



PROPOSAL FOR A BEAUTIFICATION PILOT PROJECT FOR DOWNTOWN SONORA

“Art everywhere on Washington St.”

From Vacant to Vibrant: Art in Storefronts

This proposal expands upon the success of 2nd Saturday Art Walk, which is now a recognized institution, that brings arts and culture to our downtown every month of the year.

This is an opportunity to employ artists by using vacant buildings to showcase local art in public downtown windows. The City of Sonora, with a grant from the VTC, support and guidance from the Sonora Chamber, and Tuolumne County Arts, will work with local artists to complete a pilot project that showcases artworks in empty storefronts, attacking the problem of empty buildings through public art. The objective of this program is to activate main street corridors bringing beauty to blighted facades.

Problems to consider:

- Businesses in our downtown remain empty or poorly maintained, sometimes for years.
- Our downtown has little public art.
- Artwork can be expensive, particularly permanent installations.
- Artwork can at times be a target for vandalism.

Solution:

A flexible and creative way to deal with this problem through a pilot project that will utilize already completed original artwork by local artists. Artist's' work will be digitized, enlarged and printed on inexpensive banner material, allowing for rotation in and out of storefronts and mobility of placement. This process has been done with great effect in many towns and cities.¹

Initial Goals:

- 1) Activating main street areas to improve livability, promote commerce, and create more engagement from residents, businesses, and visitors.
- 2) Creating spaces to inspire community interaction and inspiration, support downtown as the center of community life.

¹ <https://www.phantomgalleriesla.com/>

- 3) Employing local artists.
- 4) Encouraging community 'identity' or values around public art.
- 5) Contributing to the visual impact of Second Saturday with public art, that encourages walking/shopping (pedestrian connectivity).
- 6) Connections include the possibility for extending and sharing artwork through selfies as well as through a digital and analogue map and catalogue of local artists. (Each one will have a QR code for visitors to interact further with the artwork).
- 7). Artists will be paid for "use" of their images that will be printed on a banner that will be installed inside the window of the storefronts.

Secondary goal: to improve downtown vitality through policy

The City of Sonora could adopt several strategies to make their arts and cultural development efforts a success and begin to develop an Arts and Culture strategic plan for 2026 for the city of Sonora

1. Commit to consistent funding.
2. Plan for long-term cultural development.
3. Use underutilized spaces creatively.
4. Nurture private sector involvement.
5. Invest in public spaces to strengthen our arts offerings and position the city to take advantage (strategically) to develop the downtown into cultural districts.

Storefront window installations include a "tidying up of windows" to remove webs and other debris from commercial facades. Printed banners of original artworks will increase interest in the downtown street corridor while creating greater public space activation, increasing foot traffic, and encouraging downtown development. Supporting the Sonora downtown community from the ground up, generative economic and community development will employ the arts and artists to envision a vibrant business core and welcoming public common-spaces.

This pilot project seeks to:

1. Mitigate blight caused by empty buildings and businesses in our downtown area through temporary, removable artwork created by local artists and designers.
2. Develop a vetting process, through the development of a policy for evaluating public art, that includes:
 - Guidelines for production and display

- Pay scale that is fair and meets or exceeds compensation that is commensurate with market rates for the artwork produced or used for the purpose of beautification.
- Establishment of a panel that consists of artists, interested citizens, business owners and trusted parties.
- Establishment of a process by which each proposed public project is understood to improve and enhance the downtown space and will be evaluated using fair criteria that is known ahead of submissions.

In the future, if our pilot is well received, “The call for artwork” could be thematic, or it could be seasonal.

Initial Research Examples

Phantom Galleries L.A. (PGLA): revitalizes and energizes communities and pedestrian thoroughfares by converting vacant storefronts throughout Los Angeles County into temporary galleries and pedestrian viewing only galleries transforming districts into vibrant cultural hubs through the 24/7 public presentation of art.

Project for Public Spaces San Jose: Three vacant buildings lining the street on San Fernando and half a dozen more continuing around the corner on South First Street are now filled with artists' displays and installations. Phantom Galleries was created to both renew the magic in the daily journey downtown and increase the awareness of the importance of our local artists in the cultural/economic development of our city. ²

Arts in storefronts, San Francisco from 2010, funded by National Endowment for the Arts: ³ * note they have links to two documents as sample agreements between landlords and one for artists

Vacant to Vibrant: San Francisco arts commission evolved out of the 2010 Arts in storefronts mentioned above. ⁴

² <https://www.pps.org/places/phantom-galleries>

³ <https://www.sfartscommission.org/resources/art-in-storefronts-toolkit>

⁴ <https://www.vibrantsf.org/>

We propose that this pilot project (or proof of concept), begin with one or two of the facades that we have already identified and measured. * See page 4 images as our working examples.

Installing the banners on the inside of the storefront would prevent damage from vandalism. Each piece would be fitted to the orientation of the storefront window or windows in a way that will not cause harm to the window structure.

Example cost for window artwork at the vacant Superior Court, for 8 panels (3' x 7') is approximately \$500.00 ⁵

Initial artists for this pilot should represent different styles and topics:
Eleanor BonBon— Artist/Muralist and Policy Lead has provided an example of an expressive image so we can imagine the impact of color, emotion and visual interest.

As per our research:

- The original work by the artist would be \$250.00 to use their image. Artists would need to fill out licensing agreement with TCA, the Sonora Chamber of Commerce, the City of Sonora and the Visitor's bureau.
- ALL images must be the original work of the artist.
- All artists must provide an initial digital image in the format (orientation) H X W required.
- If selected, the image must be 300ppi for printing purposes.
- Building owners submission form, where they submit location and all information to aid, size photo of storefront.
- Initial pilot will provide a stipend for two facilitators who will work with the city and be responsible for organizing and implementing the installation.

Although this is for a mural project, some of the wording is pertinent:

<https://www.stanislausarts.org/news/now-accepting-artist-proposals-jennys-place-public-mural-project?>

⁵ <https://www.vistaprint.com/signs-posters/vinyl-banners>

June, 2025



Superior Court Example
Right Side Building, 4
panels, another 4 to the
left.



By far the worst! This has been like this forever!

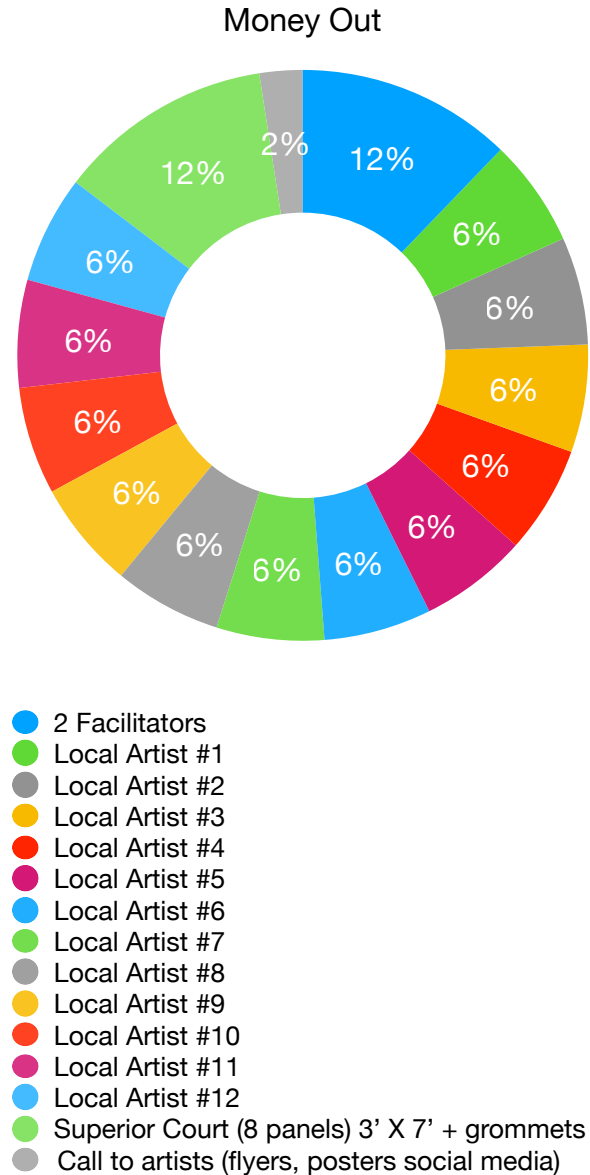


Original Artwork by Eleanor BonBon

Pilot Project: Beautification of Downtown

Money In	
Sonora Chamber/ Visit Tuolumne	\$7,500
Additional income	\$0
Total income	\$7,500

Money Out	
2 Facilitators	\$500
Local Artist #1	\$250
Local Artist #2	\$250
Local Artist #3	\$250
Local Artist #4	\$250
Local Artist #5	\$250
Local Artist #6	\$250
Local Artist #7	\$250
Local Artist #8	\$250
Local Artist #9	\$250
Local Artist #10	\$250
Local Artist #11	\$250
Local Artist #12	\$250
Superior Court (8 panels) 3' X 7' + grommets	\$500
Call to artists (flyers, posters social media)	\$100
6' x 8'	\$110



Money Out	
6' x 8'	\$110
6' x 8'	\$110
10' x 5'	\$120
10' x 5'	\$120
10' x 5'	\$120
5' x 8'	\$96
5' x 8'	\$96
5' x 8'	\$96
7' x 5'	\$90
7' x 5'	\$90
7' x 5'	\$90
4' x 8'	\$85
4' x 8'	\$85
4' x 8'	\$85
8' x 8'	\$145
8' x 8'	\$145
8' x 8'	\$145
10' x 8'	\$189
10' x 8'	\$189
10' x 8'	\$189
Total expenses	\$6,605
Money Left Over	
Income minus expenses	\$895

Respectfully submitted by: Laurie Livingston
Executive Director, Tuolumne County Arts Alliance, Inc.

Eleanor Bonbon
Small Business Owner, Unicorn Tattoo