

**Sarah Mayer** Public Comment - SB County Arts Commission



# 2

**From:** Sarah York Rubin  
**Sent:** Monday, January 8, 2024 12:08 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Cc:** George Chapjian  
**Subject:** FW: Please submit for public comment  
**Attachments:** Arts Commission Letter for Board of Supervisors January 9 Arts Hearing.pdf

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**From:** Mary Harris <maryharrisconnects@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 8, 2024 12:01 PM  
**To:** Sarah York Rubin <srubin@countyofsb.org>  
**Subject:** Please submit for public comment

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Please submit the attached letter for public comment.

Mary Harris, Chair  
Santa Barbara County Arts Commission

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
**Arts Commission**



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Dear Board of Supervisors,

As your representatives on the Arts Commission, and as stewards of the County 1% for Arts Program, we ask that you update and enforce the 1% for Arts Ordinance. The ordinance was created by our Supervisors as a commitment to the vitality and betterment of the communities where we live and work. As is, the program isn't functioning. First, it lacks timely and transparent communication about which capital projects can be eligible. When the ordinance *is* observed, the amounts are largely inaccurate, and we still aren't certain that all eligible projects are included. What's more, we frequently don't see the allocated money for years. This has deprived our communities of art and opportunities promised in the ordinance.

In November, at our regular meeting, we discussed how best to remedy this situation. We support the option to replace the current allocation process for an annual equivalent, as long as it remains an ordinance and there is a reasonable automatic annual process to account for inflation. We believe that this holds great promise and the figure of \$200,000 (\$150,000 being set aside for art with an additional set aside for employee work) to be adjusted with the index and deposited annually seems reasonable.

If you determine to keep the allocation process as-is, we request an amendment outlining the timely release of allocated funds to the Arts Trust. For reasons we still don't understand, we just experienced a 3-year hiatus in the transfer of Percent for Arts funding to the Arts Trust. This stopped us from doing our work, serving you, and serving our communities. If the current process is to remain, we ask the county to observe it. We also request an amendment to remove or recalculate the \$75,000 threshold, as well as an annual report of eligible capital projects.

If the current process is to stay in place, we would like all county staff to follow it. This entails-

- Application to "any capital project over \$100,000 paid for wholly or in part by the County of Santa Barbara to contract or remodel any buildings, structure, park or parking facility, or any portion thereof, within the limits of the County of Santa Barbara."
- That "all requests for appropriations for construction projects from eligible funds shall include as an item therein an amount equal to one percent (1%) of the estimated cost of such project or works of art."
- That "if the Board of Supervisors approves any such request, the Board shall include an appropriation of funds for works of art, at the rate of one percent (1%) of the estimated project cost to be deposited into the appropriate account to the County Art Fund."
- The "requirement for a presentation to the board on public art projects that are generated from eligible construction projects estimated at \$7.5 million or more" is either stricken or adjusted for inflation.

The Arts Commission is on the cusp of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In that time, Commissioners have loyally worked on behalf of the people of Santa Barbara County, and served as dedicated ambassadors to the County Board of Supervisors, to ensure that the County Percent for Art program continues to be robust.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
**Arts Commission**

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the program is that it helps to ensure that every community, regardless of size or resources, has access to the arts for cultural connection, creative growth, and hopeful futures.

We thank you for your support of this important ordinance and program.

Sincerely,

Mary Harris, Chair



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