




CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Engineering Department

July 20, 2021

TO: Scott Nicewarner, City Administrator
FROM: Rodney Tissue, City Engineer 
RE: **Public Art Projects**

1. **Background**

Over the past few years, staff has worked with the Washington County Arts Council and the City Council-appointed "Public Art Commission" to facilitate the installation of public art in the downtown. The community can now boast that we have twenty-three (23) unique and noteworthy pieces of public art in the public spaces of Hagerstown.

The Commission (Alexis Broder, Mary Anne Burke, Sarah Hall, Alizah Lathrop, Aaron Peternech, Cassandra Thompson) offer the recommendations below to add more art to our downtown.

2. **Mayor & Council Action Requested**

Staff is requesting that the Mayor & Council review these opportunities and as applicable approve agreements with the artists at an upcoming Regular Session

3. **Discussion:**

- A. **Aerial Art on New Phase of Cultural Trail:** As part of the UIP Plaza/Cultural Trail expansion, a public art component was included in the approved budget for \$50,000. The Commission reviewed the options and recommended aerial art for the space between buildings on West Washington Street. The Arts Council issued a "call".

The Commission reviewed the five submissions and after interviewing the short list, they are recommending Mark Schwenk of *Frog Valley Artisans* in Berkley Springs, WV. Mark's proposed work is an array of multi-level colorful aluminum sculptures suspended in an arc-shape by cables about 20 feet above the ground. The sculptures are assorted flowers and butterflies. Please see the attached proposal for sketches of the concept. We are recommending we enter into an Artist's Agreement with Mark.

- B. **Lee Street Screen Art along Cultural Trail:** John Barr, who is by far the most generous private contributor to our public art program, developed another project on the south side of Lee Street at the Cultural Trail. John constructed a concrete wall with a decorative expanded metal screen system and is offering it to the City to attach art to.

Since this is a relatively small budget installation, our contacts at the Maryland State Art Council recommended artists Carol Jarvis and Gregory Gannon. Their design is below and the Commission recommends we enter into an Artist's Agreement with them to install the floral pattern on the screens.

The cost is approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 (we are awaiting a final proposal). Funding is provided in CIP #868 which has a fund balance in FY22 of \$23,000



- C. **Faces of Hagerstown:** The Arts Council currently has a call for photographs to be installed along the District Court in the new section of the Cultural Trail and in Artist's Alley. To date, 30 photographs from 11 different photographers have been submitted. The Commission decided to extend the call to October 1 with a spring 2022 installation. Expenses will be around \$3,000 to \$5,000 and it will also be funded by CIP #868.
- D. **Replacing the 'Colorblind' Mural on West Washington Street:** This mural, painted by school students in the 1990's, has significantly deteriorated in the last few years and is severely stained by rust from the steel railroad bridge above and should be replaced. The Commission suggests a mural that is engaging, interactive, and seeks to strengthen the message of tolerance and inclusiveness that the earlier mural aspired to create. The new installation should thoughtfully address current social concerns.

To try to do anything ON the bridge abutments themselves is not recommended due to the chronic rust staining potential and obtaining railroad approval. It may be a better idea to place panels (like a billboard) in front of the wall mounted in the sidewalk. This location has over 10,000 vehicles a day passing by making it a good location for a large-scale 40' long by 8' high mural. Lighting could be improved by City Light similar to the work they did on West Franklin Street overpass.

The Commission is recommending a "call" for concepts and have a jury select the artist. The artist's concept must be fully developed and the artist selected and then we recommend applying for a \$20,000 "Public Art Across Maryland (PAAM)" grant that would fund the art and panels (\$9,000) and the billboard-like structure (\$11,000).

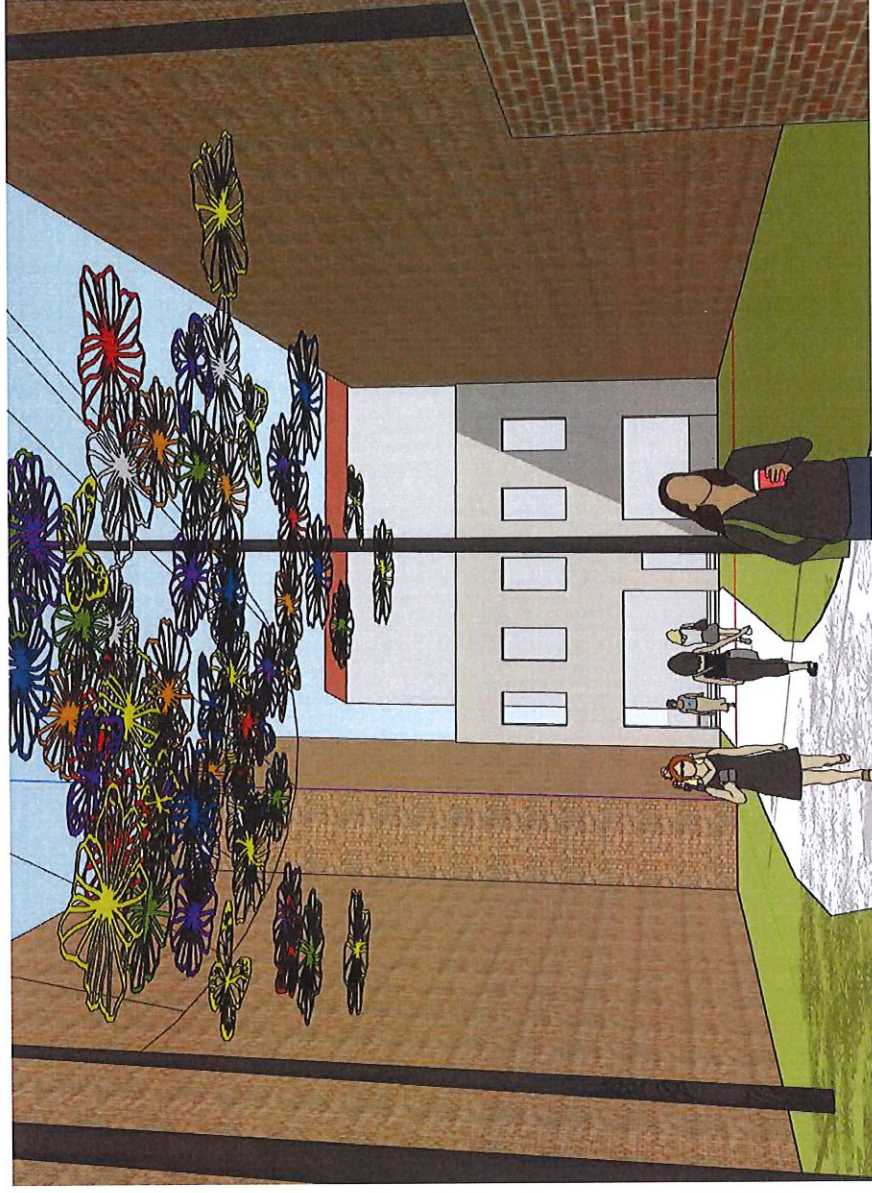


Staff will be available on Tuesday to review this project with the Mayor & Council.

Attachment: Schwenk proposal

Cc: Public Art Commission
Mark Schwenk
Michelle Hepburn
Jill Thompson
Kathy Maher
John Barr

Hagerstown Cultural Trail



Sculpture Concept

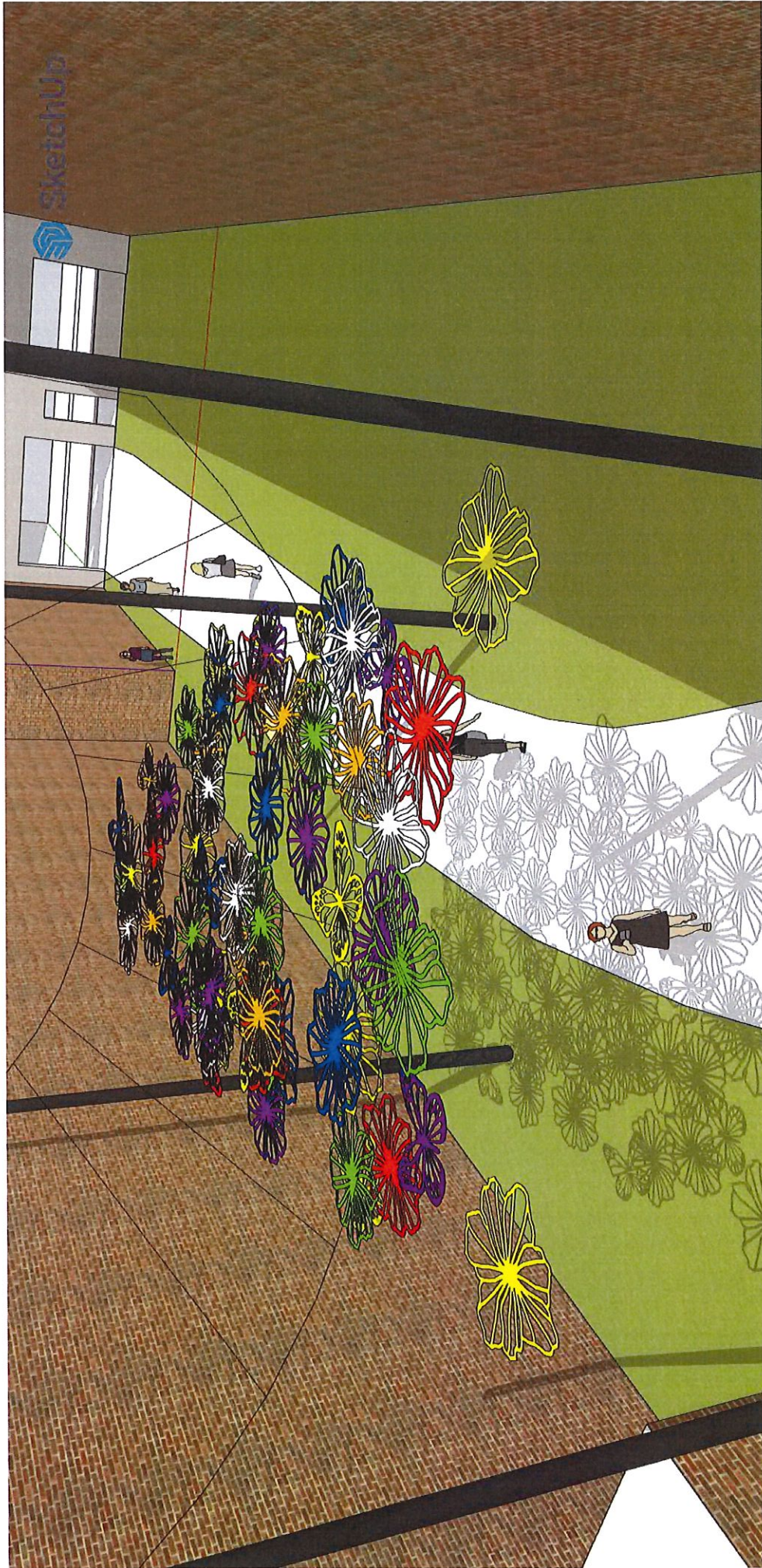
Mark Schwenk/Frog Valley Artisans, Ltd
www.markschwenk.com www.frogvalley.com

My intent is to create a space of shape, shade and color. I wish to tie in the theme of butterflies around the city- as you know butterflies symbolize rebirth, renewal and change- something Hagerstown continues to experience. This design would be multilayered and incorporates elements of flowers cut out of thick aluminum with colorful centers created out of acrylic. Butterflies would be placed throughout the design and would have colored inserts as well.

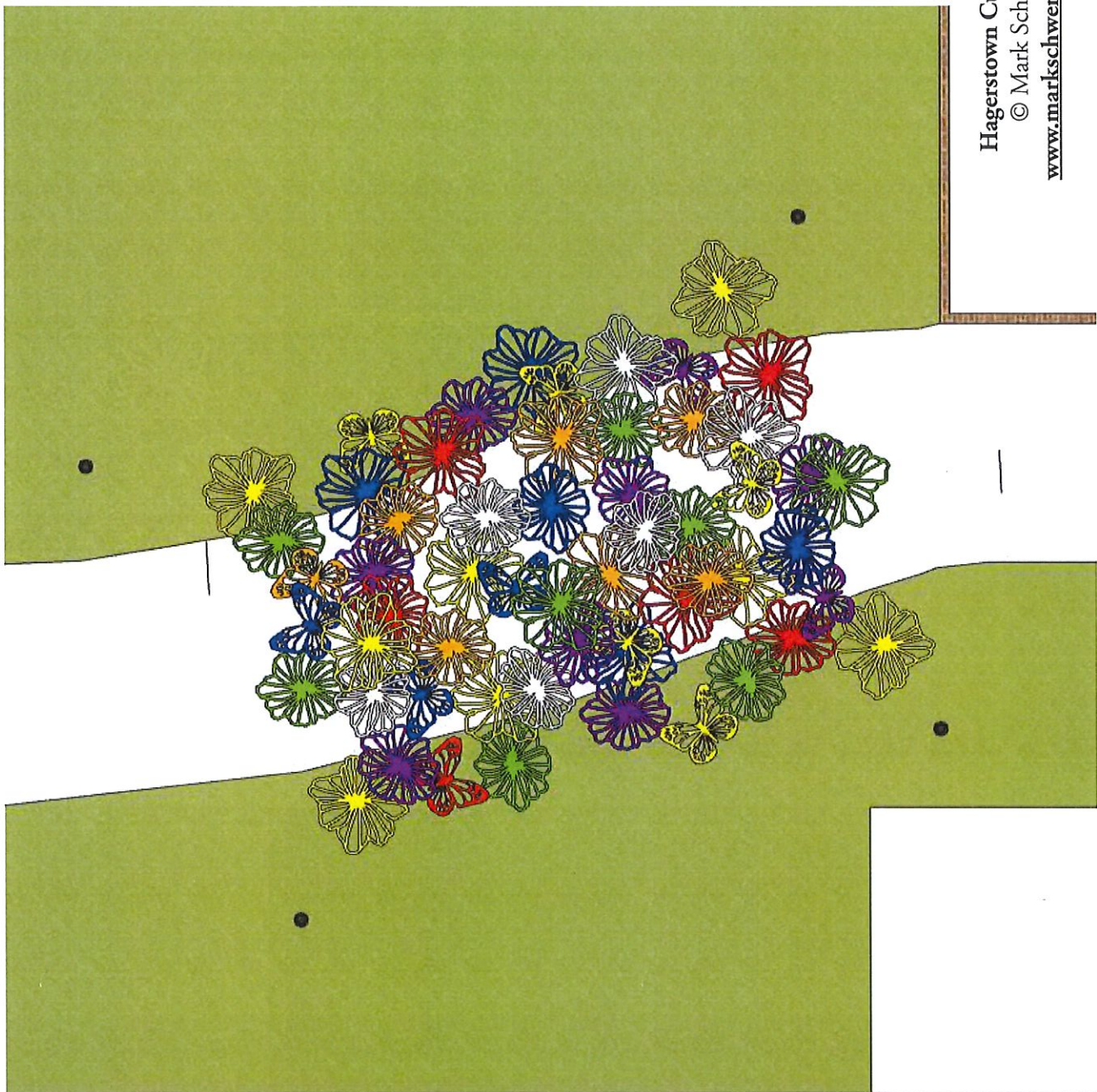
All of these elements would be finished in a brushed aluminum finish and then topcoated with a clear powdercoat to preserve the shine and texture. Everything would be laser cut from large sheets of aluminum with many flowers and butterflies together allowing most pieces to be connected naturally while each panel would then bolt together to create large sections of continuous flowing design.

Each section would be suspended from a stainless cable system that would create a strong and yet lightweight sculpture that would easily hang from the supplied poles. Our estimated height is around 16 to 20 foot high for the sculpture elements with cables hanging from top or near top of poles and as low as approx. 12 foot for stabilizing cables.

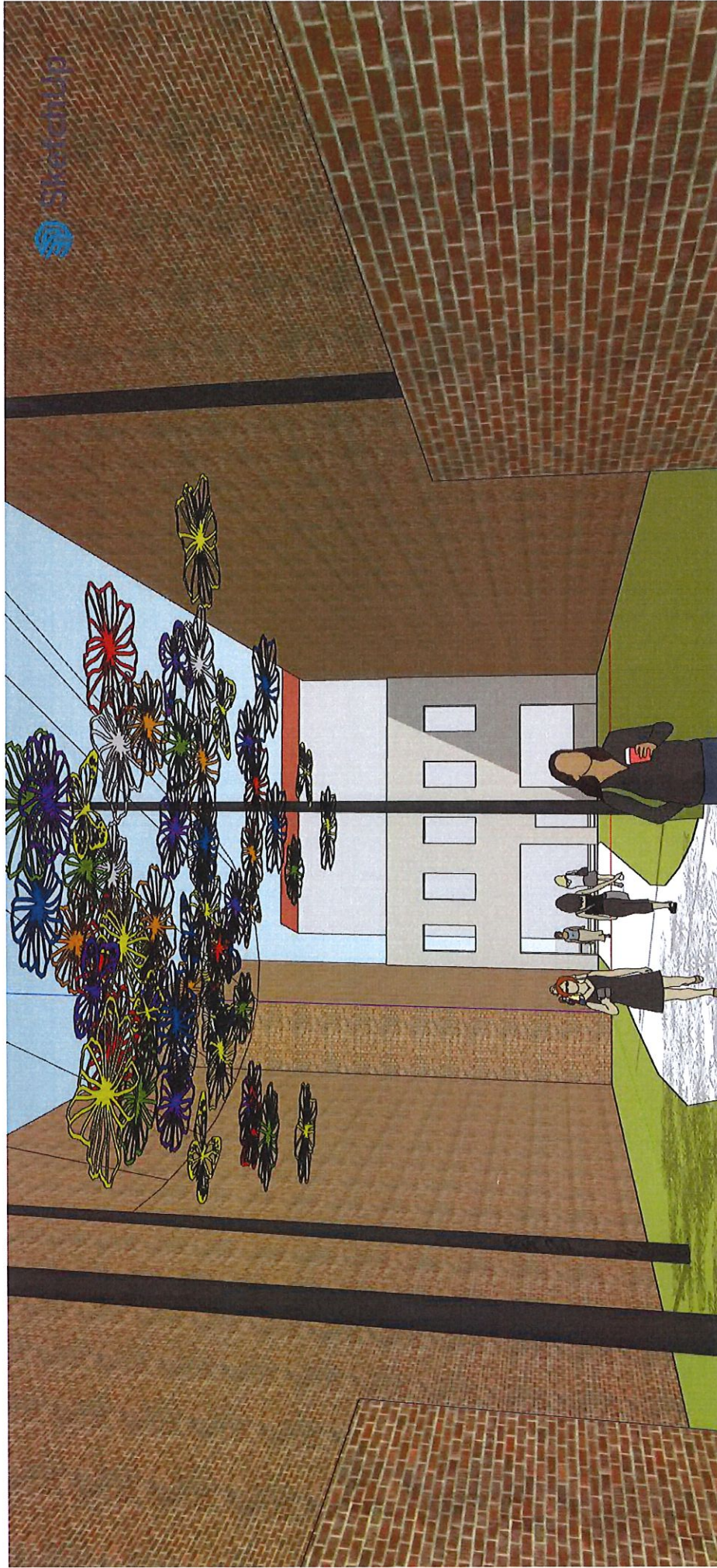
Myself and my design team would work closely with your engineers to assure the sculpture is created to be safe and long lasting.



Hagerstown Cultural Trail/ Aerial Sculpture
© Mark Schwenk/Frog Valley Artisans, Ltd
www.markschwenk.com www.frogvalley.com
304-676-4599

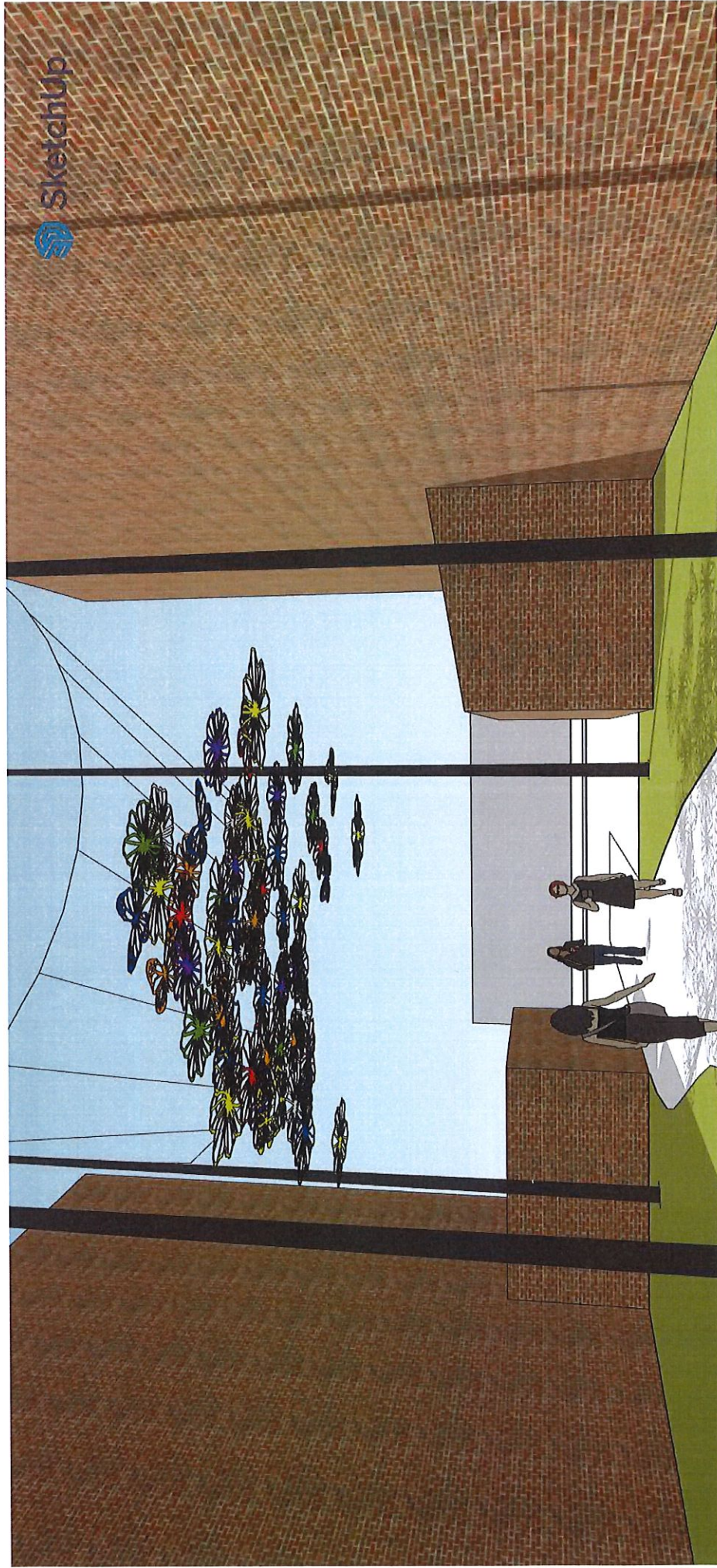


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SketchUp

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