



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2024-0779, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Economic Development Board  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Tara Thompson, (707) 565-6120  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**  
Sonoma County Public Art Plan and Policy Workshop

**Recommended Action:**  
Provide direction to staff on the development of a County Public Art Program, and consider the adoption of the proposed Sonoma County Public Art Plan.

**Executive Summary:**  
The department's Creative Sonoma division was established in 2014 with an Arts Action Plan which provided specific goals, including recommending strategies for establishing a public art program in the County.

After receiving Board direction, staff will return with a revised plan, if needed, and a proposed policy for Board adoption, estimated to be in October 2024.

**Discussion:**  
The draft Sonoma County Public Art Plan represents efforts by Creative Sonoma, local county artists, partner public agencies, and the community to explore the function of a County public art program.

### Background

Department staff has engaged in research on best practices in public art and a comparison of existing public art programs in the region. Additionally, Creative Sonoma division staff has completed multiple public art projects, in partnership with County departments and community nonprofits, which have served as learning opportunities that can inform the development of a public art program. Additionally, in 2021, a Public Art Policy Ad Hoc Committee (comprised of Supervisors Gorin and Rabbitt) was established to work with division staff to develop a policy and program; in 2022, consultant Todd W. Bressi was engaged to complete multiple interviews, focus groups, public presentations. In the fall of 2023, division leadership changes occurred.

### Plan Development & Community Engagement

In early 2022, following a competitive selection process, Creative Sonoma contracted with consultant Todd W. Bressi (Artful Places), a public art consultant with experience working with public agencies. Staff and Mr. Bressi completed multiple interviews, focus groups, and public presentations with relevant stakeholders including County department heads, affiliated entity directors, nonprofits, municipal leaders, and more. A summary of

activities is as follows:

- 7 Ad Hoc Committee Meetings
- 3 Public Art Steering Committee Meetings
- 6 Focus Group Meetings
- 32 Focus Group Attendees
- 35 One-on-One Interviews
- 10 Presentations (community meetings, Municipal Advisory Commissions, public art advisory boards, etc.)
- 7 City/Town meetings
- 10+ County Department Directors/Staff Members engaged in review, and received feedback
- Presentation to the Department and Agency Head Association

### Purpose

In the Public Art field, a Public Art Plan is a strategic document that outlines the overall vision and direction for public art within a community. A Public Art Policy is a set of guidelines and rules that operationalize the objectives outlined in the plan. Detailed decision-making criteria, guidelines and rules, and predetermined funding mechanisms meant to operationalize the vision of the plan will be further developed in the Public Art Policy.

The Plan was developed to address the following key questions:

- What does public art mean, in the context of Sonoma County?
- What is the unique role that a County-led public art initiative can play, considering the breadth and depth of experience that can already be found in various municipalities, nonprofits, and artist practices?
- What are the possibilities for collaboration between Creative Sonoma, other County departments and affiliated agencies, municipalities, and the community at large?
- What are the planning and decision-making processes that will be most effective for County-led public art initiatives, in terms of offering creative leadership, building sound partnerships, and providing oversight over public resources?

### Draft Plan Elements

Establishing a plan can provide the framework for the types of projects a County-led initiative could take on:

- Public art that is incorporated into County Capital Improvements, enhancing the public's perception and experience of those projects;
- Public art that is developed in partnership with County departments and affiliated agencies through flexible project approaches, helping partners achieve their missions; and
- Curated public art projects that are initiated by Creative Sonoma and address broader community goals.

In addition, the draft Plan contains the following:

- A planning and implementation framework that provides the foundation for a County public art

program. The Plan provides a governance structure indicating the need for a new Public Art Committee to provide leadership and oversight in public art matters, and a staff position to manage the program.

- Core processes for doing the work of a public art program. It explains the development process and function of an annual work plan for public art and how Creative Sonoma will work collaboratively with its partners to make specific plans for the projects it undertakes.
- Options for funding a County public art program, based on typical methods used by other government-based programs. Possible approaches are presented as a menu of options and include annual appropriations, project-specific allocations, in-lieu fees from developers, and grants, with the recommendation that a mix of funds would be beneficial to the program.
- Potential partnerships with County departments and affiliated agencies based on current priorities.

Staff now seeks direction to develop the policy and refine the plan to operationalize a County Art Program. After receiving Board direction, staff will return with a revised plan, if needed, and a proposed policy for Board adoption, estimated to be in October 2024.

There are two main key areas of discussion:

1. Funding: What funding sources would the Board like to see incorporated into the Public Art Policy? Which are to be mandatory, and which should be optional?
  - i. Funding source options listed in the draft Plan are based on typical methods used by other government-based programs: annual appropriations (from the Capital Outlay budget and/or a percentage of Transient Occupancy Tax), project-specific allocations, in-lieu fees from developers, and grants (programmatic and/or public art-specific).
  - ii. Funding analysis (Attachment C) includes estimated yields from some of the funding source options. This data is intended to generally inform the possible revenue from the various options.
  - iii. Depending on the level of interest for various options, further analysis, legal and fiscal consultation, and development may be required.
2. Governance Structure: Is the proposed structure, including the roles and responsibilities of elected officials, staff, and appointed committees, acceptable? As currently outlined, the following elements would be reflected in the Public Art Policy and implementation:
  - i. The Economic Development Board Executive Director would be delegated authority to approve all art-related contracts, including funding agreements, consultant services, and artist engagements.
  - ii. The Creative Sonoma Director would supervise the implementation of the public art program and approve public art Requests for Qualifications/Requests for Proposals.
  - iii. A new Board-appointed committee would be necessary to approve key components of the County public art program, including art project and artist selections. The Public Art Committee (PAC) would be delegated to approve the Annual Public Art Work Plan, Specific Project Plans, appoint Project Task Forces and approve recommendations from Task Forces.

**Strategic Plan:**

N/A

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

6/24/2014 - Establish Creative Sonoma as a division within the Economic Development Board and adoption of the Creative Sonoma Arts Action Plan (

[https://sonoma-county.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=2&clip\\_id=410&meta\\_id=136813](https://sonoma-county.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=410&meta_id=136813))

2/1/2022 - Formation of Public Art Policy Ad Hoc Committee (

<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6011744&GUID=F3A14252-14A9-4402-8E62-54A27FDAA3C1&Options=&Search=>>)

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY24-25 Adopted</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>	<b>FY26-27 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Discussion on establishing a Sonoma County Public Art Program has no direct fiscal impacts. However, it is estimated that at least 1 additional staff allocation will be needed to coordinate the program.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Sonoma County Public Art Plan
- Attachment B: Funding Analysis
- Attachment C: Presentation

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

None