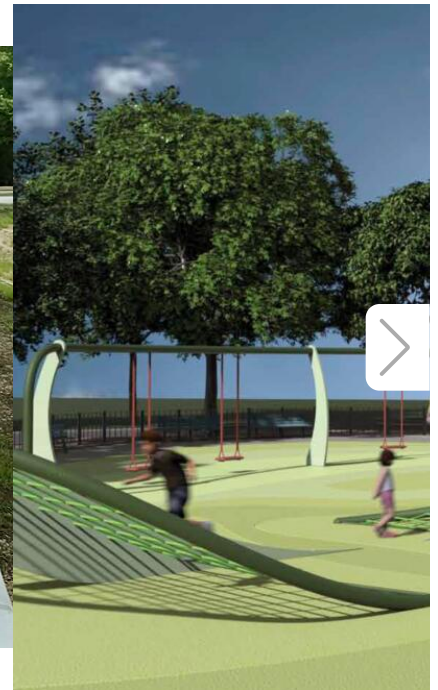


Napa's next public art project pairs with downtown street safety improvements

Proposed enhanced pedestrian crossings along downtown Napa's Second Street may serve a dual purpose as the latest project integrating public art, utilizing the city's nearly \$1 million in remaining public arts funds. | 



SLIDE 1 OF 3

The city of Napa's soon-to-open Highway 29 undercrossing, a paved path that will allow cyclists and pedestrians to move from east to west, will be getting a permanent public art mural in early 2024. (OCELOT ART)

EDWARD BOOTH

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

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Proposed enhanced pedestrian crossings along downtown Napa's Second Street may serve a dual purpose as the latest project integrating public art, utilizing the city's nearly \$1 million in remaining public arts funds.

Plans call for the addition of bulb-outs along the prominent downtown thoroughfare. And the city would hire artists to create designs for the bulb-outs.

Also known as curb extensions or neckdowns, bulb-outs are traffic-calming measures that extend the sidewalk or curb line out into the parking lane, effectively narrowing the road.

The intersections being considered include at School, Franklin, Randolph, Coombs and Brown streets.

Though, the exact configuration or number of bulb-outs is still being decided, according to city spokesperson Jaina French.

The bulb-out art is the city's latest public art project, continuing a tradition that spans over a decade, with four permanent projects completed and five currently in progress.

Ongoing public art projects in Napa

Current ongoing public art projects in the city of Napa include:

- "Circulation," a 24-foot tall, 6,000-pound aluminum cactus-themed sculpture set to be installed near the city's trio of Highway 29-adjacent roundabouts that lead into the downtown. The sculpture — by artist Ana Teresa Fernández — is budgeted at \$375,000, and is currently being fabricated. It's set to be installed by the end of the year, according to city spokesperson Jaina French.
- The Fuller Park playable art project, set to replace the aging playground at Fuller Park. The \$1.28 million project is the city's most costly art project to date — with \$500,000 coming from the public art fund and the remainder coming from a state grant and the city's playground replacement fund. The project, a

Katrina Gregory, the city's public art director, said at a June 25 meeting of the city's Public Art Steering Committee that the proposed art budget for the project is \$75,000, with the Downtown Napa Property and Business Improvement District agreeing to contribute \$150,000.

Gregory also said the city intends to use thermoplastics for the artwork, which would be baked into the asphalt and increase durability over paint. The artist or artists hired would produce a digital file of their creation and a contractor would install it, she said.

The committee recommended the City Council approve the bulb-out project to move forward. Committee members also said they'd like to see similar projects elsewhere in the city, such as at Jefferson Street — while some questioned the location.

"I could see it looking fabulous on Jefferson and all of the businesses around Jefferson would probably appreciate that, as would the pedestrians in those neighborhoods," said committee member Lissa Gibbs.

Second Street was chosen, Gregory said, in part because it needed traffic calming measures to slow traffic, plus the Property and Business Improvement District's funds are limited to downtown.

"I'm hopeful that this might be a successful project, and then we can consider it potentially for lots of other sites," Gregory said.

During the meeting, the committee decided not to recommend a second project that involved making art from stones of the historic Soscol Avenue bridge.

Caltrans will soon replace the bridge, just north of Kansas Avenue and spanning Tulocay.

The city wants to repurpose the stone artistically, according to Gregory, who estimated the project would cost \$75,000 and yield about 24 cubic yards of stones.

"It's really part of our character and history in our region," she said.

But the committee members said they thought the community didn't know enough about the replacement project, and that they wanted to see a public communication process from the state move forward prior to taking action.

Gibbs also suggested that repurposing the stones should be considered by local organizations like Napa County Landmarks and the Napa County Historical Society.

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"It seems like it's part of maybe a larger historical, cultural initiative that brings attention to the heritage of our stone bridges," Gibbs said.

Ryan Leong, Caltrans public information officer, said the replacement project is currently scheduled to begin in summer 2026.

collaboration between design firm S2 Associates and builder Specified Play Equipment Co., is finishing up its design phase; the Napa City Council will ultimately need to approve the design for the project to move toward fabrication.

- "Downstream," a two-part sculpture proposed to use Cor-Ten steel to mimic the shape of the Napa River, is budgeted at \$250,000. The sculpture, by Napa artist Jacques Lesec, is currently in the final engineering design phase, and will be installed on two Soscol Avenue medians between Gasser Drive and Sousa Lane.
 - "The Weavers" is a vibrantly-colored mural inspired by Napa's history created by Colorado-based artist David Ocelotl Garcia set to adorn the city's Highway 29 undercrossing, which opened in December 2023. The mural is awaiting permit approval from Caltrans, and had \$75,000 of public art funding assigned to it.
 - Art adorning the Second and Main Street Intersection, which is known as a "pedestrian scramble" crossing where pedestrians can walk freely across the three-way intersection, including diagonally. There's \$200,000 in art funds budgeted for that, which is currently undergoing a project scope development phase.
- The four permanent projects that have been commissioned and completed so far — at a total cost of \$275,000 in dedicated public art funding — include:
- The 9/11 Memorial in downtown Napa, a public-private project organized by prominent Napa artist Gordon Huether that makes use of recovered steel beams from the World Trade Center. The city committed \$120,000 out of the art fund to the project, which was dedicated in 2013.
 - A series of art benches installed along First Street in 2015, created by Berkeley artist Eric Powell using recycled cast-iron bookends from the historic Goodman Library using \$100,000 in the city's public art money.
 - "Begin and Continue," a 700-foot-long mural by Napa artist Mikey Kelly installed in the Rail Arts District along the Napa Valley Vine Trail in 2017. \$40,000 in public art fund money was budgeted for that.
 - "Northern Sojourner," a sculpture of a sandhill crane by artist Tiimo Mäng, which was installed at the city's Senior Center in 2020. The cost was \$15,000 in public art funding.

The bulb-out project — should it be approved — will add to a growing list of permanent art projects the city has pursued and completed since the City Council passed the public art ordinance in 2010.

That required commercial developers either install onsite art equal to 1% of the project's construction costs, or make an equivalent contribution to the city's dedicated public art fund.

The city's public art direction was outlined in its 2014 Public Art Master Plan, which established the vision and guidelines for how public art is selected and placed around the city.

Gregory said there's currently about \$997,000 in the city's dedicated public art fund, and five ongoing projects collectively have \$1.4 million dedicated to them. The fund is estimated to increase about \$100,000 to \$200,000 each year.

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