



**SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

Department: City Manager

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City Manager Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ 

**TOPIC: PUBLIC ART PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE AND MURAL AT 3301 KERNER BOULEVARD**

**SUBJECT: ACCEPT INFORMATIONAL REPORT REGARDING THE SAN RAFAEL PILOT PUBLIC ART PROGRAM AND THE INSTALLATION OF A PUBLIC ART MURAL AT 3301 KERNER BOULEVARD**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept the informational report regarding the San Rafael Pilot Public Art Program and the installation of a public art mural at 3301 Kerner Boulevard.

**BACKGROUND:**

On [February 16, 2021](#) the City Council approved Ordinance No. 1991, amending Section 14.25.040 of the City of San Rafael Municipal Code, exempting from environmental and design review any public art projects that undergo review through a separate review process established by the City for that purpose.

Public art is defined as all forms of art including, but not limited to: sculptures, murals, mosaics, and fountains, which are located on the exterior of a publicly owned facility or on a privately owned property when such artwork is placed in a location intended to be visible to the general public.

**Pilot Public Art Program 2021:**

To facilitate a path for reviewing public art projects, the City created a Pilot Public Arts program for the calendar year 2021. The program includes a Public Art Advisory Group (Advisory Group) made up of local community art representatives, a member each of the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board, and a representative with diversity, equity & inclusion expertise. For public art projects that are being proposed for installation at a City park, a member of the Park & Recreation Commission will also be included as a member of the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group was created to discuss and provide feedback on proposed public art projects in a public forum that includes an opportunity for both the Advisory Group members and members of the public to comment on proposed public art projects.

The Advisory Group is an advisory body only and was formed in order to provide the City Council with their collective feedback on the public art projects that come forward during this pilot program. The

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**FOR CITY CLERK ONLY**

**Council Meeting:**

**Disposition:**

Advisory Group does not have official authority to approve public art projects. Once reviewed by the Advisory Group, public art projects will be considered by the City Council for approval.

Two community groups (Canal Arts Initiative and San Rafael Social Justice Public Art Group) formed over the past year and each brought forward their own public art projects in the Canal neighborhood and the Terra Linda neighborhood respectively.

The following is a brief description of each of the two community groups:

### **1. Canal Arts Initiative**

The Canal Arts Initiative (CAI) is a group of local volunteers and community-based organizations that serve the Canal neighborhood in San Rafael. The goal of the CAI centers around a three-pronged mission:

- a) First, with City support, an alliance of businesses and building owners, community organizations, citizens and artists bring visible transformation to the Canal, expressing its colorful mix of cultures.
- b) Promote the use of color on buildings. A wall or an entire building, simply repainted with a lively palette, can make an engaging difference at little cost.
- c) A public art program for the Canal would include participatory education elements throughout its conception and creation, with an emphasis on history and meaning, and reflection on its impact.

The CAI group's first concept for a public art project is to create a mural in the Canal neighborhood.

### **2. San Rafael Social Justice Public Art Group**

The San Rafael Social Justice Community Art Group (SJCA group) came together in fall 2020 in response to the chalk art mural created at the intersection of Manuel T. Freitas Parkway and Las Gallinas Avenue over the summer of 2020. The chalk mural, honoring the life of Breonna Taylor, was removed per City policy to keep public property clear of markings. The group is comprised of 11 arts and community members who live and work in San Rafael. In addition, the group partnered with Youth in Arts, a San Rafael based non-profit to provide expertise, fundraising, and a youth component to the project. The project's focus is on creating art that includes a positive message to celebrate the core themes of JEDI – Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through the lens of a Marin-based Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) perspective.

In addition, the SJCA group aims to demonstrate that art is a representation of the collective community, and that the community can come together to heal, learn, and feel hope and unity. To that end, the creation of the art piece itself proposes to have an educational and awareness building experience “baked in” for the community.

The SJCA group identified Arbor Park, a small parkette at the southwest corner of the intersection of Manuel T. Freitas Parkway and Las Gallinas Avenue as their preferred location for the artwork. This location is close in proximity to the chalk art mural and is owned by the City of San Rafael. Arbor Park resides in the northern part of San Rafael in the Terra Linda neighborhood. Located at the southwest intersection of Las Gallinas Ave and Manuel T. Freitas Pkwy, Arbor Park is what San Rafael calls a Parkette, or a small park. It consists of a few benches, grass area, and walking path. The park is highly

visible to cars and pedestrians who travel in Terra Linda along Manuel T. Freitas which is the main thoroughfare for the neighborhood.

**ANALYSIS:**

The following is an informational report on the progress of the two public art projects:

**1. Canal Arts Initiative Update**

The CAI group identified the office building at 3301 Kerner Blvd. as a perfect location for a mural, as the visible entryway into the neighborhood. The CAI group has been collaborating with the Canal community, including collaborating with the Canal Alliance, the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, Artworks Downtown, the Marin Society of Artists, and Storek Studio/Architecture to insure the artistic concept for the mural is a community-driven process.

The CAI group put forth a call for artists in late 2020 with applications due on December 15, 2020. The CAI group selected a group of artists to work with through a community-driven process and they collaboratively designed the proposed mural (Attachment). The proposed mural tells the story of an immigrant from the Canal neighborhood from their childhood to becoming a respected elder in the community. Along with the mural, the CAI is creating interpretive messages to accompany the art piece and tell the story of the mural.

The proposed location of the mural, 3301 Kerner Blvd, was purchased by the County of Marin in the fall of 2020 through the State-funded [Project Homekey](#) program. The mural will be painted on removable panels and affixed to the front of the building. This will allow the panels to be removed when the mural and/or building require maintenance. Since it is a County of Marin owned building, the CAI group has worked with the County on installation requirements. The County is supportive of the installation of the mural, as is the future owner of the building (Eden Housing). Under state law, the County (as the current owner of the property) is not required to comply with City zoning and building ordinances, however the County has indicated its preference for the artwork to be considered through San Rafael's 2021 Pilot Public Art Program.

The CAI group secured a grant from the [California Arts Council](#) to achieve the first major installation of color and art in Canal: the installation of a large, colorful mural in the Canal neighborhood. The City of San Rafael is providing an additional \$10,000 of funding to support the project and the artists creating the mural in acknowledgement of the collective work of the artists, as well as the assistance the CAI group provided the City with the pilot program.

The artists have been working diligently on-site to co-create the mural and will continue to do so until it is completed; it is expected to be complete and installed by June 30, 2021.

**2. San Rafael Social Justice Community Art Group Update**

The SJCA group issued a Call for Artists in early 2021. All artists, adults and children practicing in and around San Rafael were eligible and encouraged to apply. Two applications were received and one of them was considered to meet the minimum qualifications defined in the Call for Artists. The SJCA group is very enthusiastic about the artist's proposal. The selected artist has proposed to co-create the art piece with a group of youth. The SJCA group's partner, Youth in Arts (YIA), has recently issued a process for youth to apply to be part of this project. [Make Art. Be Heard. Get PAID - Calling all TEEN Artists! \(constantcontact.com\)](#)

The youth program will be held this summer on Monday and Wednesday mornings (9:30 am– 12:30pm) from June 28-Aug 4 at Youth in Arts. The youth artists will be paid a stipend for their work and there is space for 10 individuals.

Given that the artist is proposing a co-creation process with the youth, rather than a “fully baked piece of art,” the approval process for this project will be as follows:

1. The art team will work on creating a conceptual artwork design in early summer. Once the design image/rendering has been created, it will be presented at a future Pilot Public Art Advisory Group meeting in mid-summer to gather feedback and the community.
2. The San Rafael Social Justice Community Public Art Group, YIA, and the artists will then bring forth their final design/art piece to the City Council to request approval to place the artwork in Arbor Park.
3. If approved, final installation would occur in late Summer 2021.

YIA (on behalf of the San Rafael Social Justice Community Public Art Group) was able to secure a \$10,000 grant from the County of Marin for this project. The City of San Rafael is providing an additional \$10,000 of funding to support the artists creating the art piece and in acknowledgement of the collective work of the artists, as well as the assistance the Social Justice Community Art Group provided the City with the pilot program.

Both groups (the CAI group and the SJCA group) presented their proposed projects at the first convening of the Pilot Public Art Advisory Group in May. The Advisory Group members were overwhelmingly supportive of both projects. Public comment was received during the meeting and all comments were in favor of both projects moving forward.

At the conclusion of the 2021 pilot, staff will evaluate the process that the two public art projects went through and will develop recommendations for the next iteration of the program to be established in early 2022.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

Extensive community outreach has been conducted for both projects with community groups in both the Canal and Terra Linda neighborhoods.

Staff presented an informational report regarding Public Art on February 16, 2021 at a regular meeting of the City Council.

In addition, the City created a [webpage](#) dedicated to Public Art with information regarding these projects and an opportunity for members of the public to sign up for news and notices about public art projects in San Rafael. The City promoted updates on the projects on Nextdoor, Twitter, and other social media. Additionally, on May 25, the first Pilot Public Art Advisory meeting was held in which the proposed public art projects were presented and members of the projects provided feedback.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The fiscal impact for supporting both of these projects at \$10,000 each, is a total of \$20,000, in which there are sufficient funds as part of the City's general fund fiscal year 2020-21 budget.

**OPTIONS:**

The City Council has the following options:

1. Accept the informational report.
2. Accept the report with modifications.
3. Direct staff to return with more information.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Canal Arts Initiative mural image

## Canal Arts Initiative



Proposed mural at 3301 Kerner Boulevard, San Rafael