

City of Sonoma
Plaza Banner Administrative Policy

Purpose/Usage

This policy sets forth provisions related to banners on Plaza streetlight poles.

- Plaza banners are used to: (1) help create a downtown environment that is attractive, colorful, vital, and welcoming; and (2) promote events and celebrations of general community interest, support the local economy, and/or benefit local nonprofit organizations.
- A year-round banner program is desirable, using a combination of event banners and City-sponsored decorative and/or promotional banners. During periods when there are no event banners in place, the use of City-sponsored banners is encouraged. These may include general welcoming banners (e.g., "Welcome to Sonoma", "Historic Sonoma Plaza", etc.) and holiday/festive banners.

The City does not intend to create a public forum on the Plaza streetlight poles.

Review

Banner designs are reviewed for compliance with established guidelines, as outlined below, by the Design Review Commission.

Applicants

Local public, non-profit, or not-for-profit organizations are eligible to sponsor banners. Applications may also be accepted from for-profit organizations to promote philanthropic events that generate financial support for local community organizations. Applications for banners that are determined to be inconsistent with the goals of the banner policy will not be approved. In furtherance of the purpose of this policy, the City of Sonoma Cultural and Fine Arts Commission may co-sponsor a banner application. In any case, all banner applications are subject to review and approval by the Design Review Commission.

General Provisions

- The City of Sonoma Planning Department is responsible for administering the review of banner applications and for scheduling banner displays. The Planning Department will process banner placement requests through the Design Review Commission.
- The standard display timeframe for event banners is 30 days; the maximum requested length for banner display is 60 days and is subject to availability.
- If requests for banner placement exceed availability, consideration will be given to the local economic and/or community benefit of the event, whether the banners are proposed in conjunction with an established annual event, and whether the event is located within City limits. The approved duration may be less than the period requested. In the event of conflicting requests, the City Manager (or his/her designee) shall resolve the conflict.
- The City reserves the right to schedule the light poles for certain periods for City-sponsored banners or other City-approved uses. The cost for banner design, fabrication, installation and removal, and other associated costs are the responsibility of the sponsoring organization.

Banner Design and Fabrication Guidelines

- Banners are to be sized for and compatible with existing mounting brackets.
- Banners are to be fabricated using marine acrylic, canvas, or other environmentally-friendly material, with images on both sides of the banner.
- Banner design should use contrasting colors and a small number of large, simple, bold elements. Text should be limited and images and type appropriately scaled for long-range visibility. Use of professional design services is encouraged.
- Sponsor recognition, if any, shall be limited to the lower 20% of the banner space. Text size within the sponsor recognition area should be no larger than three-fourths of the text size used in the event area.
- Multiple compatible banner designs may be used in an alternating installation pattern.
- Unless otherwise approved, banner applicants should utilize all 21 street light poles bordering the Plaza.
- Design and fabrication guidelines are waived for reuse of banners that were approved for Plaza use prior to establishment of this policy. However, the City may deny the reuse of banners that are in worn, faded, frayed, dirty, or otherwise poor condition.

Timing

A banner application may be submitted for approval no sooner than one year prior to the preferred starting date of banner placement and no later than 30 days prior to the requested banner installation date. Applications for new banners that have not been utilized previously in the Plaza, including the proposed design, should be submitted at least 90 days prior to the requested installation date in order to provide sufficient time for design review and applicant fabrication. Banners will not be placed unless all City approvals have been granted.

Installation and removal

Installation and removal of banners is administered by City Public Works staff, including selection and supervision of contractor. Applicants are required to deposit sufficient funds with the City to cover the cost of installing and removing banners, the staff time required to support installing and removing banners, and associated City administrative expenses.

Applicant may use the donated services of a qualified installer pre-approved by the City, and have their deposit (less administrative costs) returned following timely removal of the banners. If banners are not removed in a timely manner, City may use the deposited funds to contract for removal services. The installer must obtain an encroachment permit prior to banner installation, including providing evidence of required insurance coverage. Current insurance requirements are available on the City website at www.sonomacity.org. Banner hardware must be returned to the Public Works Department prior to return of deposit.

Applicant Insurance

The applicant organization must provide a current Certificate of Liability Insurance and Additional Insured Endorsement, naming the City of Sonoma, its officers, officials, and employees as additional insured. The Certificate must comply with current City requirements regarding general liability and property damage terms, and must be provided to the City and approved prior to banner installation.