

# What Mayor Walsh's \$3.1 Million Upham's Corner Investment Means for Public Art

*He's talked a big tech game but now it's time to focus on arts & culture*

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On Monday, [Boston Mayor Marty Walsh](#) announced a major municipal investment in the [Upham's Corner Main Street](#) area's infrastructure. The \$3.1 million will help finance a number of neighborhood initiatives, including revamping local storefronts, adding street and sidewalk lights and improving the Strand Theatre. But Mayor Walsh's monetary move also has positive implications in the realm of public art.

Mayor Walsh's transition has focused on fostering public art and injecting culture into each of Boston's various neighborhoods, along with bringing Boston to the forefront of global innovation and technology. One of the recommendations [relayed by his Arts & Culture Transition Team](#) includes committing "dedicated funding to the arts and increase that funding until Boston ranks among the top five cities in the nation as measured by per capita support for its diverse arts and culture activity."

As per [Mayor Walsh's announcement](#), new arts and culture programs through the Upham's Corner ArtPlace initiative will help to boost the commercial district's aesthetics, including a \$500,000 public art commission from the Boston Foundation and [Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative](#).

BostInno reached out directly to Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Community Organizer and Planner Bayoán Rosselló-Cornier to get an

idea of how the mayor's investment will impact the DSNI, the community and its commercial activity. Not surprisingly, the art commission is just one facet of a multi-dimensional culture phenomenon poised to take the Roxbury/Dorchester area by storm.

"The art commission is actually not part of the city's \$3.1 million dollar investment in Upham's Corner," Rosselló-Cornier told BostInno in an email, explaining the initiative's background. "The art commission is a joint venture between The Boston Foundation and us at the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, but it will add to the overall attention and focus that is being placed on Upham's Corner."

The DSNI has since commissioned Cedric Douglas to head the project, which will be put on permanent display in the neighborhood. The project has been in the works for two years, mentioned Rosselló-Cornier, but the new funding will allow for more dexterity in crowdsourcing ideas for what Douglas's work of art will actually shape up to be.

"The first phase of the commission is a three-month process during which Cedric and his UP Truck team will hold artistic interventions, games, community meetings, etc. to engage residents to see what type of art should be created and where in Upham's," continued Rosselló-Cornier. "Unlike many other public art commissions, there's no preconceived notion of what artist's piece is, in what medium will it be created and, or, where it will be installed."

The [UP Truck](#) is almost exactly what you think it is: a food truck-like vehicle that travels around Boston promoting urban art. In fact, it bills itself as "a mobile creative arts lab for community engagement using unconditional ways to engage people in the arts. UP inspires spontaneous discovery, creativity, and fun."

Using the UP Truck, Douglas will be able to effectively traverse the area to get the best possible idea of what residents want to see displayed as a work of art that embodies the neighborhood's core values.

At this point, it's unclear when Douglas, the DSNI and Upham's Corner ArtPlace initiative will be ready to commence with the permanent display art project. Stay tuned to BostInno for more information from the mayor's office and about Boston's public art.

*Image via [Travis Watson](#)*