

# Sonoma County Public Art Plan

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## Inspirations for Public Art in Sonoma County

Early in the process of developing this public art plan, Creative Sonoma met with and surveyed community members to learn what they valued most about Sonoma County. Their responses touched on six themes, which are summarized in the following pages. These responses provide a starting point for how Creative Sonoma can urge artists to find inspiration for public art that reflects Sonoma County's civic purpose, its shared understanding of itself and the dialogues it is having about its future.

- Our history: people, places and narratives that have shaped the county
- Our landscape: environmental qualities, cultural meanings and traditions, with the land and water at the center
- Our creative practices: innovations of making and creation
- Our diversity: the traditions, struggles and accomplishments of all people in the county
- Our resilience: our collective experiences, traumas and commitment to a new future together
- Our hunger for connection: building bridges between communities across distance and difference

# Executive Summary

The Sonoma County Public Art Plan addresses three key questions:

- What is the unique role that public art can play in relation to County government?
- What are the possibilities for collaboration between Creative Sonoma, County agencies and the community at large?
- What are the planning and decision-making processes that will be most effective, in terms of offering creative leadership, building sound partnerships and providing oversight over public resources?

The plan outlines types of projects for Creative Sonoma to use in developing public art projects that accomplish its mission:

- Public art that is incorporated into County capital projects through a traditional “percent for art” model,
- Public art developed in partnership with County agencies through flexible project approaches, and
- Curated projects initiated by Creative Sonoma.

The plan lays out policies for funding and decision-making that will be the foundation of Sonoma County’s public art initiative. It recommends the creation of a new Public Art Committee that will provide leadership and oversight in public art matters; policies for funding public art through both the budgets of capital projects and annual appropriations; and the creation of a staff position to manage the program.

The plan also details basic processes for doing the work. It explains how Creative Sonoma and the Public Art Committee will create a plan for public art every year and how Creative Sonoma will work collaboratively with its partners to make specific plans for the projects it undertakes. It also provides specific criteria for identifying projects, as well as processes for developing and managing them.

Finally, the plan illustrates potential partnerships with Sonoma County government and its affiliated agencies (i.e., the Water Agency, Ag + Open Spaces) that serve the county, based on current agency priorities. Where possible, it shows precedents from other communities to inspire the work that can happen here.

This plan was developed concurrently with, and is meant to work integrally with, the County’s Public Art Policy and the County’s Public Art Procedures Manual. The plan, along with the Policy and the Procedures Manual, are meant to be consulted regularly as a how-to manual and as a guide for how Creative Sonoma, County departments and the community can participate in managing the County’s public art resources. The plan should also be consulted as a reminder of and an inspiration for the higher purpose to which this work aspires, which is to embody the shared purpose of the people of Sonoma County. This is a purpose that is not only reflected in the world we see around us, in the land and traces of how people live here, but also in the stories that reveal the many meanings of this place and in the aspirations county residents share for the future.

## Plan Approval

The Sonoma County Public Art Plan was prepared by Creative Sonoma at the request of the Board of Supervisors. It fulfills one of the strategic goals that was established for Creative Sonoma when it was founded in 2014, which was to recommend to the Board of Supervisors a strategy for establishing a public art program in the county.

This plan was developed through consultation with arts, culture and community stakeholders throughout the county, including artists, representatives from municipal public art programs and Municipal Advisory Councils in unincorporated areas of the county.

# Introduction

## Why Public Art?

Sonoma County is a place that speaks powerfully to anyone who encounters it – particularly in the language of its landscape, which is a repository of stories about how people live and work in this place.

Public art is an indelible part of this experience. Sonoma County has long been a destination and a thriving work place for artists and their creativity is part of its visual landscape. Public art has been incubated by city arts programs, non-profit arts organizations, wineries and even artists themselves, and it can be found in urban, rural and natural spaces throughout the county. This work is playful, exuberant and often surprising but always deeply embedded in this place, a visual record of the conversation that artists are having with the life forces of the landscape, a reminder to people of where they are and why they are here.

This plan imagines an expanded role for public art that is connected to Sonoma County’s civic life. The relevance of this approach to public art has become unquestionably clear over the past few years, as communities have faced the challenge of devastating wildfires, flooding and a pandemic, as well as the urgency of addressing long-neglected issues of equity and climate change.

This plan imagines how artists can give voice to the experiences Sonoma County residents are having as a community – an interconnected and symbiotic network of towns and cities; working and natural landscapes; coastal areas, riparian valleys and the mountains that rise beyond; as well as successions of peoples who have been here for millennia, who have settled here over recent centuries and who are newly arrived.

It imagines how artists can help confront the challenges the community is facing, acknowledging the traumas the community has experienced and uplifts the myriad stories and shared purpose that weave Sonoma County together.

And it imagines public art as essential at a time when paths forward must be openly questioned and when everyone’s voice must be embraced in constructing what the future can be.

### **Vision**

Public art is embraced as a priority of Sonoma County government, incorporated into County programs, projects and services and celebrated for its ability to connect people and inspire civic purpose.

### **Mission**

Creative Sonoma inspires, catalyzes and facilitates public art projects in collaboration with Sonoma County government and community partners.

## The Role of Creative Sonoma and County Government

County government can be an ideal partner for this visionary and purposeful approach to public art. The day-to-day work of public agencies – building infrastructure, managing critical environmental resources, supporting the health and welfare of residents, guiding the community to a sustainable future, providing leadership in the acknowledgement and repair of historic injustices – provides a powerful platform for creative explorations and community partnerships.

Creative Sonoma is an ideal entity to stimulate this work. Established by the County Board of Supervisors in 2014 to support the county’s ecosystem of creative practitioners, businesses and non-profits, part of its original work plan was to lead a public art planning process and implement a public art program. Since then, Creative Sonoma has laid the groundwork by undertaking two benchmarking studies of programs throughout California and by producing demonstration projects in collaboration with County departments and communities. The conversations that began this planning process underscored the sense of connection and shared purpose that people hope public art can engender and their desire to participate in meaningful public art processes.

Creative Sonoma can leverage its relationships with County government, creative enterprises and artists, and the broader community to inspire, instigate and successfully manage a public art program aimed towards this vision. This plan provides a framework for how Creative Sonoma can do that, focusing on three overarching public art objectives:

[Align public art with the County’s strategic pillars.](#)

Sonoma County’s investment in public art can help County government achieve its broad strategic goals. Key among these are the strategic pillars of **healthy and safe communities** (“provide equitable access to quality housing, health and human services for all”) and **organizational excellence** (“communication and engagement with Sonoma County residents should result in services that meet the needs of our residents”). Public art projects can also support the County’s racial justice, equity and climate change initiatives.

[Incorporate public art into the projects, programs and activities of County government.](#)

This plan provides inspiration for aligning the creative mission of public art with the mission of the County’s public agencies. Creative Sonoma will work in partnership with County government agencies to incorporate public art into their everyday projects and programs. This will require clear planning and project management models that help Creative Sonoma and County agencies enter into partnerships that are not only effective and transparent but also flexible enough to adapt to the unique circumstances of each project. This plan outlines several project types – Capital Projects and Partnership Projects – that can be a foundation for collaboration. It also provides examples of where those project types can be applied.

[Catalyze public art projects in the community.](#)

Creative Sonoma will be looked to for leadership in this approach to public art. This plan also outlines a model for Curated Initiatives, a model that will enable Creative Sonoma to catalyze and support public art projects not only in partnership with County agencies, but also with municipalities, nonprofit civic and arts organizations, and individual artists.

## What We Do: Public Art Project Types

Creative Sonoma's public art program will prioritize three types of projects:

**Capital Projects** are artworks that are incorporated into major County facility, infrastructure and public space projects which are usually but not always part of the County's Capital Improvement Budget.

**Partnership Projects** are initiatives created in collaboration with County departments and other countywide agencies. These projects will focus on connecting public art with ongoing services, programs and special initiatives, specifically tailored to each opportunity. They will also focus on facilities and infrastructure developed by agencies that are not included in the County's capital budget.

**Curated Projects** are specific projects and broad initiatives that Creative Sonoma organizes through its own leadership in response to priorities or opportunities that it identifies. These projects could be managed directly by Creative Sonoma or by municipalities, non-profits, or artists.

### Public Art in Capital Projects

Sonoma County will incorporate public art into its capital projects, such as buildings and other facilities, transportation and water infrastructure, parks and other community public spaces, and components of the proposed County Government Center.

Public art in capital projects will be developed by Creative Sonoma, working in partnership with the agency building the project, the agency that will ultimately operate the facility and the design team. Typical projects would include bridges, community parks and components of the proposed County Government Center. These projects are generally, but not always, documented in the County's Capital Improvement Plan. Early, earnest and coordinated consideration of opportunities for Public Art in County capital projects shall be the standard, and not the exception.

### Criteria for Eligible Capital Projects

Any capital project that meets the following criteria will be considered an "Eligible Capital Project," where public art should be incorporated

- Projects that involve County-owned buildings and facilities, parks and other public spaces, transportation and water infrastructure, and stream restorations
- Projects that are accessible to or visible to the public

Capital projects that do not meet these criteria could also include public art, at the request of the Public Art Committee and/or the local Supervisor, with the agreement of the relevant County department.

The following types of capital projects will not be considered Eligible Capital Projects and will be exempted from including public art:

- Seismic upgrades, fire recovery, communications infrastructure and brownfields remediation projects
- Emergency response projects
- Maintenance and repair projects
- Underground utility and underground storage projects
- Road construction and maintenance and repair projects, including the Pavement Preservation Program
- Projects that are themselves Public Art

Affordable housing or homeless housing projects will be considered as opportunities for public art on a case-by-case basis. Though affordable and homeless housing are important policy goals and resources should not be diverted from addressing this issue, residents of affordable housing should be able to benefit from public art just as other groups would.

## Approaches to Capital Projects

Public art in capital projects can come in many forms, including artwork that is integrated into architectural or landscape design, functional artworks, site-specific sculpture or two-dimensional works. In some circumstances, a “design team” approach, in which an artist is a member of the design team and collaborates on the design of the projects, can be considered.

When the project is a building, public art can be inside or outside the building, but always in a place that is visible and accessible not only to the users of a facility but also to the general public. When the project is related to open space, the location can be flexible, based on the sensitivity of the open space and public access.

When approved by Creative Sonoma, the Public Art Committee and the agency sponsoring the project, public art funds that are generated by several Eligible Capital Projects can be aggregated to create a more appropriate and impactful project in at the location of one of the projects, or a different location altogether.

Processes for coordinating the Public Art component of Eligible Capital Projects are set out in the Procedures Manual.

## Partnerships With Sonoma County Government Agencies

Creative Sonoma will collaborate with Sonoma County government agencies (County departments, special districts and other countywide agencies) to develop projects that help its partners achieve their programmatic goals by working with artists and through public art processes.

Partnership Projects will be co-developed between Creative Sonoma and the partnering agency. Typical projects would be related to services and programs; campaigns and other special initiatives; and facilities and infrastructure developed by agencies that are not included in the County's capital budget. The approach to each project will be tailored to the opportunity at hand.

### Criteria for Considering Projects

Partnership Projects will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- The partnership can effectively advance program and/or policy goals.
- The project provides an opportunity for meaningful artist involvement.
- The project provides an opportunity to seek out and support artists and cultural forms that speak to, and preferably are rooted in, the community of concern.

### Approaches to Partnership Projects

Partnership Projects can come in many forms in addition to traditional permanent artworks. These include temporary installations, events, or exhibitions in a variety of media (including but not limited to physical installations; audio, video and photography documentation; graphic design; textiles; music, dance or performance).

Partnership Projects can be developed through a variety of approaches, including artist residencies, community collaborations, or traditional commissions. Artists can also assist with public engagement processes, particularly in support of the County's goals for equity in public engagement, and create artworks that document community input or the engagement processes themselves.

### Planning and Developing Partnership Projects

Partnership Projects are initiated when Creative Sonoma and a County department or a countywide agency determine that they can advance their missions through a partnership that involves public art.

Creative Sonoma and potential partner agencies will discuss the aspects of the project listed below as early as possible in the process. Answers to the threshold questions outlined below will help the Public Art Committee determine whether the project will be added to the Annual Public Art Work Plan.

- **What are the goals of the project and possible approaches to structuring it?** Creative Sonoma can stimulate the conversation by providing background on precedent projects.
- **What is the potential budget and what are potential sources of funding?** Creative Sonoma will have limited funds to support Partnership Projects and partnering agencies may have insight into programmatic funding streams that would support artist-led projects.
- **What will the roles of Creative Sonoma and the partnering agency be?** For example, what aspect of the project management will each entity be responsible for? What working relationship will each entity have with the artist? What capacity do Creative Sonoma and the partnering agency have to fulfill those roles?



## Curated Projects

Creative Sonoma will organize Curated Projects through its own leadership to pursue significant opportunities that are not identified through Capital Projects or Partnership Projects, or through other public art initiatives in the county.

Curated Projects will enable Creative Sonoma to address unique community needs and artistic opportunities by playing a catalytic role in initiating projects, bringing together cross-sector partnerships and connecting with outside resources. Curated Projects will also enable Creative Sonoma to establish ongoing bodies of work focused on the inspirational themes outlined earlier in this plan — multiple projects, in a variety of locations and by artists over time, that can inspire an ongoing creative conversation.

Curated Projects can be managed by Creative Sonoma directly or by municipalities, nonprofits or individual artists, in response to calls for proposals from Creative Sonoma.

### Criteria

Curated Projects will meet as many of the following criteria as possible:

- The opportunity addresses the County’s public art mission or goals, or the inspirations outlined in this plan, in a way that is not being met through Capital Projects or Partnership Projects.
- The opportunity provides the community with public art experiences that are not being provided by other public art initiatives in the county.
- The opportunity taps into resources that are available only to Creative Sonoma, or for which Creative Sonoma is the most appropriate steward.
- The opportunity is of a scope or nature that makes Creative Sonoma the most viable entity to play a leadership role.

### Approaches to Curated Projects

Creative Sonoma will consider a wide variety of approaches for Curated Projects:

- Traditional permanent artworks, such as two- and three-dimensional artworks in any durable media
- Temporary installations, events, or exhibitions in a variety of media (including but not limited to physical installations; audio, video and photography; music, dance or performance; graphic design; textiles) and with a variety of durations
- Artist residencies or community collaborations
- One project or multiple projects staged in different locations and/or at different times, as part of an intentional collection of projects
- Projects that involve creative resources not typically engaged through public art, such as processes related to the lifeways and traditions of Sonoma County’s diverse communities

### Planning and Developing Curated Projects

Creative Sonoma can find inspiration for Curated Projects in many ways. Ideas may be seeded by an opportunity for a grant or a partnership, by a major external event, or by the recognition that there are artistic opportunities or community needs that are best met through leadership that Creative Sonoma can offer and the flexibility that Curated Projects can offer.

The process of developing a Curated Project will generally follow the same basic steps that other projects do, as is appropriate to the scope and scale of the project and/or program, though there will potentially be a need for flexibility, compared to a Capital Project or Partnership Project because of the unique nature of these projects. Creative Sonoma will vet its ideas for Curated Projects with the Public Art Committee so it can offer guidance and support before the project is formally proposed for addition to an Annual Public Art Work Plan.

# How We Do It: Implementation

## Project Planning

The process of identifying and defining a public art opportunity is a creative activity in and of itself.

Creative Sonoma staff will lead this process. They will engage in ongoing conversations with peers in other County departments and countywide agencies to monitor the pipeline of Capital Projects that are potential candidates for public art and to identify Partnership Projects that are aligned with other agencies' missions, priorities – particularly initiatives, programs and campaigns that would be fertile ground for collaborating with artists.

## Project Intake

The first milestone in the project planning process will be to initiate a Project Intake Report, which includes preliminary information about project goals, location, timing and budget and, for Partnership Projects, the roles that each partner will play. Project Intake Reports will be developed and tracked by Creative Sonoma staff and used by the Public Art Committee during the process of developing and Annual Public Art Work Plan. Sample Project Intake Report forms are included the appendices to this plan.

## Annual Public Art Work Plan

Creative Sonoma will create an Annual Public Art Work Plan that outlines the public art projects that it will undertake in a given fiscal year. The Work Plan will be submitted to the Public Art Committee (PAC) for review and approval.

In developing the Annual Public Art Work Plan, Creative Sonoma and the Public Art Committee will review the opportunities identified in the Project Intake process against the criteria outlined below. The Work Plan will prioritize the new projects that the program will initiate and provide basic information for each: a rationale for how the project meets the County's public art goals, an indication of what the proposed budgets and funding sources will be, and what staff capacity needs are anticipated.

The Work Plan will take a multi-year view. In addition to outlining plans for the coming year, it will also indicate which projects are being carried over from previous year and will identify what future-year opportunities should be considered, even though future-year projections are subject to change.

In general, all commitments to Public Art projects will be made through the Annual Public Art Work Plan process. Exceptions can be made, as in the case of external funding opportunities that arise in the middle of a year and must be responded to. In this case, the staff will recommend and the PAC can approve an amended Work Plan.

In the future, as the County's public art collection grows, Creative Sonoma will also include a conservation component in the Work Plan. This component will identify conservation needs for the upcoming fiscal year and anticipate needs for future years.

## Criteria for Including and Prioritizing Projects

The following general criteria, along with the specific criteria for Capital Projects, Partnership Projects and Curated Projects outlined elsewhere in this plan, will be used to evaluate whether a project will be included in the Work Plan and how it will be prioritized:

- There is sufficient funding, staffing and time available (from Creative Sonoma and/or external sources) for the project to be successful.
- There is a potential to create strong artistic outcomes, including bringing new artistic approaches and voices.
- There is a potential to effectively and meaningfully advance program and/or policy goals.

In developing the work plan, staff and the PAC will balance the portfolio of projects according to the following factors:

- the overall capacity of Creative Sonoma,

- the timeframes in which projects will be delivered, so that there are short-term and long-term projects in the pipeline,
- the diversity of project types and artistic media, and
- equity in terms of geographic distribution and audiences served.

## Individual Project Plan

For certain public art projects, Creative Sonoma will prepare an Individual Project Plan, which is a foundational document that guides the planning and execution of a project. Project Plans will be developed for projects with a budget of \$60,000 or more, and other projects at the Public Art Manager's discretion. While Creative Sonoma staff has the lead responsibility for drafting and administering the Public Art Project Plan, the Public Art Committee, the Project Task Force (if one has been assigned) and project partners play a collaborative role. The PAC must approve the Project Plan before the project begins, though the plan may be updated as the project evolves to reflect new or changing information.

A Project Plan is a flexible tool; it can be as brief or as detailed as required by the nature of the project, but the goal is to provide a clear basis for managing the project and for accountability and evaluation.

A Project Plan is also an evolving tool. Some decisions about a project need to be made early on, while others can be made later (and the Project Plan updated) as the project progresses. For each project that the program undertakes, the public art program staff will consider documenting the following topics in a Project Plan.

### Components of an Individual Project Plan

- The project goals and how the project relates to Sonoma County's overall vision for public art
- The composition of the Project Task Force (i.e., the organizations and groups of people who will be represented)
- A description of the project's location and other information about proposed siting
- The project's expected lifespan, if temporary
- Criteria against which the artist selection and concept proposal can be evaluated
- The budget and funding sources
- The project schedule
- Internal and external stakeholders
- The artist solicitation method and artist selection method
- The artist's scope of work
- A communications and marketing strategy
- A community engagement strategy
- Potential partners and needed agreements
- Evaluation criteria, data collection and process
- Documentation process

## Funding

### Sources of Funds

Sonoma County will fund public art through a variety of sources – budgets of eligible projects, capital grants, annual appropriation and programmatic grants.

#### Eligible Capital Projects

Sonoma County will determine which projects in its capital budget will incorporate public art (“Eligible Projects”) according to guidelines in the “Public Art Project Types” section of this plan.

Affordable housing or permanent supportive housing projects will be considered as opportunities for Public Art. Though affordable housing is an important policy goal and resources should not be diverted from providing this resource, residents of affordable housing should be able to benefit from public art just as others would. Accordingly, the amount of Public Art Allocations for those projects shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.

For each Eligible Project, Sonoma County will allocate one percent (1%) of the budget for public art (“Public Art Allocation”).

For the purpose of calculating the Public Art Allocation, the Project Cost excludes land acquisition, planning, design, site remediation and seismic upgrades.

#### Capital Grants

Any County agency that applies for a grant to fund an Eligible Project will include funds for the required Public Art Allocation in the grant request, whenever the parameters for the grant allow it.

#### Annual Appropriations

The County will make a regular, annual appropriation to fund public art. This will provide for predictability and reliability in the funding stream, which will make it easier for Creative Sonoma to seek external funding and to plan and make commitments to projects that may last more than one year.

This funding will be dedicated from the County’s Transient Occupancy Tax allocations for Community Investment. The budget for public art each forthcoming year will be calculated as two to three percent of the rolling average, over the previous five years, for TOT expenditures allocated for Community Investments.

#### Programmatic Grants

Creative Sonoma will work with County departments and other countywide agencies to identify sources of external funding. These sources may include grants for public art projects directly as well as grants for public programs that allow funds to be used for community engagement and public art strategies.

#### Uses of Funds

Funds allocated for public art from any of the above sources can be used for public art project or program expenses. Specific allowable uses, and disallowed uses, will be outlined in the Public Art Policy.

## Governance: Roles and Responsibilities

This section sets out the roles and responsibilities of elected officials, County staff and appointed committees in making decisions about public art and managing projects.

### Board of Supervisors

*The Board of Supervisors is the legislative authority of Sonoma County. Its five members are elected by district.*

- Appoint members of the Public Art Committee
- Delegate decision-making authority to the Public Art Committee
- Designate representatives to participate in Project Task Forces

*As a courtesy, Supervisors will be notified of decisions about artist selections and artist concepts for projects in their districts before the decisions are finalized.*

### Public Art Committee (PAC)

*The Public Art Committee is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. It consists of seven members, one representing each Supervisorial district, and two at-large representatives. In addition, it includes two ex officio members who are from the Creative Sonoma Advisory Board and who are appointed by that Board. Members will be artists, or arts or design professionals.*

- Approve Creative Sonoma's Annual Public Art Work Plan
- Approve Individual Project Plans
- Appoint Project Task Forces
- Approve recommendations from Project Task Forces

### Creative Sonoma Staff

*Creative Sonoma's public art program is led by a Public Art Manager who works under the supervision of the Creative Sonoma Director.*

- Manage day-to-day operations of public art program
- Prepare Annual Public Art Work Plan for consideration of Public Art Committee
- Prepare Individual Project Plans (in collaboration with Project Task Force, if one has been appointed) for consideration of Public Art Committee
- Manage Public Art Committee agendas
- Manage implementation of public art projects
- Maintain liaison with County departments and other countywide agencies to identify public art opportunities
- Manage processes for accepting and reviewing proposals through Project Intake Reports
- Report as requested to Board of Supervisors

### Project Task Force

*A Project Task Force is created for projects with budgets of \$60,000 or more, or for other projects at the discretion of the Public Art Committee, following a recommendation of the Creative Sonoma staff.*

*A Project Task Force will have at least five members. The membership will include the Supervisor (or representative of Supervisor) of the district in which the project is located as well as artists, arts professionals and representatives of project stakeholders, including any County agencies that are involved. Task Forces will include membership from the community in which the project is located.*

- Collaborate with Creative Sonoma staff to develop Individual Project Plan
- Review RFQs and RFPs
- Review artist materials and recommend selection to Public Art Committee

- Review artist concepts and recommend selection to Public Art Committee

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## Program Administration

### Artist Selection Processes

There are a variety of processes that Creative Sonoma can use for selecting artists for public art commissions. For each project, the process will reflect the circumstances and goals of the project, as well as best practices in the public art field.

Artist selection processes will be designed with the following principles in mind:

- Selection processes should be competitive, except in situations where there are extraordinary circumstances, as outlined in the approved Individual Project Plan.
- Artist selections should generally be made based on artist qualifications. If artists are asked to prepare concepts, the artist must be compensated.
- Artist selection processes must be consistent with the procurement approaches required by the funding source and/or the project sponsor.
- Artist selection processes should be designed, as much as possible, to eliminate barriers that prevent artists from participating and to support artists throughout the selection process.<sup>1</sup>

Detailed outlines of the artist selection processes that Creative Sonoma will use are included in the Procedures Manual that accompanies this Plan.

### Community Engagement Approaches

Community engagement is an important component of public art practice, setting it apart from other artistic endeavors.

Community engagement is important as a matter of equity and inclusion, to ensure that people have the ability to influence decisions that impact the places they experience and value, and that public art reflects their voices and the way they would like to express their stories.

Community engagement is also important because a permanent public art project will have a public presence for a very long time; it will play an outsized role in creating an image for the community where it is located, as well as an impression of that community in the public's mind.

The leaders of a public art project should give careful thought to the community in which it will be located and set clear goals for the role they would like community stakeholders to play in the development of the project. With those goals in mind, the project leaders can then determine the best approach to involving the community at various phases, such as planning, designing, creating and celebrating the artwork.

Detailed recommendations are included in the Procedures Manual that accompanies this Plan.

### Donations, Commemorative Works, Memorials and Loans

From time to time there will be individuals or groups that would like to donate public art to Sonoma County, either to help beautify the county or to bring attention to people, events and causes that they think deserve recognition.

Also, from time to time, Creative Sonoma, an individual or organization might seek to borrow or loan an Artwork for display in an exterior location managed by a County agency. This means that the Artwork will not be owned by the County and will be returned to owner when it is removed for display.

To manage these opportunities so that the public interest is considered, the County will create standard review processes for accepting or declining donated works of art, commemorative artworks, memorial projects and loans. The following processes and protocols provide a framework for managing this decision-making:

- Definitions for what constitutes a Donation, a Commemorative Artwork, a Memorial and a Loan.

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<sup>1</sup> Barriers can include access to information about the opportunity, the language in which opportunities are communicated, and rigid submission formats. Support measures can include information and coaching sessions, and acceptance of statements in alternative formats, such as audio or video.

- Guidelines for evaluating proposals based on technical criteria, aesthetic quality and general relevance to the location and the community at large.

Detailed recommendations are included in the Procedures Manual that accompanies this Plan.

### **Relocation, Deaccessioning (Removal) of Artworks**

The owner of a work of public art retains the right to relocate that artwork or remove it altogether. However, the relocation or removal of an artwork before the end of its anticipated lifespan should be a rare and unusual measure. All Relocations and Deaccessions of Artworks must be undertaken in conformance with the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990 (VARA), which offers the artist a protection of his or her right of integrity and right of attribution.<sup>2</sup>

If the artwork is owned by the County, then a formal process will be followed. The process will include a careful evaluation of the proposal to relocate or remove the artwork, using pre-established criteria, and a recommendation to an authority responsible for making a decision.

Detailed recommendations are included in the Procedures Manual that accompanies this Plan.

### **Maintenance and Conservation of Artworks**

As Sonoma County begins to build its public art collection, it will keep in mind future maintenance and conservation needs. The following practices and protocols will help ensure that maintenance and conservation can be planned for effectively.

- Identify conservators and fabricators active in the region so they can be contacted quickly when the need arises. Consider issuing on-call services contracts to conservators with a variety of expertise.
- Identify the conservation needs of each permanent artwork prior to fabrication and installation. Require, when necessary, that artists consult with a conservator during the design development phase of the project to identify the anticipated conservation needs of the artwork. Alternately, submit design documents for review by a conservator prior to executing or authorizing the fabrication and installation portion of a contract.
- Require artists to provide a maintenance guide for artworks they create. A maintenance guide typically includes protocols for routine cleaning of the artwork (including recommended frequency, cleaning agents and methods) as well as an inventory of specifications for and sources of materials used in fabricating the artwork.
- Require artists to guarantee the artwork against any failures of workmanship for one year and to assign manufacturers' or fabricators' warranties to the owner of the artwork.
- Clean artworks and perform routine maintenance regularly, according to the protocols in the maintenance guide.
- Report any damage or conservation needs to Creative Sonoma; facility managers will not perform any non-routine maintenance unless requested.
- Ensure that there is a periodic conservation assessment of the works in the County's collection, including budget estimates and prioritization for conservation work. Incorporate these recommendations into the proposed Annual Public Art Work Plan and budget.
- Undertake all maintenance and conservation in a manner appropriate to the medium and characteristics of the artwork, following the protocols established by the artist and conservators, and in accordance with VARA.

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<sup>2</sup> 17 U.S. Code § 106A - Rights of certain authors to attribution and integrity



# Where We Are Going: Opportunities for Public Art

## Introduction

Following are potential Capital Projects, Partnership Projects and Curated Projects that Creative Sonoma could undertake with key County departments and other countywide agencies. These are all specific opportunities that are aligned with Sonoma County's public art mission to "inspire, catalyze and facilitate public art projects in collaboration with County government and community partners" as well as the various goals and criteria outlined in elsewhere in this plan. They are also illustrative of the types of projects that could be considered in the future, as opportunities and priorities change and as other resources become available.

## Sonoma County Public Infrastructure (PI)

Public Infrastructure builds and manages much of the County's infrastructure, such as general facilities, roads and the airport; it also manages Sonoma County Transit, five small water systems and the County's landfill and refuse transfer stations. PI's Facilities Development and Management Division, which is responsible for facilities planning, construction, maintenance and real estate services, will be a key partner in developing public art in County capital projects.

### Capital Projects: County Government Center

The County is currently considering options for upgrading the current Government Center campus in Santa Rosa based on the recommendations of a facilities study from 2013. This could be one of the most important opportunities for public art in Sonoma County over the next decade, in terms of scale, impact and symbolism.

Consider integrating public art into near-term capital projects, the construction of a new Emergency Coordination Center and the construction of a new Public Health Lab and Morgue. When the County determines its long-term strategy for facilities planning, design and construction, consider developing a specific public art overlay strategy.

### Capital Projects: Bridges

PI has approximately fifteen bridges in the construction pipeline. The bridges are in a variety of locations, from urban to rural, and vary in their construction type and in the integration of features such as lighting and pedestrian walkways.

Consider developing a variety of public art scenarios that could be applied depending on the circumstances of the bridge (such as its location, construction method, design and level of use) and evaluate each bridge as to the potential for public art early in the design and budgeting phase.

## Sonoma County Regional Parks

Regional Parks manages more than fifty parks and preserves throughout the county. Its resources include ocean, mountain, river and rural landscapes, as well as community-oriented parks in unincorporated areas. These resources offer wild landscapes, trails, interpretive resources, marinas, swimming areas, campgrounds, sports fields, playgrounds and other facilities. Regional Parks capital improvements, planning, programming and interpretive projects all provide opportunities for public art.

### Capital Projects

Consider developing a variety of public art scenarios that could be applied to Regional Parks capital projects depending on the type and location of the parks resource, including the cultural and environmental sensitivity of the landscape. Evaluate the potential for public art early in the design and budgeting phase of parks projects. In some cases, a public art component could help a grant proposal be more attractive to funders.

## Sonoma Water

Sonoma Water provides four core services: drinking water, flood protection services, wastewater treatment and distribution of recycled water, particularly for the urbanized areas of Sonoma and northern Marin Counties. It also generates electricity from hydropower, to help achieve its carbon-neutral operations goals, and it undertakes habitat

and wetlands restoration projects as part of its stormwater management and flood protection activities. Some of its land holdings are also used for public access and recreation, in collaboration with Sonoma Regional Parks.

### Capital Projects

Consider integrating public art into infrastructure such as water storage tanks, fencing, public signage and external buildings as deemed appropriate by Sonoma Water staff.

### Stream Restoration Projects

Consider developing interpretive projects related to major stream restoration projects, such as the Dry Creek Habitat Enhancement Project.

### Public Information Campaigns: Drought, Resiliency, Water Quality

Consider collaborations on public education around core Sonoma Water policy areas: drought, flooding/climate resiliency and quality of drinking water. These issues could be explored through permanent artworks, projects that focus on direct public engagement, or campaign-style approaches.

### Curated Strategy: Water as a Platform for Public Art

Water is a resource that both connects and differentiates Sonoma County's various communities. It has deep cultural resonance as well as immense practical utility. Consider a long-term artistic strategy, through curated projects or residencies, for encouraging artists to explore connections between water, land and the life of the community.

### Health Services / Human Services / Office of Equity

The **Department of Health Services**, the **Human Services Department** and the **Office of Equity** intersect in their work related to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of the county's most vulnerable residents, as well as to addressing equity issues. Their mission areas include behavioral health, public health, services for the aging, economic assistance, family services, employment and training services, racial equity and language access. They have been central to the County's efforts to address the intersecting traumas of the Covid pandemic and wildfires, as well as its efforts to address equity issues.

The work of each of these agencies intersects with *A Portrait of Sonoma*, a study that shifted that community's understanding of what determines well-being in Sonoma County and how conditions vary between neighborhoods. *A Portrait of Sonoma* was commissioned in 2014 by Health Services and updated in 2021 through a partnership of Health Services, Human Services, Office of Equity and the Community Foundation of Sonoma County. Subsequent to the publication of the update, County agencies and community leaders began to work on an Agenda for Action to address the inequities that the study documented.

### Public Engagement: "No Wrong Door"

"No Wrong Door" is a service framework that means when a member of the community asks for help with housing, health or human services, they can access the array of services they need regardless of where they enter the system. The goal is to create easier access to services and reduce people's fear and confusion about asking for help because they don't know where to turn.

Consider engaging artists to create portals for county residents to access housing, health or human services. Processes can include messaging campaigns, placemaking at service delivery locations and pop-up resource centers.

### Public Engagement: Raising the Visibility and Voice of Communities

Both *A Portrait of Sonoma* and the traumatic events of the last few years have dramatically brought to light the cultural, economic, social and generational disparities that are not always evident to people in the course of their everyday lives. Consider artist projects that bring more public awareness of these disparities by raising up the voices and stories of community members who have previously been much less visible, if seen at all.

### **Public Engagement: Datawalk and Freedom Dreaming**

“Datawalk” and “Freedom Dreaming” are follow-up projects to *A Portrait of Sonoma*. “Datawalk” works with community leaders to “ground-truth” *Portrait of Sonoma*’s findings by asking whether the *Portrait* reflects what they know about their community and what it might have missed. “Freedom Dreaming” asks residents to imagine the positive changes they envision for their community. Consider asking artists to play a role in facilitating these processes and helping people to communicate their ideas through creative approaches.

### **Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District**

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) protects natural land that is important for ecological, scenic, or agricultural reasons. Ag + Open Space maintains an extensive network of partnerships for the purpose of providing awareness of and public access to the County’s open space resources and supporting research on land management best practices from an ecological, agricultural and fire protection point of view.

#### **Grant Programs: Improving and Engaging Open Space Resources**

Ag + Open Space manages a variety of grant programs for communities to create or improve public access to open space resources and for programming that engages people in the lands it has purchased.

Consider how artists/creatives can be eligible for grant projects and consider providing matching funds to grants related to public art.

#### **Curated Strategy: Land as a Platform for Public Art**

Consider a long-term artistic strategy, through curated projects or residencies, for encouraging artists to explore the many meanings of the land – cultural, economic, personal – and how it is managed.

#### **Data Residency: Sonoma Veg Map**

Ag + Open Space is a partner with Sonoma Water in the Sonoma Veg Map project,<sup>3</sup> a five-year effort to map the County’s topography, physical and biotic features, and diverse plant communities and habitats. Consider an artist residency to explore how these data sets could be used to generate artworks in visual, digital, sound or other media.

#### **Cultural Residency: Local Tribal Outreach**

Ag + Open Space is working to expand its relationships with local tribes, to learn how their knowledge of the land can be incorporated into the land management practices that the agency’s partners follow. Consider a residency of a local tribal artist that could help improve public understanding of native land practices. Consider collaboration with Sonoma Regional Parks, which is partnering with Graton Rancheria on management of the Tolay Lake Regional Park.

### **Sonoma County Library**

The Sonoma County Library consists of a central library, ten branches, two rural stations and one temporary site (Roseland). It also maintains three special collections (the Sonoma County Wine Library, the History and Genealogy Annex, and the Petaluma History Room) as well as a collection of oral histories of people’s experiences during the 2017 and 2019 wildfires.

In 2021, the library completed a “reimagining” process to assess how it could meet the community’s needs more holistically. One of its goals is to “embody a culture of creativity, for quality of life,” which includes the specific actions of “emphasize programs that provide opportunities to interact, engage and contribute,” and “support public art at library buildings.”

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<sup>3</sup> Sonoma County Vegetation Mapping and LiDAR Program

### **Public Art: Roseland Branch Library**

Consider co-commissioning a permanent public artwork or helping the library identify an artist who could create an artwork for the new library.

### **Library Residency: Patron Engagement**

Consider creating a residency in which an artist works alongside library staff to collaborate with library patrons on programming to reimagine how the library can be a community and cultural resource. The residency could be based in one library or organized to rotate throughout the entire system.

### **Library Residency: Exhibitions**

Consider creating an artist or curatorial residency to support exhibitions and temporary artworks on display by serving in a curatorial role. This could be an annual or a multi-year residency, to allow the artist time to develop intentional exhibitions or commission original work.

### **Branding Campaign: Library**

Consider commissioning artists to design patron tools such as library cards and bookmarks that support library branding. This could be an ongoing set of commissions that would become a collection in and of itself.

## **Sonoma County Regional Transportation Authority (SCTA) Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA)**

Sonoma County's Regional Transportation Authority and its Regional Climate Protection Authority are interrelated agencies. SCTA coordinates transportation planning, state and federal transportation funding, and some construction projects for the County and its nine municipalities. RCPA provides leadership for climate protection efforts among the cities and multiple public agencies.

As SCTA and RCPA focus on research and planning, coordinating policy and funding, and urging shifts in public behavior, the best opportunities for public art involve artist-led public engagement and information campaigns, as well as technical assistance for incorporating public art into transportation projects.

### **Public Engagement: Moving Forward 2050 Comprehensive Transportation Plan**

SCTA is preparing to update Sonoma County's comprehensive transportation plan, which guides the allocation of state and federal funding to local transportation projects. The planning process is an opportunity for broader conversations about the County's mobility vision and how it interfaces with sustainability and equity.

Consider asking artists to develop projects that help SCTA connect with residents, by documenting community ideas and recommendations and demonstrating alternative strategies for mobility.

### **Grants: Public Art in Transportation Projects**

SCTA's funding supports improvements at all levels of the transportation network. SCTA is currently in the late stages of accepting and evaluating proposals for projects that will be incorporated into SCTA's five-year "transportation improvement plan."

Consider collaborating on a workshop for project sponsors to help them develop opportunities for public art during the next stages of planning, design and funding.

### **Residency: Dynamic Climate Action Data Tracking**

Much of RCPA's work involves monitoring and evaluating data related to climate action progress.

Consider a residency for an artist who works with information technology to work with data streams that drive a dynamic art project. Such an art project, with either an online presence or in physical space, could serve as a constantly evolving reminder of the County's progress towards carbon-reduction goals, as well as the work yet to be done.

## **Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)**

SMART is a passenger rail line that runs along a 45-mile route, currently from Larkspur to Santa Rosa, eventually extending further north to Cloverdale. Its customer base is more or less evenly split between commuters and leisure travelers.

### **Public Art: Wayfinding Pylons**

Consider collaborating with SMART on wayfinding projects that create a unique sense of arrival for each station. For example, commission a series of public art pylons, one at each station. Each pylon could have its own identity, signifying the community where it is located, but also could exist within a common vocabulary that conveys the idea of a coordinated system. Creative Sonoma's role could be to collaborate with SMART on planning for the pylons across the system and to work with communities that do not have their own public art programs on specific funding and commissioning strategies.

### **Marketing Campaign: Poster Series**

Consider commissioning a marketing campaign, such as an ongoing poster series, that helps promote SMART services and regional tourism. Posters could appear in the SMART environment (platforms, rail cars) as well as the areas around the stations. Consider collaboration with Tourism Sonoma.

## **Private Sector Partnership**

### **Public History: Sonoma Developmental Center**

The County has completed a "specific plan" that will guide the redevelopment of the former Sonoma Developmental Center, a residential campus near Glen Ellen and Eldridge that served developmentally disabled people until it was closed in 2018. The plan includes a recommendation to "promote public art through programs, such as the establishment of a Public Art Committee, to ensure ongoing inclusion of high-quality public art that references and highlights the site's history."

Consider integrating artist-led public history projects into future phases of the planning and development process. Through the redevelopment process, consider a pilot approach to include public art in mixed-use developments in Sonoma County.

# Appendices

## Definitions

### Artist

An individual, or a team of people, who meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Realizes income through the sale, performance, publication, or commission of original works of art;
- Has previously exhibited, presented, performed, or published original works of art in museums, galleries or other recognized art venues and publications;
- Has formal training or education in a field of art; or
- Has received awards or other forms of recognition from arts juries, arts grant panels and similar entities for his/her/their artistic abilities or accomplishments.

An environmental design professional, such as an architect or landscape architect, can be considered an Artist if they otherwise meet the criteria in this definition.

### Artwork

A work that is created under the direction of an Artist or Artists to be beautiful or express an important idea or feeling, produced in any form or media, of permanent or temporary duration and existing in a single copy or limited edition.

### Artist Residency

An arrangement through which an artist works for a fixed time within a specific agency, program, or community. The residency allows for the artist to develop a research and engagement process that leads to a project that is driven by both the artist's practice and the agency's mission.

### Capital Project

A public art project that is developed in conjunction with an Eligible Capital Project.

### Commemorative Artwork

An Artwork whose purpose is to commemorate an individual, organization, event, or topic.

### Conservation

The preservation of Artworks through ongoing examination, documentation, treatment and prevention.

### Curated Project

A Public Art project or initiative (a series of projects) that is organized through the leadership of Creative Sonoma.

### Deaccession

The permanent removal of an artwork from the County's Public Art Collection.

### Design-Build Construction Process

A procurement process in which a single contractor is responsible for both the design and construction of a project. Ordinarily, the design contract and the construction contract are awarded independently of each other and both are managed by the agency in charge of the construction process.

### Donation

An Artwork that is given to the County as a gift and accepted through the County's formal donations procedure.

### Eligible Capital Project

A construction project that is listed in the County's Capital Improvement Budget and meets the criteria for incorporating public art.

#### Loan

The acceptance of public art that is not owned by the County for temporary display on County property.

#### Maintenance

Work performed to keep public artworks functioning and presentable in the best possible condition as a public asset.

#### Memorial

A design element other than a Commemorative Artwork whose purpose is to commemorate an individual, organization, event, or topic. Examples of Memorials include, but are not limited to, plaques, monuments, plazas, gardens, fountains, or other civic features.

#### Partnership Project

A Public Art project that is developed through a collaboration between Creative Sonoma and a County department or countywide agency.

#### Project Cost

The total cost of an Eligible Capital Project, excluding land acquisition, planning, design, site remediation and seismic upgrades.

#### Project Intake Form

A checklist that the Public Art Manager uses to collect information about potential opportunities and presents them to the Public Art Committee.

#### Public Art

An original site-specific Artwork in any media, existing in a single copy or in a limited edition, produced by an artist or by a team of artists, and conceived and executed with the intention of being staged in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all.

#### Public Art Allocation

The amount of the Project Cost of an Eligible Capital Project that is reserved for public art.

#### Public Art Collection

All public art artworks that have been commissioned, purchased, accepted for donation or otherwise formally added to the inventory of public art owned by Sonoma County, through processes outlined in the County's Public Art Master Plan and Public Art Policy.

#### Public Art Committee

A body that is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to provide oversight over public art decision-making.

#### Public Art Fund

A dedicated account into which funds received for expenditures related to the Public Art Program are held.

#### Public Art Master Plan

A document, approved by the Board of Supervisors, that establishes the vision, goals and directions for a Public Art Program, and broadly outlines funding, governance and operational considerations.

#### Public Art Policy

A document, approved by the Board of Supervisors, provides specific direction for managing and funding Sonoma County's public art program.

#### Public Art Procedures Manual

A document, developed by Creative Sonoma and approved by the Economic Development Board, provides guidance for day-to-day operation of the Public Art Program and criteria for managing decisions, such as the acceptance of donations and loans.



#### Public Art Program

Activities organized by Creative Sonoma on behalf of Sonoma County related to the addition, display, interpretation, and caretaking of public art, through processes outlined in the County's Public Art Master Plan and Public Art Policy.

#### Relocation of an Artwork

The re-siting of an artwork in the Public Art Collection to a location other than that which it was originally intended for.

#### Removal of an Artwork

The withdrawal of an artwork in the Public Art Collection from public view entirely.

#### Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

A call to artists that asks for the submission of an artist's credentials, which is the basis of selecting an artist.

#### Request for Proposals (RFP)

A call to artists that asks for the submission of both an artist's credentials and a conceptual proposal for an artwork, both of which become the basis for selecting an artist.

#### Roster

A pre-qualified pool of artists from which artists can be selected to participate in a Limited Competition/Invitational process or be selected directly.

#### Temporary Artwork

A work of Public Art that is commissioned for display in a public setting for a limited period of time, usually less than one year.

#### Temporary Exhibition

A collection of Artworks that are organized and presented for display in a public setting for a limited period of time.