

National art grant given to Norfolk for "Art and Rising Tides" project

By Katherine Hafner
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NORFOLK

The city plans to commission public art about flooding and rising sea levels after receiving a \$75,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The "Art and Rising Tides" project is among 69 that were granted "Our Town" awards from the federal agency, which gave between \$25,000 and \$200,000 to each project.

Leaders of the project, including the Downtown Norfolk Council, which is partnering with the city, said they plan to explore the issues through artwork, especially in the arts district on Granby Street north of Brambleton Avenue.

The artist will work with city planners, architects and community partners.

The project will include functional pieces that deal with the arts district's flooding problems in creative ways, such as water swells under sculptures and cisterns that may siphon rainwater off buildings, said Karen Rudd, manager of the Norfolk Public Art Program. Leaders plan to measure rainwater and determine whether the installations make a difference.

Rudd said the grant starts Oct. 1, and officials will have two years to finish the project. An artist should be picked by early next year. Rudd estimated the total budget at almost \$300,000.

The issue of sea-level rise has been salient in Hampton Roads in recent years, as land slowly sinks and tides rise.

The city's grant announcement said officials aim to use artistic expression to strengthen preparedness and infrastructure.

A \$50,000 grant was given to the nonprofit Elizabeth River Project. Scottish sculptor Rob Mulholland will complete a permanent installation at Portsmouth's Paradise Creek Nature Park. He will also create temporary sculptures between that park and Chesapeake's Elizabeth River Park, across the South Norfolk Jordan Bridge, as part of the nonprofit's 2016 Elizabeth Riverfest.

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