



STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Jenny Rogers, Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Public Art Program *Art in Public Places*
MEETING DATE: September 18, 2017

Approved for Forwarding:


James C. McCann, City Manager

1 **Issue:** Mill Valley's Public Art Program *Art in Public Places*.
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3 **Recommendation:** Approve the proposed Public Art Program *Art in Public Places*.
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5 **Background:** Recent years have seen increased support of the Arts Commission, thanks
6 to passionate support from City Council, and enthusiastic advocacy by members of the
7 arts community and an art-loving general populace. As a result of the City's two year
8 General Plan process (2011-2012), Commission's scope of work expanded greatly with
9 the adoption of the Mill Valley General Plan (MV 2040, October 7, 2013) as reflected
10 in the over six pages of arts-related goals and objectives within the Community Vitality
11 Element (MV 2040, 82-113). This planning work was informed by community and
12 Commissioner involvement in both the General Plan Arts & Culture Subcommittee and
13 Community Arts Coalition. A key area identified within the General Plan for future
14 development is the support of "Civic Arts" identified within the plan as a keen interest
15 in and desire for a flourishing Public Art Program.
16

17 The City Council reviewed the draft Public Art Policy (PAP) at its meetings on April 11
18 and approved the PAP at its meeting on June 6, 2016. Since approval of the new policy,
19 staff have been working with Commissioners on development of a modest introductory
20 Public Art Program, "*Art in Public Places*", with the goal of installing engaging public
21 art in public spaces in Mill Valley on a temporary basis.
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23 The *Art in Public Places* program envisions the placement of art into the natural
24 environment and public realm of the city, to contribute to the city's cultural heritage,
25 artistic vibrancy and reputation as a destination for arts and culture tourism.

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Discussion: The Commission’s Public Art Program *Art in Public Places* outlines five program elements – the Sculpture Program; PaintBox; Art Benches; Little Libraries; and Outdoor Recreation Facilities Meet Art. The idea is to transform ordinary objects and our experience of our daily environment through the power of the arts. Each of these five program elements is intended to introduce art into the community’s everyday experiences of the city, our natural environment and enhance the enjoyment of daily life.

These five initial elements have been selected by Commissioners and staff with the following guiding principles in mind:

- Conformance to the City’s MV 2040 General Plan;
- Enhancement of the experience of the natural environment;
- Creation of opportunities for social engagement, outdoor recreation and play;
- Beautification of urban areas and ugly objects;
- Affordability with projects that would be relatively low cost;
- Ease in installation, de-installation and maintenance for City staff;
- Emblematic of Mill Valley’s “small town character”; and
- Celebration of the power of art to transform everyday objects and experiences.

Program Elements (see attachment #1):

- The Sculpture Program is proposed as a simple pole system anchored by concrete planter base, with the pole serving as the trunk of the piece. Artists will be provided a pole on which to securely mount or attach their sculptures for ease of install and de-install by City staff. Artworks will be displayed on a temporary basis in strategic locations around town such as the Bayfront Community Garden, Bayfront Meadow, the Mill Valley Community Center, and Mill Avenue as part of a pilot program launch of *Art in Public Places* in spring / summer 2018. Arts Commissioners look forward to working the Parks and Recreation Commissioners and community members on the selection of appropriate public sites for new sculptural pieces.
- PaintBox is proposed to beautify PG&E utility and City traffic signal control boxes around town by wrapping them in colorful temporary murals. This program, and programs like it, have been very successful in municipalities all around the country. This project is relatively low cost to the City and offers awesome exhibition opportunities for local artists.
- Art Benches is proposed to provide the public with a few specially designed, Commission approved art benches for installation in city parks and open spaces. The idea would be to work in collaboration with the Parks & Recreation Commission and City staff to select appropriate locations where arts benches could be placed. The Arts Commission would pre-approve art bench designs, and donors could then purchase an art bench through the City’s Donation

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71 process with benches available for the enjoyment of the general public.
72 Selection of appropriate art benches would prioritize beautiful organic designs
73 and benches made from environmentally sustainable materials.
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75 ○ Little Libraries is proposed to provide neighborhoods with colorful books,
76 art and book art exchanges to celebrate the love of reading, of art and of
77 living in Mill Valley. These little art libraries encourage folks to share the
78 love of art and reading while highlighting designs by local artists and
79 brightening local communities. Proposed as a unique collaboration with the
80 Mill Valley Library, this project will provide an opportunity to share Arts
81 Commission, Recreation and Library programs and events.
82

83 ○ Outdoor recreation facilities meets public art, the Public Outdoor Ping Pong
84 Table (POPP) is just one example of how public art could be incorporated
85 into existing recreation facilities. As proposed, POPP would create outdoor
86 fun while combining the recreational experience with the visual beauty of a
87 site-specific mural. The Art Commission is interested in places where public
88 art intersects with the outdoors and outdoor recreation. The idea would be
89 to activate outdoor spaces, create joy filled art experiences, and
90 opportunities for solitary contemplation, community engagement and play.
91

92 These elements are intended to enhance the community’s vitality through the installation
93 of public art, on temporary basis, into the natural environment; art works which will
94 delight, fascinate and encourage community bonding and civic pride.
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96 **City Council Assignment**

97 Guided by its Core Values to preserve the community’s high quality of life and provide
98 prudent fiscal policies and practices, City Council established “*further evaluation of*
99 *the Art Commission needs and implementation of solutions*” as one of its 2012-2014
100 Priority Projects. As part of this work, Commission members and City staff were asked
101 to study and evaluate the current state of the Commission’s arts programming and
102 operations, and analyze the current state of the arts in Mill Valley including future
103 activities identified through the Mill Valley General Plan process, and to develop from
104 this study, a Strategic Plan and Work Plan for the Arts Commission. Development of
105 the proposed Public Art Policy was identified as Phase I of the Arts Commission
106 implementation project toward the development of a citywide Public Art Program,
107 which was approved by Council on June 6, 2016.
108

109 **General Plan Conformance:** The Arts Commission Public Art Program directly
110 supports the goals and policies set-forth in the MV2040 General Plan including:
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112 **Goals & Policies:**

113 **Vitality-3 | Healthy Community**

114 Maintain a broad range of public and private programs that meet diverse community
115 needs, including mental health, arts, recreational, intellectual, educational, and cultural

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116 programs.

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118 **CV.7 Diverse Programs and Services**

119 Continue to place high priority on programs and facilities that serve the entire
120 community, and ensure that programs and services meet the diverse needs in the
121 community for users such as seniors, youth, and special needs groups, with facilities
122 and/or amenities planned and designed to accommodate a range of ages and abilities
123 and changing definitions of recreation.

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125 **Vitality-4 | Healthy Community**

126 Provide a complete and integrated system of community facilities, public parks, and
127 open space areas throughout Mill Valley that provide opportunities for both passive and
128 active recreation.

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130 **CV.9 Parks and Cultural Facilities**

131 Design and implement parks and recreational facilities to meet the unique and
132 anticipated needs and interests of residents.

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134 **ART-6 | Arts & Cultural**

135 Maintain a strong identity for Mill Valley as a regional destination for excellence in
136 the arts, culture, and arts education.

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138 **ART.2 Facilities**

139 Support, sustain, and develop excellent arts and culture facilities.

140

141 **ART.6 Funding and Services**

142 Support adequate public and private funding for the continued growth of the arts.

143

144 **ART.6-3**

145 Provide supportive services and other incentives to facilitate the delivery and
146 enjoyment of the arts, culture, and arts education, where feasible.

147

148 **Fiscal Impact:** In the recent mid-year budget adjustment, City Council authorized
149 \$22K for FY 2017-2018 as part of the implementation of the *Art in Public Places*,
150 “Phase II” in the development of Mill Valley’s Public Art Program. To best support the
151 initial implementation of the program, there will be some significant upfront costs to the
152 preparation of the ground and the installation of the pot and pole system for outdoor
153 sculptures in public sites, (which is the rationale behind tackling only one or two
154 sculptures per year). City staff and Commissioners will be fundraising by launching
155 philanthropic initiatives to supplement the current Arts Commission budget and hope to
156 match current Public Art funding. Though, it will take some time for the Commission
157 to build its base of philanthropic support, we have already had strong expressions of
158 support from the Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce and their new Enjoy Mill Valley
159 Civic Fund and other local service organizations. Commission is also interested in on
160 exploring the possibility of adopting a “percentage-for-the-arts” program to help fund

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161 future expansion of the *Art in Public Places*. More than half the states currently
162 maintain percent-for-the-arts programs.

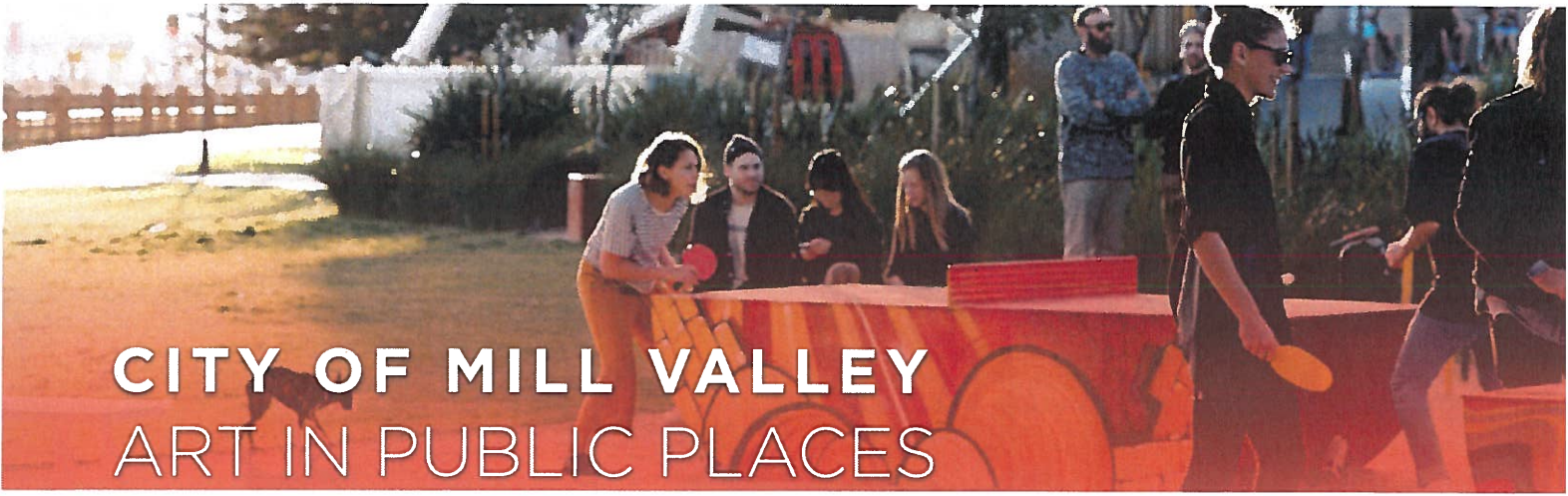
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164 **Attachments:**

165 1. Public Art Program *Art in Public Places* flyer

166 2. City Council Staff Reports, June 6, 2016

167 3. Mill Valley Public Art Policy



CITY OF MILL VALLEY ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

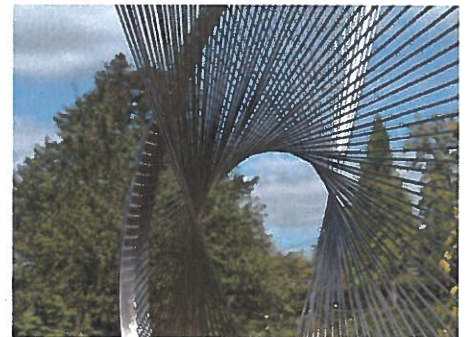
Traditionally, “public art” invokes the images of historic bronze statues of a soldier on horseback, or a large decorative fountain in a park or plaza setting. Today, public art can take a wide range of forms, sizes, and scales - and can be temporary or permanent. Whatever the form, public art instills meaning - a greater sense of identity and celebration of where we live, work and play - creating enriching and engaging experiences for all residents and visitors to Mill Valley.

Mill Valley Arts Commission’s **Art In Public Places** program is designed to bring the power and delight of art into our everyday experiences of our natural environment through the transformation of ordinary objects – the utility box, the park bench, the mailbox, the ping pong table, etc.

The program initially proposes to incorporate five elements and transform these objects into an experience of art and the natural environment, which will delight, fascinate and encourage community bonding and social engagement.

The Sculpture Program

The Arts Commission hopes to bring art into the community’s daily life through the Sculpture Program. At outdoor locations such as the Bayfront Community Garden, Bayfront Meadow, the Mill Valley Community Center and Miller Avenue, the vision for the Sculpture Program is to enhance these community setting and the natural settings by displaying a variety of inspiring artworks on a rotating temporary basis. Artworks would be solicited through an open “Call for Sculptures” and once selected and installed will attract viewers and invite dialogue while offering an opportunity to gain understanding and awareness of the visual arts and enjoyment of the great outdoors.



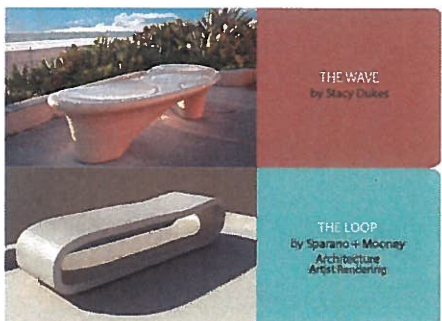
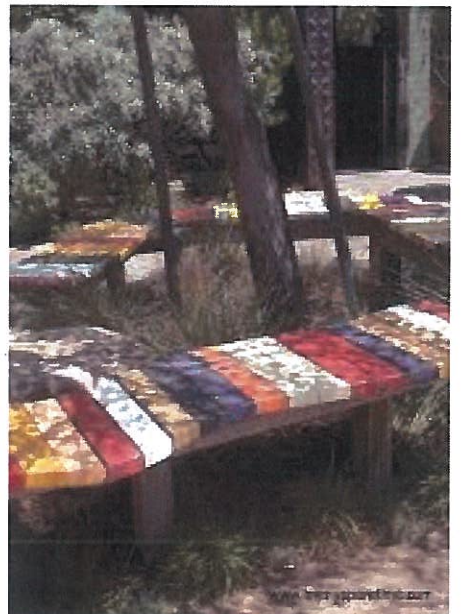
PaintBox

Murals and dynamic art installations on PG&E utility and City traffic signal boxes around town. The aim of PaintBox is to highlight local artists within our community and, in doing so, brighten up the streets, beautify ugly utility boxes and deter vandalism.



Art Benches

Specially designed, pre-approved art benches for donors to gift to the City's parks, recreation facilities and open spaces. Like other specialty bench programs, these Art Benches would provide an aesthetically pleasing and a restful place to enjoy the natural surrounds in Mill Valley. The Arts Commission hopes to select 1 to 3 unique bench designs by local artisans, which would be available to the public. Selection would prioritize beautiful organic design and benches made from environmentally sustainable materials.



Little Libraries Project

In collaboration with the Mill Valley Library, the project will provide neighborhoods with colorful book exchanges to celebrate the love of reading and bring people together through art. These little libraries encourage folks to share the love of reading while highlighting designs by local artists and brightening local communities. They would also provide an avenue to share news on Arts Commission, Library and Recreation Department programs and events.



Public Outdoor Ping Pong Table (POPP) with decorative mural

In collaboration with the Mill Valley Parks and Recreation Commission, this project tackles how best to incorporate public art into recreation facilities in order to enhance outdoor recreation. Amenities like the POPP outdoor ping pong transform this everyday object by adorning it with public art - creating a vibrant outdoor environment for the community in which to recreate and enjoy each other's company. The Art Commission is interested in the intersection of public art and outdoor recreation, which allows the activation of outdoor spaces, the enjoyment of art and the engagement of the community playing together.

