



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0167

Agenda Date: 2/13/2025

2025 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

ESD 25-01

TITLE Harnessing the Potential of Community Art to Further Community Sustainability Goals

BACKGROUND

Lead Department: Library and Recreation Services

Support Departments: Office of the City Manager
Office of the City Attorney
Finance Department
Environmental Services Department

Sponsor(s): Sustainability 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?

The Sustainability Commission was introduced to the idea for this study by an Arts Commissioner interested in amending Council Policy 6.4.4 Art in Public Places and Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) 19.52 Art in Private Development to include requiring a minimum percentage of recycled materials in public art installations. The Arts Commission proposed and sponsored Study Issue LRS 25-03 Aligning Public Art with Sunnyvale’s Sustainability Commitment at their March 20, 2024, meeting.

On October 28, 2024, the Sustainability Commission proposed and sponsored a similar Study Issue that would study opportunities for including sustainable elements such as, but not limited to, using recycled or sustainable materials, demonstration projects on emissions reductions, art which incorporates community resilience features such as local solar or battery storage, and overall contributes toward the Climate Action Playbook (Playbook) Strategy 5 goal of empower the community to adapt to our changing climate Council Policy 6.4.4 establishes uniformity between the requirements for art in municipal construction projects with the requirements in SMC 19.52 for art in private development projects, and was last amended in 2012, prior to adoption of the Playbook.

The Study is relevant to the following City Policies:

- Climate Action Playbook Play 5.1: Enhance community awareness and engagement
- Council Policy 6.4.4: Art in Public Places

- Sunnyvale Municipal Code 19.52: Art in Private Development
- General Plan: Chapter 2, Community Vision: Sunnyvale of the future will become a regional leader in environmental sustainability. Sunnyvale is an attractive, safe, environmentally-sensitive community which takes pride in the diversity of its people, the innovation of its businesses and the responsiveness of its government.
- City of Sunnyvale Master Plan for Public Art (2020) - includes Art in Private Development (AIPD) and Art in Public Places Program

What are the key elements of the study?

Examples of opportunities for aligning public art with climate goals include use of recycled materials in public art and art that demonstrates sustainability concepts.

The Study would examine the current requirements of Council Policy 6.4.4 and SMC 19.52 to determine where opportunities for alignment with the Playbook could be included, and review potential updates to the Master Plan for Public Art. Factors that would be considered include but are not limited to the costs of alternative materials compared to conventional materials, California building code regulations, and any impacts to introducing sustainability elements in the policies.

The Library and Recreation Services (LRS) Department and the Environmental Services Department (ESD) would collaborate to deliver the study, which would include:

1. Determine where consultant support is needed to conduct research, analysis, and community outreach (e.g. hosting public meetings or developing a survey), for the study.
2. Research whether other cities or counties have requirements for public art installations that include environmental or sustainability elements.
3. Consider including specific environmental or sustainable parameters in the policies to guide art selection to align with the Playbook’s goals.
4. Determine impacts of amending the policies to align with the Climate Action Playbook, such as artist interest or availability, cost implications on private developers, and structural durability and longevity of art installations.
5. Evaluate the project cost implications for municipal Capital Improvement Projects and Art in Public Places Program funded through the Public Art Fund.
6. Consider adding Environmental Services staff in the Project Review Committee for public art selection.

The Study is expected to result in recommendations for potential changes to the SMC 19.523, Council Policy 6.4.4, and the Master Plan for Public Art or in staff administration of these policies.

Estimated years to complete study: 1 year

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

Staff oversight would be required for selecting a consultant to lead the research, analysis, and

outreach components of the study. This is not currently funded and would require a budget supplement.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown Cost: Study would include assessment of potential costs, including capital and operating, as well as revenue/savings, if any.

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.

Study Issue LRS 25-03 Aligning Public Art with Sunnyvale's Sustainability Commitment would consider opportunities for including in SMC 19.52, Council Policy 6.4.4 and the Master Plan for Public Art, a minimum percentage of recycled materials in public art pieces. ESD 25-01, sponsored by the Sustainability Commission, would incorporate the focused interest of LRS 25-03 and consider introducing sustainability elements in Council Policy 6.4.4, SMC 19.52, and potentially including Environmental Services staff in art project review committees. The City Council may consider combining the scopes of ESD 25-01 and LRS 25-03 at the 2025 Study Issues Workshop.

This policy issue is not currently listed as a priority in the Climate Action Playbook Game Plan 2028.

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

Reviewed by: Sarah Johnson-Rios, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Tim Kirby, City Manager