



City of Costa Mesa

77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Agenda Report

Arts Commission

Item #: 26-128

Meeting Date: 02/05/2026

TITLE: ART IN PUBLIC PLACES DRAFT ORDINANCE REVIEW

DEPARTMENT: PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

PRESENTED BY: LAURETTE GARNER, ARTS SPECIALIST

CONTACT INFORMATION: LAURETTE GARNER, ARTS SPECIALIST, (714) 754-5322

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Arts Commission:

1. Review and discuss the newly drafted Art in Public Places ordinance (Attachment 1), as specified in the Art in Public Places Report and the Arts and Culture Master Plan (Attachment 2).

BACKGROUND:

The Art in Public Places Report was created by consultant, Arts Orange County and was approved by the Arts Commission on April 6, 2023, to address aspects of the Arts and Culture Master Plan's Goal #2: Expand Public Art throughout the City. The following initiatives from the Arts and Culture Master Plan were recommended as follows:

Action 2.1: Continue the City-operated program of temporary utility box art, which affords opportunities to local artists, established and emerging, to create images that offer the community beautification. Review additional sites that are suitable for such installations, including wayfinding signage.

Action 2.2: Develop a plan for more ambitious temporary and permanent public art, including the identification of potential locations around the City, creation of policies with respect to selection and acquisition of artworks, and determination of the funding sources to be used.

Action 2.3: Temporary art programs are very popular with the public because they are constantly refreshed with new works, offering a variety of themes, styles, shapes, colors, and scale to the cityscape. Create a new program of temporary installations of large-scale sculptures. We recommend two-year loans, placed at sites inclusive of all the City's districts. This can be ramped up gradually by installing three works in Year 1 (one in each of three districts), adding three (3) in Year 2 (in the remaining districts), and then continuing to rotate the works on expiring loans annually.

Action 2.4: City may consider adopting a policy mandating fees for public art from new development projects.

Action 2.5: Create a new program of permanent public art and implement the process of selecting and installing a first work.

Action 2.6: Incorporate imaginative design in all the City's functional elements and fixtures. There are artists and existing companies that specialize in the custom fabrication of creatively designed elements such as streetlights, playground equipment, fitness stations, bus shelters, benches. After a period of research, the City should conduct a call for artists to submit designs, which would be selected by the City through a process involving the Arts Commission, Planning Commission, City staff and Council. Based on budget, the City can choose to transform the chosen elements over a short period of time or phase them in as replacement of older elements.

The steps for Action 2.2 in the Arts and Culture Master Plan have been presented at previous Arts Commission meetings, utilizing the information and procedural recommendations from the Art in Public Places Report:

- Public Art Criteria and Guidelines to assist with new temporary and permanent public art projects in May 2023
- The Murals on Private Property permit process in June 2023
- Murals on Public Property was presented in October 2023
- Permanent Public Art on Public Property in December 2023 and February 2024, for additional edits
- Public Art Donation Policy in March 2024
- Review of Public Art Funding in May 2025

After the May 1, 2025 meeting, the Arts Commission directed staff to create an Art in Public Places Ordinance modeled after the City of Laguna Beach's ordinance that directs 1% of all funding for public works projects and for private development projects.

The Parks and Community Services Director and staff have met with Economic and Development Services Director and Public Works Director on two (2) occasions since then, to discuss drafting an Arts in Public Places ordinance for a potential City Council review.

ANALYSIS:

The Art in Public Places Report is a comprehensive report of recommendations for programs and policies and provides detailed specifics as to how the six (6) initiatives from the Arts and Culture Master Plan may be executed in the next three (3) years. Each of the components detailed below in the Art in Public Places Report, will be crucial in assisting staff in creating new policies and processes:

1. Public Art Commissioning Process
2. Public Art Collection Management
3. Murals and the Commissioning Process
4. Public Art Donations and the Criteria
5. Public Art inclusion in City Public Works Development Projects
6. Public Art inclusion in Private Development Projects

While numbers one (1) through four (4) are administrative processes administered by staff, numbers five (5) and six (6) involve a financial contribution from either public or private entities and would require a City Council approved ordinance to assure consistent compliance for citywide implementation.

FISCAL REVIEW:

There are currently no costs associated with this process.

LEGAL REVIEW:

There is no legal review required for this report.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the Arts Commission:

1. review and discuss the newly drafted Art in Public Places ordinance, as specified in the Art in Public Places Report and the Arts and Culture Master Plan.