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Mill Valley recognizes its thriving arts community and acknowledges with pride the contributions of individual artists and arts institutions to the City's history, traditions and cultural identity. The arts give our community an authentic, connected and unique sense of place, contribute greatly to our quality of life, and serve as an important economic driver. The City of Mill Valley seeks by this chapter to state its commitment to nurture, support and celebrate the artistic and cultural resources in the community and to provide equal and abundant opportunities for broad artistic engagement.

In the past century, Mill Valley has spawned and supported a wide array of exceptional arts organizations, facilities and events that have contributed to the City's reputation as an arts destination including, for example, the Mountain Play, the Fall Arts Festival, the Marin Theatre Company, O'Hanlon Center for the Arts, 142 Throckmorton Theatre, the Outdoor Art Club, Mill Valley Philharmonic, the Mill Valley Film Festival and the Sweetwater. We enjoy extraordinary arts education in our public schools thanks to our community's commitment and support for organizations like Kiddo!, THUMB, PATH, CTE and AIM. Mill Valley is rich with art galleries, visual and performing arts schools and providers, individual artists, writers, architects, designers, production companies and more that all contribute to our vibrant creative environment.

Diverse artists and art forms are essential to a vibrant creative environment. Variety and invention are necessary to reflect and serve our community's wide range of artistic appreciation and to expand artistic horizons. Cultural activities encourage community spirit and a heightened appreciation for diversity, thereby strengthening community cohesiveness. The provisions of this plan promote and encourage artistic diversity and free artistic expression.

The City's arts sector is a vital engine of the Mill Valley economy. It supports hundreds of local jobs, contributes millions of dollars in direct expenditures to our local economy, and provides a vital share of the City's tax base. The arts sector draws thousands of local residents and visitors into town each year to patronize Mill Valley stores and restaurants. Mill Valley's reputation for excellence in the arts and its natural beauty work hand-in-hand to increase our property values. Well established and supported arts organizations instill civic pride and promote economic stability by fostering strong relationships while allowing for growth and productive change through shared experiences and open communication.

Arts education promotes creative thinking and academic achievement, and helps us live successful, rewarding lives. Learning about and participating in local creative endeavors also helps to forge meaningful connections that strengthen our community. Arts education is a key way to continue to cultivate the City's artistic character.

Artwork and performances in public places and in the physical environment, as well as in traditional venues, enhance the City's unique sense of place and encourage human interaction. Art and artistry in the built and physical environment are encouraged in order to enhance the City's artistic identity and distinguishing beauty, to integrate public and private buildings into the community landscape, and to ensure equal access to these artistic resources.

Throughout Mill Valley's history, the City has been a magnet for a diverse array of established and emerging artists including legends in their industries. Increasingly, most local artists (and firemen and teachers) cannot afford to live in town and this undermines the artistic vibrancy of the community. This chapter, in conjunction with [others], supports the creation of more affordable live/workplaces for artists.

As reflected in the goals, policies and programs of this chapter, this Plan is intended to ensure the continued success and growth of its arts sector by, among other things: recognizing and promoting the City's artistic identity; encouraging and supporting cultural development and arts-related commerce and tourism; fostering and facilitating the activities of arts providers; building positive community involvement with and support for the arts; and supporting City-sponsored activities and facilities.

## 1. Definitions

“Arts” and “Arts and Culture”—These terms encompass all types of artistic creation including, but not limited to, visual and performing arts, written and spoken words, music, film, theatre, dance, architecture, and design.

“Artists” and “Arts Providers”—These terms include any and all individuals, organizations and businesses involved in creating, performing, producing, teaching, designing, displaying or otherwise facilitating the creation, delivery and/or enjoyment of the arts in our community.

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Goal 1: Maintain a strong identity for Mill Valley as a regional destination for excellence in the arts, culture and arts education.

Policy 1.a.—Identify and record, on an ongoing basis, the contribution of the arts, culture and arts education to the city's history, character, economic vitality and quality of life.

*[Notes—A wealth of private arts, culture and arts education organizations contribute to Mill Valley’s artistic character. Having a thorough understanding of our community’s past and present arts and cultural assets—and their contribution to the community—is an important first step in an organized effort to support and strengthen Mill Valley’s artistic identity.]*

*Program 1.a.i: Conduct an initial and, thereafter, periodic arts census to document art-related events, assets, activities, organizations and venues.*

*Program 1.a.ii: Catalog the City’s art history, including arts, artists and arts education.*

*Program 1.a.iii: Determine and monitor the economic impact of the arts upon the City’s economy.*

Policy 1.b.—Leverage the arts sector contribution as a key component of the City’s economic vitality strategy.

*[Notes – The Community Arts Coalition (CAC) undertook a preliminary assessment of the economic value of the arts using an Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator, developed by Americans for the Arts through an extensive nation-wide study. Using that formula, and including just ten of the town’s arts non-profits, the result showed that Mill Valley’s arts sector was contributing: \$13,911,825 in expenditures; 381 full-time jobs; \$7,327,492 in household income; \$465,831 in local government revenue and \$564,204 in state revenue. Definitions and background information are available in the CAC’s July 17, 2012 memo that was submitted to City staff.]*

*Program 1.b.i: Undertake a public awareness campaign to encourage full local participation and build community.*

*Program 1.b.ii: Promote cultural tourism essential to sustain top-quality cultural offerings and economic vibrancy.*

*Program 1.b.iii: Address and accommodate arts uses in traffic, transit and parking plans.*

Policy 1.c.—Support, sustain and develop excellent arts and cultural facilities.

*[Notes—Mill Valley currently has no framework or policies for supporting its valued cultural resources. Faced with the loss of Village Music, the closure of the Sweetwater, and the relocation of the Mill Valley Film Festival offices, Mill Valley had no policies to inform a coordinated civic response. Contrast this with the city of San Rafael which courted and supported our city’s iconic Film Festival whose offices are now located in San Rafael.]*

*Program 1.c.i: Assess facility needs and availability.*

*Program 1.c.ii: Encourage cooperative uses of public and private facilities.*

*Program 1.c.iii: Develop a facilities retention and improvement plan.*

Policy 1.d.— Work with artists and arts organizations to promote and publicize the City’s arts, entertainment and cultural assets, both within and outside the community.

*[Notes—Independent efforts of private arts and cultural organizations are necessarily diffuse. By recognizing, promoting and celebrating its artistic identity, Mill Valley can provide a harmonizing voice that can strengthen the arts sector as a whole and all that it provides for our community.]*

*Program 1.d.i: Devise the ways and means for effective use of gateway displays, signs and banners.*

*Program 1.d.ii: Implement and update outreach tools such as a central informational and ticketing kiosk, an arts and entertainment website, arts app and QR Readers.*

*Program 1.d.iii: Provide listings for arts organizations in City publications, such as the Parks & Recreation Activities Guide.*

*Program 1.d.iv: Produce and maintain a City arts guide with a directory of artists.*

*Program 1.d.v: Include news about the Arts Commission activities in the City’s annual state-of-the-city mailing and other periodic mailings.*

Goal 2: Establish and maintain strong and cooperative civic arts leadership, working collaboratively with public and private arts providers.

Policy 2.a.—Define and support a strong, clear role for the Arts Commission and its relationships with other city entities.

*[Notes—Mill Valley’s Arts Commission has no authority to participate in, consider or influence City decisions affecting the arts sector. To host its own arts events, the Arts Commission must obtain Parks & Recreation Commission permission. The Arts Commission has no paid staff and receives its limited funding (\$16,000) from a line item in Park & Recreation’s \$5 million budget. In order to carry out the new responsibilities under the arts and culture provisions of this chapter, the Arts Commission will need some administrative support. It is anticipated that a strengthened Arts Commission will be chiefly responsible for the administration and oversight of the provisions of this chapter and will work collaboratively with individuals, organizations and businesses that comprise and support the arts sector to pool and maximize available resources.]*

*Program 2.a.i: Create clear roles, guidelines and responsibilities for the Arts Commission, including the administration and oversight of Arts & Culture provisions of the MV2040 Plan.*

*Program 2.a.ii: Expand the funding and provide on-going staff support for the Arts Commission.*

*Program 2.a.iii: Enable the Arts Commission to participate in the approval process for artistic components of major public or private development projects.*

*Program 2.a.iv: Build cooperative but independent relationships between the Arts Commission and all other city agencies.*

Policy 2.b.—Foster cooperation and collaboration with and among members of the arts community.

*[Notes—A united arts community can strengthen programs by sharing resources, coordinating calendars, collaborating and more. Mill Valley can play an important role in fostering mutual understanding and support among members of the arts community, city leaders, government agencies and members of the public.]*

*Program 2.b.i: Conduct an annual roundtable with arts leaders to review and develop shared arts sector priorities.*

Policy 2.c.—Encourage and support partnerships between the arts, business and educational communities.

*[Notes—Our community has a strong tradition of supporting the arts, culture and arts education with its talents, skills and financial resources. This support is critical to sustain and grow the rich cultural opportunities that distinguish our community and enrich our lives. Mill Valley can help nurture, support and celebrate the role of private individuals and businesses in this regard.]*

*Program 2.c.i: Develop mechanisms that improve communication, coordination and sharing of resources between the arts, business and educational communities.*

Goal 3: Provide robust support for the arts through public and private funding.

Policy 3.a: Provide dedicated City funding for the arts and their continued growth.

[Notes—The arts sector has a profound effect on Mill Valley’s quality of life and economic vitality. Yet historically Mill Valley has provided negligible arts funding, notably for its Arts Commission. By contrast, many cities wisely invest in their arts and culture sector and reap exponential economic and other benefits as a result. Mill Valley should provide and encourage funding for the arts at a level commensurate with their importance to the City’s identity and financial health.]

*Program 3.a.i: Develop new reliable revenue streams for the arts, such as “percent for art” developer fees or reinvestment of tax revenue from the arts and hospitality sectors.*

*Program 3.a.ii: Assist artists and arts organizations in pursuing support from businesses, foundations and other entities, such as by providing demographic data and endorsements.*

[Notes—Possible uses for additional funding:

- Arts Commission staff
- Public awareness/publicity (arts census, arts app, signage, City branding)
- Arts shuttle and transportation coordination
- Planning, coordination, production and display of public art
- Coordination of citywide arts events/celebrations to unite diverse forms and providers
- Grants, stipends, studio space, housing for arts uses
- Outreach and support for accessibility and diversity]

Policy 3.b.—Provide supportive services and other incentives to facilitate the delivery and enjoyment of the arts, culture and arts education.

[Notes—Mill Valley controls many services, resources and facilities that are, or could be, utilized to facilitate the delivery and enjoyment of the arts, culture and arts education in our community. These include, for example, performance and display facilities, vans, parking and traffic control and public signage. Mill Valley can have a substantial positive impact on the availability of arts opportunities—at relatively little cost to the City—by prioritizing arts activities and providing incentives for arts uses.]

*Program 3.b.i: Make community arts’ uses of city services a priority.*

*Program 3.b.ii: Consider implementing fee waivers for arts events.*

*Program 3.b.iii: Streamline application processes for the use of city facilities.*

*Program 3.b.iv: Expand volunteerism and its provision and coordination.*

*Program 3.b.v: Implement a community shuttle that serves the arts.*

Policy 3.c.—Encourage artists and arts sector workers to live and work within the city.

*Program 3.c.i: Support the creation of affordable housing and workplaces suitable for artists.*

[Notes—Possible ideas:

- Public and/or private subsidies to landlords willing to commit a portion of housing stock for affordable housing for artists and city workers).
- Underwriting of low cost studio space in a commercial building.
- Artist in residence programs and open studios for independent local artists.]

*Program 3.c.ii: Ensure that zoning allows for artists’ residences and workplaces.*

Goal 4: Reflect and encourage arts, culture and arts education in the City's environment.

Policy 4.a.—Support and encourage the inclusion of artwork and artistry in the planning and design of new and established buildings and structures.

*Program 4.a.i: Provide incentives for the inclusion of artwork in development projects.*

*Program 4.a.ii: Revise city regulations to better accommodate the incorporation of artwork in buildings and structures.*

Policy 4.b.—Facilitate the integration of artwork and performances in public and publicly-accessible spaces (e.g., public buildings, parks and squares, rights-of-way, in and on private businesses and homes).

[\[Notes—Artwork and performances in public places encourage human interaction and are readily accessible to all members of the community. As a leading arts center, Mill Valley should seek to maximize opportunities to create and experience artworks of all kinds in public spaces.\]](#)

*Program 4.b.i: Include the Arts Commission when selecting art in public places.*

*Program 4.b.ii: Identify opportunities for and incorporate public art throughout the City, such as the Miller Avenue corridor.*

*Program 4.b.iii: Initiate a program for public art, with varied and changing art installations and performances citywide.*

*Program 4.b.iv: Enact an ordinance exempting noncommercial artwork on private property from permit requirements.*

*Program 4.b.v: Support performances and events in public spaces and nontraditional settings.*

Policy 4.c – Support community opportunities for artistic enrichment through arts education.

*Program 4.c.i: Support and promote educational workshops and lectures.*

*Program 4.c.ii: Consider self-guided arts and culture walking tours.*

*Program 4.c.iii: Support opportunities for community members to participate in creative processes.*

Goal 5: Attract and support diverse art forms, artists and audiences to sustain a vibrant cultural environment.

Policy 5.a.—Support and encourage a wide variety of established and emerging art forms and artists.

*Program 5.a.i: Institutionalize support for artistic freedom, variety and eclecticism.*

*Program 5.a.ii: When promoting the arts, also promote the value of artistic diversity to encourage creativity, expand horizons and accommodate a wide variety of artistic tastes.*

*Program 5.a.iii: Provide low cost opportunities for artists to display and sell their works in public.*

Policy 5.b.—Support diversity, including varied ethnic, cultural, age, gender and economic populations, among the users and providers of the City's arts, culture and arts education offerings.

[\[Notes—Mill Valley is increasingly portrayed and perceived as hostile to diversity. CAC members have reported, for example, that their ethnic minority workers, artists and performers suffer frequent police stops and questioning in the City and some have refused to return. In order to attract the diverse perspectives and experiences that are essential to a vibrant creative environment, Mill Valley must act affirmatively to dispel this perception and to welcome diversity.\]](#)

*Program 5.b.i: Host and support multi-cultural arts events, performances and displays.*

*Program 5.b.ii: Assist in the identification and recruitment of culturally diverse arts leaders and providers.*

*Program 5.b.iii: Support and reflect artistic expression that draws upon the cultural diversity as found in the community's workforce.*

*Program 5.b.iv: Provide a welcoming environment for all individuals in our community regardless of their ethnicity, culture, gender, age or socio-economic status.*

Goal 6: Ensure that arts, culture and arts education are broadly accessible to all members of the community.

[Notes—The arts, culture and certainly arts education are among Mill Valley’s defining attributes, and are themselves important tools for uniting our community. Access to these opportunities is integral to civic participation in Mill Valley and should be made as fully available as possible to all members of our community.]

Policy 6.a.—Support and encourage affordable arts, culture and arts education offerings for all community members.

*Program 6.a.i: Consider low cost ticketing, an empty seat program and subsidies for financially disadvantaged persons.*

*Program 6.a.ii: Explore resource pooling to minimize the cost of producing and participating in arts events.*

*Program 6.a.iii: Allow for affordable arts festivals with low entry fees for local artists.*

Policy 6.b.—Encourage and assist arts, culture and arts education providers to accommodate individuals with special needs, consistent with existing law.

*Program 6.b.i: Explore and support the provision of accommodations, such as priority seating and close captioning for public events.*

*Program 6.b.ii: Encourage the use of technology to facilitate arts engagement by individuals with special needs.*

*Program 6.b.iii: Create a scholarship fund targeted for resident low income and/or special needs artists.*