



City of Edmonds Media Release

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department

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WWU STUDENTS PITCH YEAR-ROUND SEASONAL EVENTS CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE FOURTH AVENUE ARTS CORRIDOR

***Student Public Relations Project Part of Sustainable Cities Partnership Between Edmonds,
Western Washington University, and Association of Washington Cities***

(Edmonds, WA) – The 4th Avenue Arts Corridor in downtown Edmonds has the potential to become a year-round hub of cultural events and festivities that highlight the Edmonds arts community, according to a plan created by Public Relations students at Western Washington University. Those students presented a winning proposal to City staff to help promote the downtown Arts Corridor through a series of seasonal events and festivities on 4th Avenue North under the theme of “Art for Everyone.”

“All of the proposals had strong points, but City staff was especially impressed by the focus on all ages and all seasons in the winning proposal,” says City of Edmonds Arts & Culture Manager Frances Chapin. “We want to commend the WWU students on their ingenuity, professionalism and passion for this project. Working with them was an exciting opportunity to see our community through different eyes – both the perspective of students who grew up in or near Edmonds and the impressions of others who had never spent any time in Edmonds. They’ve made an impressive contribution in the effort to help Edmonds promote a critical area of its downtown core.”

The student project is part of the City of Edmonds year-long partnership with Western Washington University and the Association of Washington Cities called the Sustainable Cities Partnership (SCP). The goal of the SCP is to apply students’ energy, enthusiasm and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent real-world problems facing the City. SCP faculty and students work through a variety of studio and service learning courses. One of those real-world projects

is to bring visibility and energy to the City's 4th Avenue Arts Corridor project. The City is working to promote planning and development for a three to four block arts/culture corridor along 4th Ave N, just off Main Street, which links to Edmonds Center for the Arts to the north. The corridor was designated as an Arts Corridor with unique zoning in 2006, and initial concept planning for the corridor was completed in 2009. Since then the roadway project has stalled, although the Arts Commission has continued support for the concept through implementing an interim art project in 2016, "Luminous Forest" by Iole Alessandrini. The City called the corridor out as a possible WWU student project for creation of a promotion campaign to reengage the community and foster support for the larger corridor project.

WWU's fall quarter Public Relations Research and Campaigns course (JOUR 440 with 13 students, taught by Jennifer Keller) was organized as four competing independent teams. Each team of students acted as an independent PR firm which created a project proposal for the City. City staff attended the final presentations and reviewed proposals to determine which of the four they would select as the "winner" for the PR campaign project. Creativity abounded, from the set-up of the room to recreate 4th Avenue's "Luminous Forest," to a video tour and a broad range of graphics for branding events, posters and even bumper stickers. The WWU student projects can be found at this link: <http://www.edmondswa.gov/sustainable-cities-partnership.html>.

Each team conducted a survey of approximately 100 people in downtown Edmonds. In addition to demographic information, each team asked people a variety of questions about interest in the arts, awareness of public art, and awareness of the 4th Avenue Arts Corridor project. Results varied, but in general more than a third of those interviewed were aware of the 4th Avenue project, and in some cases up to 50% of respondents knew something about it or thought it was worth supporting. Questions about how people get their news confirmed the importance of multiple sources - print, online and social media. Each team then used this research to develop a proposed PR campaign to raise awareness of and support for the 4th Avenue Arts Corridor. Ideas included signature events that would draw people to the corridor, such as a family friendly run, a wine walk, an interactive art walk for families and children, a community chalk wall art project, live theater performances, and development of the pedestrian parklette as a focus for other art walk activities. The theme of "Art for Everyone" was incorporated into several of the proposals. The "winning" proposal included "4th Avenue, 4 Seasons, Art 4 Everyone", a year-round plan to involve all community members through a campaign of seasonal events and festivities to highlight the 4th Avenue Arts Corridor.

City employees will now focus on bringing the neighbourhood together to discuss implementing a plan for the 4th Avenue Arts Corridor, which could become a focus area for some of the student proposed activities in the future.

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