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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Brattleboro Words Project gets \$15,000 grant to install  
2 interactive mural at new Amtrak station

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3 Brookline, Putney projects also share of grants from  
4 Vermont Arts Council

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5 TEXT BODY:

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6 The Vermont Arts Council (VAC) recently announced  
7 \$433,165 in grants to fund public art projects and improve  
8 cultural facilities across the state, and three Windham County  
9 projects are on the list of grantees.

10 The grants comprise two programs, Animating  
11 Infrastructure and Cultural Facilities.

The Animating Infrastructure grant program will support 10 public art projects, totaling \$93,500 in funding, including the fabrication and installation of a permanent, hand-carved interactive mural for the Brattleboro Words Trail at the new Amtrak station. The exhibit will provide a wayfinding center for a newly imagined Connecticut River destination for the town.

“The Words Trail sprang from the community and continues to engage new people in its growth. It is a remarkable achievement,” wrote Brattleboro Museum & Art Center Curator Emerita Mara Williams in the proposal.

Mural artist Cynthia Parker-Houghton, lead designer at Natalie Blake studios, used sgraffito to carve the two large clay murals of Windham County and downtown Brattleboro in 2021. The \$15,000 grant will allow her to create a permanent mural on the wall of the new station.

The [Brattleboro Words Project](#) — originally a multi-year program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts — celebrated the people, places, and history of words in Brattleboro and the region. It was a collaboration of the Brattleboro Historical Society, Brooks Memorial Library, Brattleboro Literary Festival, Write Action, and Marlboro College. It continues under the fiscal sponsorship of the Vermont Folklife Center.

According to the VAC news release, the grant program “supports projects in which public art is integrated into existing or proposed infrastructure improvement projects. As communities envision new buildings, roads, bridges, and other public spaces, they are encouraged to think beyond the ordinary and consider projects that have the potential for artistic enhancement, creating unique places where people want to live, work, visit, and play.”

Grants of up to \$15,000 were available for implementation projects and up to \$5,000 for design projects. At least 80% of grant funds must be used to support the artists’ involvement in the design, fabrication, or installation of the artwork. The remaining amount can be used to support the other

46 aspects of the project, such as project management and  
47 community engagement activities.

48 The East Putney Community Club and the town of  
49 Brookline were among 16 arts and community organizations who  
50 received a total of \$339,665 in funding through VAC's Cultural  
51 Facilities grant program, which supports capital improvements to  
52 town halls, theaters, library buildings, museums, community  
53 centers, and other public spaces where Vermonters gather for arts  
54 and cultural activities.

55 Among the projects funded this year are energy  
56 efficiency upgrades — such as heat pumps and LED lighting —  
57 improved sound equipment, fire safety system upgrades, and  
58 accessible lifts.

59 Pierce's Hall in East Putney will receive \$4,413 to  
60 support storm window installation, while the town of Brookline  
61 will receive \$12,000 to support the installation of insulation in  
62 the walls, ceiling, and floor of the Brookline Meeting House  
63 vestry.

64 Funded by the state of Vermont Capital Appropriations  
65 Budget, the Cultural Facilities Grant program is one of the state's  
66 Building Communities Grant Programs established by the  
67 Vermont Legislature to help communities preserve important  
68 historic buildings and enhance community facilities.

69 VAC partners with the Vermont Historical Society and the  
70 Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to administer the  
71 program. A panel of experts in historic preservation, architecture,  
72 and other building and accessibility expertise determines award  
73 recipients.

74 "Public art brings vitality to our communities, and  
75 investing in cultural infrastructure strengthens both our shared  
76 spaces and our shared future," said VAC Executive Director Susan  
77 Evans McClure. "These projects highlight how art enriches public  
78 life while honoring and sustaining the depth of our cultural  
79 heritage. We are proud to support them and the many cultural,  
80 social, and economic benefits they create."

81 For more information about both grant programs, visit  
82 [vermontartscouncil.org](http://vermontartscouncil.org).

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