

Community Plans, Public Art and the Community Oriented Artist

Discuss and define the mission of this effort which could include a commitment to public art in community plan updates, a concept for a region-wide “public art as infrastructure” special initiative, relationship to BRAC and other specific project efforts, a commitment to public art in new Assessment and Business Improvement Assessment Districts and/or involvement in the “Liveable Neighborhoods” program that is currently part of the Planning Department.

Why Include Artists in Community Development and Revitalization?

Community oriented artists, that is, artists who work directly with municipal and civic groups to solve community design or aesthetic problems, can be important catalysts for neighborhood economic development and revitalization.

Artists bring a multi-disciplinary approach to creative problem solving. Formally trained in a variety of media, unbound by the constraints of a particular training or methodology imposed by any one field, artists are able to create thoughtful solutions to public space and public life by pulling together appropriate ideas and media/technologies from disparate fields. The results can be unexpected and non-traditional, enlivening and humanizing public space which in turn can generate the experience of community life.

Artists can conceptualize, design and fabricate their own work, employing a wholistic approach to problems of space, form, time, media, function, community life. Artists are particularly adept in utilizing “non-standard” materials and approaches in their work, often resulting in considerable cost savings over solutions purchased out of catalogues.

Artists are visionary in their approach, coming out of a discipline which combines the life of the mind, spirit and culture. They employ an alternative vocabulary, which references a long historical perspective. Community oriented artists recognize that artful solutions do not necessarily result in “objects” but can result in art as an experience, one which is shared by all members of the community.

Recommendations:

Acknowledging that artists should be part of the planning and design process by definition, the committee recommends that artists be used by the City of San Diego as consultants or participants in the following areas:

- Education/outreach in communities with city staff through the Commission for Arts and Culture, Neighborhood Pride and Protection, Liveable Neighborhoods, and the Renaissance Commission.
- Facade rebate programs
- Capital improvement projects
- Restructuring city documents 254/255 to include artists “as needed” list
- Transit upgrades
- Planning policy documents such as community plan updates, BRAC, historic surveys, etc.
- Business Improvement District initiatives
- Liveable Neighborhood / Renaissance Committee
- Community Development Corporations

- City board positions (i.e., Neighborhood Pride & Protection, Commission for Arts & Culture, City Planning Department, Economic Development, Parks & Rec.)

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