



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0164

Agenda Date: 2/13/2025

2025 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER
LRS 25-02

TITLE Aligning Public Art with Sunnyvale’s Sustainability Commitment

BACKGROUND

Lead Department:	Library and Recreation Services
Support Departments:	Office of the City Manager Office of the City Attorney Finance Department Community Development Department Environmental Services Department
Sponsor(s):	Arts Commission
History:	1 year ago: N/A 2 years ago: N/A
Council Strategic Priority:	Yes
(At time of sponsorship)	Accelerating Climate Action, the Active Transportation Plan and Vision Zero Plan

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What precipitated this study?

During the Arts Commission meeting on Feb 21, 2024, a private developer presented their proposed artwork. It was a very large stainless-steel sculpture that measured 16-feet high by 22-feet wide by 8-feet deep. The Art Commissioners inquired whether the sculpture would be made from recycled stainless steel and the artist indicated that it would not.

What are the key elements of the study?

The Arts Commission is interested in requiring developers to include a minimum percentage of recycled materials in their public art pieces. This requirement could align the public art requirement with the City’s sustainability commitment and reduce the carbon footprint associated with the fabrication of large art installations.

To study this issue, staff anticipates the following list of questions will need to be researched and analyzed:

- Does the City currently require a percentage of recycled materials be used for art in new developments?
- Do other cities or counties have a similar requirement?
- How does this align with Sunnyvale’s Climate Action Playbook?
- Does the Green Building Code, LEED design guidelines, or other program provide a standard

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and definition for “recycled” materials?

- Could such a requirement create a burden on developers, builders, and artists through increased costs and/or limited availability of recycled materials?
- If adopted, should this requirement also pertain to Capital Improvement Projects and community art projects funded through the Public Art Fund?
- Are recycled materials durable enough for public art?
- Can this study issue be combined with another suggested study issue by the Sustainability Commission (Harnessing the Potential of Community Art to Further Community Sustainability Goals)?
- How will these changes be incorporated into City Council Policy 6.4.4, the Climate Action Plan, and the Master Plan for Public Art?

Estimated years to complete study: 18 months

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost):	Moderate
Funding Required for Non-Budgeted Costs:	\$65,000
Funding Source:	Would seek budget supplement - General Fund

This study would require a consultant to:

- conduct community outreach;
- research other similar programs;
- research the availability and durability of recycled materials;
- analyze additional costs of using recycled materials;
- compile and analyze results.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown. Study would include an assessment of potential costs, including capital and operating, as well as revenue/savings.

EXPECTED CITY COUNCIL, BOARD OR COMMISSION PARTICIPATION

Council-Approved Work Plan: No

Council Study Session: No

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Arts Commission, Planning Commission, Sustainability Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Defer. This policy issue merits discussion at a future Study Issues Workshop.

This study issue may be combined with a similar issue proposed by the Sustainability Commission (ESD 25-01 Harnessing the Potential of Community Art to Further Community Sustainability Goals). This area is not currently listed as a priority in the Climate Action Playbook Game Plan 2028.

Prepared by: Kristin Dance, Recreation Coordinator II and Trenton Hill, Recreation Manager

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Reviewed by: Ramana Chinnakotla, Director, Environmental Services Department

Reviewed by: Michelle Perera, Director, Library and Recreation Services

Reviewed by: Sarah Johnson-Rios, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Tim Kirby, City Manager