processes within the DPW. It doesn't appear there was time for the artist and city workers to learn about, and from, one another, before a major part of the project's vision was decided. Note: the collaboration that developed over the course of the residency focused on problem solving the artist's idea and, as subsequent sections make clear, was productive and positive.

Recommendations:

The ER recommends that future iterations use timeline structure to establish a professional tone and ambitious agenda while also being clear that individual phases are intended to be adapted as necessary. One way to do this is to start with a more expansive timeline, 18 to 20 month program with built in options for one or two extensions. The duration of which will be determined by need.



The ER recommends that Phase One, consisting of introductions, research, and interdisciplinary brainstorming between artist and city department, be prioritized as a time where no major decisions are made. Two to three months seems an appropriate minimum amount of time for this critical stage. Especially given the program's emphasis on interdisciplinary problem sharing/solving as well as expanding creative toolkits for artists and city workers.

Documentation of Process

The internal documentation, overseen by PAIR's Administrator and DCD Point of Contact, Sally Svetic is a thorough record of process and outcomes throughout the program. There is a wealth of practical information regarding process, adaptations of the timeline, contracts, outreach, public response, a detailed budget tracker and meeting notes. This archive of information is for internal use and can benefit future iterations. (For more on documentation for public purposes see Telling PAIR's Story below.)

The following list of Key Documents, highlight a few records that will be useful for future iterations:

1. "PAIR Final Report"—useful summary of key events authored by Sally Svetic for MAB
2. "MAB_PAIR_PublicArtistInResidence_2022 FINAL"—Request for City of Milwaukee Host Depart, includes Program Overview and examples of other municipal residencies.
3. "Statements of interest from Agencies—Overview of Interest Statement from five city departments.
4. "Artist RFP Final draft 7.13 and Liaison RFQ Final draft 7.13"—Public Call for Artist and Liaison applications.
5. "City of Milwaukee Announces Public Artist in Residence Start"—Press Release introducing the selected artist and liaison.
6. "PAIR Outreach_Final"—List of Community Events along with data on production and engagement.
7. "Moving City Report out of DPW"—useful information on budget, outreach, and Polly Morris' response to Alderman Lamont Westmoreland. For public distribution.

The above documents represent a small selection of the many documents that detail the time, effort, and labor that goes into such a program. A couple additional examples on that topic include the folder of “Team Meeting Notes” as well as the folder of “Examples” that includes six programmatic references for municipal residencies that were researched during PAIR’s development.

Recommendation:

The EV recommends that future iterations should include a summary list of meetings between artist, city staff, and community members with a particular focus on Phase One research. The list could be organized chronologically on a weekly or biweekly basis. Such a list becomes an important tool for understanding the public nature of PAIR, both internally and when sharing the program back to the public. The recommendation is made as a way to also emphasize the value of people getting to know one another and exchanging ideas in the earliest stages of the program.



Catalyst for People Working Together

1. “Interdisciplinary work is important and it’s where we find creative, effective solutions for all types of problems. Looking at the City’s wide-ranging expertise, only PAIR brings artists and art into that interdisciplinary effort.” —Jessica Wineberg, Executive Director, Vision Zero, City of Milwaukee DOA

2. “I applaud any program that includes opportunities to build trust between artists, city employees, and the larger community, which is a process that requires time and patience.” —CK Ledesma, Public Artist



3. “The strength of the program hinges on interaction between the artist and city employees. This could be facilitated by a series of luncheon meet and greets during the residency’s earliest stages.” —Kate Riordan

Observations:

- Part of PAIR’s mission is to be a catalyst for interdisciplinary problem-solving. By all accounts from people that were part of the pilot experience, the opportunity to work with others was positive. This was true from artistic perspectives as well as those of city employees, which amounts to a significant program success.
- While interpersonal frictions developed between certain individuals the program’s structure and timeline gave individuals the tools to work through any differences. This sets a powerful example for future iterations.
- Based on MAB Agenda items that detail PAIR’s progress, all interdisciplinary brainstorming and collaborative problem-solving happened after the artist’s decision to create an art car. This was a missed opportunity that failed to take advantage of the program’s potential strength for collaborative ideation as well as production. Especially given the positive collaboration that followed.

Recommendations:

The ER recommends that interdisciplinary efforts at all stages of the program be emphasized in future iterations. This is particularly critical in the earliest stages of the project, when the public is being introduced to resident artists as well as the city department and employees with whom they are working.

While the focus of the PAIR program should be the artist in residence, the ER recommends that using PAIR as a tool for learning about day to day operations of city government, in addition to creative approaches to problem solving, will strengthen the program over time.

The ER concurs with Kate Riordan’s thoughts about luncheon meet and greets, between the artist and city workers, as well as in the context of community outreach. Food and conversation facilitate PAIR’s long-term, overarching goals.

Telling PAIR's Story

"I appreciated the support of public relations professionals, and the contract limited what could be shared by who and when. I would have preferred more project-driven social media." —Sarah Davitt, Artist in Residence PAIR Pilot Program

"Sarah Davitt was a nexus of productive connections during the residency, this is one of PAIR's success stories that needs to be told." Tim Murphy, Member, Milwaukee Arts Board and Public Art Subcommittee

"I was disheartened to see critiques coming from colleagues, especially when built on misinformation. I see this as an opportunity for future iterations to do a better job of telling the PAIR story as it unfolds." Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Co-Chair, Milwaukee Arts Board

Observations:

- One of the crucial data points that comes from the ER informal survey is that as late as Spring of 2025, well after the Art Car had been unveiled and even after major news outlets picked up its story, over 20% of those asked had not heard about The Moving City: Art Car. It's notable that the survey was not random nor statistically neutral, given limited resources, it was directed to people with tangible connections to Milwaukee's cultural community.
- The role of story-telling and reaching an audience with quality content is more difficult than ever. The attention economy is more competitive than ever despite, or perhaps because of, the proliferation of tools and platforms available. People are oversaturated, weary, and guarded regarding what information they consider. It is important to understand and acknowledge the current landscape for outreach, and use that awareness to better tell one's story.
- PAIR's Archive includes excellent documentation as well as examples of effectively sharing information in real-time on a variety of city channels. The point being that it takes a lot to move the needle of public awareness, much more so public interest. That said, opportunities were missed in regards to making PAIR a story about people working together to achieve common goals. Especially as one of those goals is to make Milwaukee a stronger, more vital urban community.

Recommendations:

The ER recommends more resources be allocated to telling PAIR's story as it unfolds and gauging response so that an effective feedback loop exists in real time. This allows for a strategic promotional plan that operates with awareness and understanding. The goal is to intentionally tell PAIR's story. To be clear, the ER does not recommend making media for the superfluous purpose of clicks that do not benefit the artist or program.

One way to increase promotional resources is to rewrite the role of Liaison so there are budgeted hours to work with the artist and city's PR team on telling PAIR's story. (See Final Recommendations.)

Critical Feedback

“... Art is supposed to provoke conversation, get dialogue going and put an image with a campaign. Anyone remember the “give a hoot don’t pollute” owl? Or Smokey the Bear? Or the cracking of an egg in a hot skillet and the words “this is your brain on drugs” those are all campaigns that provoked awareness when I was younger. This may seem like a waste to an adult but think about the visual impact it may have on the younger children. ...

—Droptthroughdeck, posted to Reddit

“While I understand the well-meaning intention with this project, as an Alderman whose job it is to oversee the city’s coffers, I see it as not being a responsible use of money (especially for something temporary). I am embarrassed, upset and disappointed that funds and city staff time were directed toward this project.”—Alderman Lamont Westmoreland

“I bet investing \$90,000 in concrete barriers and road infrastructure would help more than a busted car.....” —gurple99 posted to Reddit

“... the art installation is still sparking a conversation about reckless driving in Milwaukee. “I know there have been issues with the car. Folks don’t like it, but the fact of the matter is that everyone is talking about reckless driving because of this car. So in a sense, I think it’s doing its job,” —Mayor Cavalier Johnson, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Observations:

- The quotes convey an abbreviated cross-section of the public response to the one aspect of PAIR’s artistic production. This back and forth took place in mainstream news as well as social media platforms such as Reddit.
- It is important to acknowledge the full scope of public response, even if that response reflects misinformation or simplifications of the program. In particular, for this evaluation, the backlash that momentarily overshadowed many aspects of the program serves as a productive friction for future iterations. (See recommendations below.)
- In 2025, the Art Car continues to be active at a variety of events under the auspices of Vision Zero, which lends increasing validity to the art car’s potential to start conversations.
- This evaluation focuses on the programmatic structure of PAIR with the goal of improving future iterations, the ER is not focused on the aesthetic review of the artwork it produced.

Recommendations:

ER recommends using this experience to strategize how best to tell PAIR’s story in real time as a way to build trust between all parties, including the public. An ongoing suggestion throughout the ER is the value of the public (virtually) meeting the artists and city workers in advance of the artwork’s conception and long before its unveiling. To be clear, the ER does not recommend that public opinion be sought in predetermining any given artist’s project or area of focus.

ER recommends that future PAIR iterations embrace the delicate and challenging role of mediating between artist and public as integral to their mission.

Performance Indicators

"It's fascinating how my personal practice evolved. This was my first sculpture designed to be in motion. And it's pretty cool that the result of this learning is the first municipally owned art car in the United States." —Sarah Davitt, Artist in Residence PAIR Pilot Program

"Pair achieved its intention of shaking up the status quo and getting people talking. Some of the public response caught me, and others involved, by surprise. There's an opportunity to channel all response into making the program stronger for the future."—Tim Murphy, Member, Milwaukee Arts Board and Public Art Subcommittee

"I see value in tiny changes."—Polly Morris, Vice-Chair MAB, Chair, Public Art Subcommittee

Observations:

The ER identifies four key performance indicators

- 1) Continued support for PAIR by individuals connected to the Pilot Program.
- 2) Realization of PAIR's self-stated goals and purpose, especially the goal of supporting artists.
- 3) Relevance of the Pilot Program's artistic outcomes to its thematic focus on "reckless driving."
4. Public response to the Pilot Program and the Art Car, The Moving City.

- Based on interviews and public record, there is overwhelming interest in continuing the PAIR program. This is a notable success for the Pilot Program, which had to adjust and adapt many variables throughout the residency without the benefit of an existing template. That said, the enthusiasm to continue PAIR came with qualifications regarding the need to learn from the Pilot and continue building a better program.

- People connected to the PAIR program, especially Sarah and Angie, had positive things to say about their experience. PAIR's ability to create a productive environment was a significant success.

- Other goals related to making Milwaukee transportation safer and improving people's lives are difficult if not impossible to determine. It is misleading and unproductive to use such language in press releases and public announcements. At its worst, over-promising outcomes could erode the artist's experience and undermine the above bullet point.

- While public response entailed very positive to extremely critical reactions, the most productive friction for the PAIR Program moving forward is understanding the challenges of being caught in negative news cycles and public forums they fuel. Public art, underwritten by taxpayer's dollars, is often a lightning rod of debate. PAIR successfully navigated those challenges and future iterations will benefit from the experience.

Recommendations:

The ER recommends writing a new mission statement based on what was learned during the Pilot Program.



The ER recommends allowing the thematic focus of any residency to develop over the first three to six months. This avoids predetermining the artist's time with specific language such as "addressing issues of reckless driving." It's possible the same project might have been produced, but the language describing it would have resulted from collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches.

Future PAIR Iterations

"Art changes lives. So finding ways to get serious issues addressed and solutions being sought through art and artists is a brilliant idea. It is my hope we continue to run the PAIR program and that we learn from it and improve it." —Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Co-Chair, MAB

"PAIR needs a team of champions, a group of individuals from outside the core team, who are invested in the program's success and play supportive roles while helping to share the program with the public." —Sally Svetic, Neighborhood Business Development Specialist, DCD, City of Milwaukee

"Through the PAIR program, the City and Arts Board embarked on a bold new venture, skillfully managing the unpredictable risks and the significant rewards that come with innovation. This experience has been incredibly positive, and I'm excited about pursuing similar collaborative initiatives again." —Christina Klose, Brand and Creative Services Officer, City of Milwaukee; Member, Milwaukee Arts Board and Public Art Subcommittee

"I would like to be part of future PAIR programming." —CK Ledesma, Public Artist

Observations:

People connected to the PAIR Pilot Program expressed interest and support for continuing the PAIR program. There were minor qualifications acknowledging the potential for political headwinds in the face of critical feedback. While acknowledging this fact, multiple people were quick to point out that all criticism is an opportunity for further discussion (see Mayor's quote in Critical Feedback section). Fostering conversation around difficult cultural issues is one of the program's stated goals, and there is hope that talking about the program from all angles creates momentum.

This evaluation can be seen as a step toward the next PAIR iteration, but other steps were put on hold until its completion. So other evidence of how and when PAIR 2.0 could take shape do not exist. There is no tentative timeline, internal discussions about a budget, or a five-year plan that provides momentum toward that goal.

For reasons such as continuity and the expectation of continuity within artistic and general communities; cumulative impacts of story-telling; and the practical limitations of evaluating a program based on a single iteration, it would have made sense for the Pilot to consist of at least two, and preferably three iterations that overlapped or ran consecutively.



Recommendations:

The ER recommends that any future PAIR iteration include at least two separate residencies within a collective timeline. If that results in smaller per-project budgets, the emphasis could be on the earliest research and interdisciplinary brainstorming phase where the public learns about the artists and the city department in which they are embedded.

The ER recommends a focused effort on growing its applicant pool in order to find the most fitting combination of artist and city department. The ongoing strength and viability of the program depends on artists seeing the value of being in residence. It may be productive to set applicant pool benchmarks moving forward.

Concluding Thoughts: Program Strengths and Summary Recommendations

Program Strengths

1. The PAIR Pilot Program began with a well-defined structure that included research, community engagement, testing, production, and implementation. The different phases were adapted in real-time based on specific needs and collaborative dynamics. The combination of structure and malleability was a major success that created a productive environment with largely positive experiences by all parties.

2. The real-time problem solving noted above allowed for new developments. PAIR's partnership with Vision Zero was not part of the original plan. The flexibility and adaptive problem-solving that allowed VZ to take ownership of the Art Car is a significant program success. Especially as VZ continues to use it for their traffic safety programming, extending PAIR's impact.

3. In the wake of critical feedback following the Art Car's unveiling, the PAIR Team and their supporters emphasized the program's strengths and intentions, highlighted misinformation and continued to promote the Art Car's communal value.

4. The working relationship between the MAB's Public Art Subcommittee, Milwaukee's Department of City Development, and independent artists highlights the benefits of partnering with others to generate fresh ideas regarding the traditional roles of government and private sector. Administrative logistics are integral to such partnerships. Many people, including PAS Chair Polly Morris and subcommittee members are quick to credit Sally Svetic, PAIR's main contact within the DCD, as a major factor in the successful pilot.

5. On a similar note, multiple people interviewed mentioned that Polly Morris, Chair of PAS as well as Sally Svetic, Neighborhood Business Development Specialist, DCD were integral to PAIR becoming a reality. It was clear from these conversations that Morris and Svetic provided the initial momentum and sustained forward progress throughout the program. It is important to acknowledge who plays pivotal roles in the PAIR program, or any civic undertaking for that matter, in order to strategically support these individuals as well as work on expanding the leadership team. (See Recommendations 5 and 6 below.)

Summary Recommendations

1. The ER highly recommends structuring the first three months (minimum) as a time for introductions, immersion, and learning without any major decision being made. This period is crucial to PAIR's story. It's a time when the public can meet the artist as well as city departments and employees. The ER recommends highlighting the value of these initial meetings. As the artist learns about city processes, and city employees learn about the artist's approach to problem solving, those experiences are shared with the public who learn about both. One major goal in such an approach is to inspire more community engagement throughout the residency.

2. The ER recommends all PAIR iterations include two or more residencies within the same cycle. They could overlap or run consecutively. For example, the RFP for a new residency could be released as the current residency is winding down. It is crucial for a successful program to enact its own future and downtime between cycles will ultimately require more effort to sustain it.

3. The ER recommends looking to local and regional residency for examples of how to engage audiences and build applicant pools. Two regional residencies that could serve as helpful points of reference are the long-running Kohler Arts/Industry Residency and the Pfister Hotel's residency. It's important to note that neither of these is a municipal residency so they operate with different frameworks. Still they enjoy favorable interest from artists and the public, which benefits all parties and stakeholders.

4. The ER recommends creating a five-year plan that includes tentative funding sources, timelines, potential city department partners, evaluation and refinement of key individual roles.

5. The ER recommends refining the Liaison role so as to offer more logistical support for DCD staff. While the liaison's role within the Pilot contributed to the program's overall success, the ER recommends leveraging the position as one of administrative rather than artistic support. The liaison's role should include an evaluative component, making notes in real time

that will contribute to summary evaluation. In that capacity, the liaison's role should have the potential, and be well-positioned, to consult and help problem-solve across the entire spectrum of PAIR activities. (It may be helpful to refer to the Evaluator's role in the Los Angeles Creative Strategist's program for the latter two points.) It follows that funding for the position should be maintained or increased based on added value to the program.

6. The ER recommends broadening the program's core team, supporters, and advocates to include a diverse range of community leaders, business owners, and Milwaukee enthusiasts. (See Sally's quote regarding a Team of Champions in the Future Iteration section.) By way of example, perhaps a restaurant supports PAIR by hosting a luncheon meet and greet, or a local personality livestreams a group visit to the artist's studio. The goal is to expand the notion of stakeholders so as to support overall workload while allowing the program to better tell its story to the broadest possible audience.

Final Summary

The PAIR Pilot Program was a successful residency that actualized many of its goals while establishing a base line from which future improvement can be made. It is important to note that given the many interpersonal and creative variables with a single residency as reference it is challenging to evaluate programmatic consistency or lack thereof. The data and conversations that make up the report shed much light on the Pilot residency that may or may not predict future challenges and successes.

The PAIR Pilot Program was able to happen, by many accounts, because of the leadership and efforts of Polly Morris and Sally Svetic. Multiple people interviewed mentioned that without these two key individuals the program would not have been successful, and likely would not have happened. While their efforts, along with everyone who contributed to PAIR, are applauded, any program that relies too heavily on an individual is susceptible to organizational and personnel changes.

The ER concludes that the best use of PAIR's initial investment in Milwaukee's cultural community, is to build on the Program's successes and learn from those areas that can be improved. An ongoing PAIR Program will continue to foster dialogue and interdisciplinary efforts that uplift the city's neighborhoods and neighbors.



Evaluative Methodology

The PAIR Pilot Program Evaluation Report (ER) was conducted from February 2025 through July 2025. It was commissioned by the Public Art Subcommittee (PAS) in accordance with their original timeline, which anticipated the report taking one month, immediately following the contractual conclusion of the Pilot Program. The timeline was adapted to account for contractual logistics and the reality of scheduling multiple interviews.

The evaluation relies on three main sources for information: 1) The substantive archive of internal documents that track the program's progress. 2) Interviews with ten individuals, most of whom played a role within the Program. 3) Public accounts of the Program such as news coverage and social media platforms. In addition to these main sources, the evaluation drew on the evaluator's personal knowledge and engagement with the program since its inception.

The focus of this evaluation report is the PAIR Pilot Program as distinct from its resulting artwork. While those two things are closely aligned at points, it's the programmatic structure that will impact PAIR's future, and by extension, its ability to contribute to Milwaukee culture. The ER approach to data collection was both formal and informal. Interviews were conversational, with the goal of piecing together personal perceptions of the program as it played out in real-time. The ER faced a major hurdle in not being embedded within the program during its duration, precluding any first-hand knowledge or observations of PAIR's week to week progress. Working within those parameters, the ER balances statistical data points with narrative summaries and analysis. Quotes from each of the interviews help to anchor subsequent observations and recommendations. This evaluation also draws on the Evaluation Report of the Los Angeles Creative Strategist Program (LACSP), which served as a major reference for many aspects of the PAIR Program.

Finally, the ER contract included provisions that the evaluator work with the PAIR Team in conducting the evaluation. This was a helpful collaboration as the work of evaluating a program with many variables, after the fact, benefits from having more than one person or perspective. The ER would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of many individuals. In particular, Sally Svetic's guidance and input made a difficult context for evaluation both enjoyable and productive. With that in mind, all collaboration regarding the focus, conclusions, and recommendations of the ER maintained the evaluator's independence as necessary and integral to its ability to benefit the future of the PAIR Program.



Statement of Positionality

I was asked by the Public Art Subcommittee in late 2024 if I would be interested in evaluating the PAIR Pilot Program. My reply was an enthusiastic yes for multiple reasons, the main one being that I believe that a successful municipal residency, and cultural investment in general, amplify the strengths of urban centers and their populations. Based on that goal, I saw the evaluation as an opportunity to assess the Pilot Program so that future PAIR iterations can benefit from previous successes and learn from areas calling for improvement.

I was familiar with PAIR since its public RFP and RFQ and had submitted my RFQ for the position of Liaison. My understanding is that I was short-listed for my current role in the Evaluation Phase based on that application and follow up interview. I also understand that PAS was intent on having an artist in the role of evaluator as part of their mission to support artists and showcase the diverse skillset of the creative community.

I bring over thirty years experience as an artist working at the intersection of civically-engaged projects, poetry, and multi-media. I was named Mildred L. Harpole Artist of the Year by the Milwaukee Arts Board in 2023, received a Mary L. Nohl Individual Artist Fellowship in 2010. In 2014, I was in the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art. In 2025, I along with friends and supporters, are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Blue Dress Park. The project was one of my early public interventions, which continues to explore the role of imagination within the urban landscape and civic fabric. My interdisciplinary approach to my own career gives me well-rounded experience from which to assess complex projects and programmatic strengths.

The productive frictions and areas highlighted for improvement within the ER, are in many ways the program's strengths. They best fulfill the role of a pilot program in mapping out holistic approaches to creating a PAIR Program that benefits artists, city employees, and the public.

Paul Druecke's Bio

Paul Druecke is an artist and writer working at the intersections of sculpture, poetry, and multimedia projects. His work was included in the 2014 Whitney Biennial and anthologized in Blackwell's Companion to Public Art. His ongoing project "America Pastime" was featured in the New York Times Five To Follow series. "A Social Event Archive" was the focus of a solo exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Museum in 2017. The "Archive" has been cited as foreshadowing social media's now familiar blurring of personal and public history.





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