



Art for art's sake

Glendale starts first citywide arts program while Pasadena officials mull projects in Northwest

By [André Coleman](#) 12/30/2010

While Glendale decides how to spend its coming windfall from a recently approved development set-aside for public art projects, Pasadena officials are wondering what to do in Northwest Pasadena with money available for art from a similar law enacted before Glendale's.

On Dec. 7, the five-member Glendale City Council, acting as the city's Redevelopment Commission, imposed a two-tier development impact fee that allows developers to either contribute 1 percent of their project's total cost to a citywide arts fund or provide 2 percent of the cost to on-site art on their property. The new law also expands developer impact fees for arts from the Downtown Redevelopment Area to include the whole city.

Which groups get money from the fund, and how much, will be determined by a comprehensive set of guidelines already approved by the Glendale Planning Commission.

As local arts maven Arlene Vidor wrote in an email to supporters soon after the vote was taken that Tuesday afternoon, "This is a major step for Glendale."

Vidor, a photographer by trade, is a member of Glendale Arts, a private nonprofit organization charged with managing the Alex Theatre and coordinating resources that are designed to benefit artists, according to its Web site.

In Pasadena, using developer fees to construct public arts projects is a longstanding practice — everywhere in the city except economically challenged Northwest Pasadena. In an effort to promote construction in those neighborhoods, developers there in the 1980s and '90s were exempt from the 1 percent set aside. As a result, few public arts projects are located in Northwest. That situation is changing, with community leaders now calling for more public arts projects.

During a meeting at the Jackie Robinson Center in early December, residents were asked for the suggestions for what should be on the list of projects. Some people focused on "legacy projects" — public art installations that would capture elements of Northwest Pasadena's local history and culture, such as the historic relationship between the area's

Japanese-American and African-American communities. Others were interested in seeing a more contemporary presence in public art, said city spokeswoman Ann Erdman.

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