



# Town of Yountville

6550 Yount Street  
Yountville, CA 94599

## Staff Report

Item #: B

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## Yountville Arts Commission Staff Report

**DATE:** September 9, 2024

**TO:** Yountville Arts Commission

**FROM:** Brad Raulston, Town Manager  
Samantha Holland, Parks & Recreation Director

**SUBJECT:**

Yountville Legacy Walk Concept, Potential Call for Artists for Review, Discussion, Feedback and Approval

**DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND**

The Town is preparing for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of incorporation on February 4, 2025. The Town Council created two “ad-hoc sub-committees” to help how the history of the Town is recognized and the event to celebrate the occasion. The Yountville Legacy Walk is intended to begin a tradition of recognizing pioneers and meaningful figures in the history of Yountville. It will complement the existing art walk and develop standards and protocols if approved by Town Council.

At the July 16 Town Council Meeting, the Council heard an item to accept a donation from Rob Orr of a life sized bronze historical sculpture of George Yount for placement at Town Hall. The proposal received feedback from the Council and staff brought the item to a subcommittee group made up of Mayor Mohler, Council Member Knight and Art Walk Subcommittee members Schaer, Meredith and Kapjian, the donor and Town Manager Raulston and Director Holland for further analysis. The joint sub-committees met and discussed the proposed sculpture. The discussion included questions about the type of sculpture, the artist, and how it would be placed in front of Town Hall. There were comments about how our modern history could be incorporated in the concept and how it related to our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Yount sculpture donation has expanded into the proposed Legacy Walk concept to be inclusive of others who have shaped Yountville into the community it is today. The Yountville Legacy Walk is the new concept for this project that proposes beginning with the sculptures of George Yount, Sally Schmitt and Frances Solis “Pancha”. If approved, this could evolve to include more in the future.

The Arts Commission Art Walk Subcommittee will work with staff to create and advertise a Call For Entry for the sculpture design of Sally Schmitt and Frances “Pancha” Solis. The concept is that this sculpture will be of Sally and Pancha at a table that will be located in Hopper Creek Park adjacent to the French Laundry Garden and across the street from the Solis Family compound and the French Laundry Restaurant. Staff is recommending the Legacy Walk start with the town’s namesake George C. Yount and these two women who shaped the early years of the Town. Additional sculptures will be analyzed for future installations.

Sally Schmitt and her husband Don moved to Yountville from Fresno in 1967. Don was hired to convert the old Groezinger Winery into what became the Vintage 1870 shopping arcade. Sally opened her first restaurant in

Yountville called the Vintage Café. In 1970 Sally and Don opened Chutney Kitchen, their second restaurant. In 1974 Sally and Don purchased the French Laundry building for \$39,000. In 1970 Sally and Don left the Vintage 1870 and their businesses behind to work on the French Laundry which opened in 1978. From there Sally's reputation and recognition as a chef receives a wide and admiring audience and she is on the cover of the Napa Valley Magazine with a feature story. Sally really has been called the pioneer of "Farm to Table" California Cuisine which she continued providing until 1993 when she cooked her last meal at the French Laundry before moving.

Frances "Pancha" Solis and her husband Ruben owned two popular Napa County restaurants, Jalisco and Cafe' Rancho Grande in the 1950's and 60's. Pancha was the matriarch of the family of 13 children and their home/compound was located just across Creek Street from the French Laundry on Washington Street in Yountville. In her cookbook, Six California Kitchens, Sally shared that Pancha was instrumental in sharing with Sally the local produce and farm to table, or garden to fork, cooking techniques that have been popularized by chefs such as Alice Waters and Thomas Keller.

### **CALL FOR ENTRY – LEGACY WALK**

Staff is proposing that the Art Walk Subcommittee weigh in on a call for entry for the Town to commission an artist to design and fabricate the sculpture of Sally and Pancha sitting at a farm table where others can join which will be located in Hopper Creek Park. A concept sketch of the park and the "pioneer art" is attached below.

The call will be released, and entries first reviewed by the subcommittee. The recommendation for the chosen artist and design will come before the Arts Commission for approval before going before the Town Council for final approval of the concept, design and artist agreement. Once a design is chosen, the park site will be analyzed for changes needed to accommodate it as well as improve accessibility to the park site.

### **GEORGE YOUNT SCULPTURE PROPOSAL AND DONATION**

Napa Valley resident and history buff Rob Orr has offered to donate a sculpture of George Yount to the Town. Attached are photos of a 2-foot maquette of the proposed George C. Yount historical sculpture from artist Don Budy of Colorado. The life-sized sculpture is being designed of George C. Yount in his 40's – 50's in buckskins as was found in historical documents to be what he wore on a daily basis. The sculpture is proposed to be installed in front of Town Hall along with the relocated Yount Mill stones as part of the Yountville Legacy Walk. A site plan is attached showing the sculpture being located behind the Mill Stones within the landscape area.

The George Yount sculpture is in the design process by artist Don Budy and photos of a 2-foot maquette are included in the packet for your review. This sculpture will be funded by donor Rob Orr and is being designed for placement in front of Town Hall along with the Yount Mill Stones that will be relocated from in front of Town Hall. More information about Budy can be found at <https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/don-budy>. Budy has completed several historical figure sculptures including one for the Town of Genoa, Nevada of Snowshoe Thompson (12' High) and a sculpture of Dr. Walter Heath for the City of Parker Colorado <https://parkerarts.org/art-gallery-exhibits/permanent-public-art/>.

Before the Arts Commission this evening is a request to discuss the Legacy Walk concept and provide feedback as well as the approval of the design concept of the George C. Yount sculpture. The Legacy Walk concept and sculpture design will then be brought forward to the Town Council for final review, approval and acceptance of the donation by Rob Orr.

If approved, the goal would be to include the unveiling of the Yount sculpture as part of the Yountville Commons grand opening and 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on February 4, 2025 and to approve the concepts and fund the Sally & Pancha art piece around the same time.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact? Yes

Is it Currently Budgeted? No

Where is it Budgeted? N/A

Is it Mandatory or Discretionary? Discretionary

Is there a Staff Resource Impact? Yes

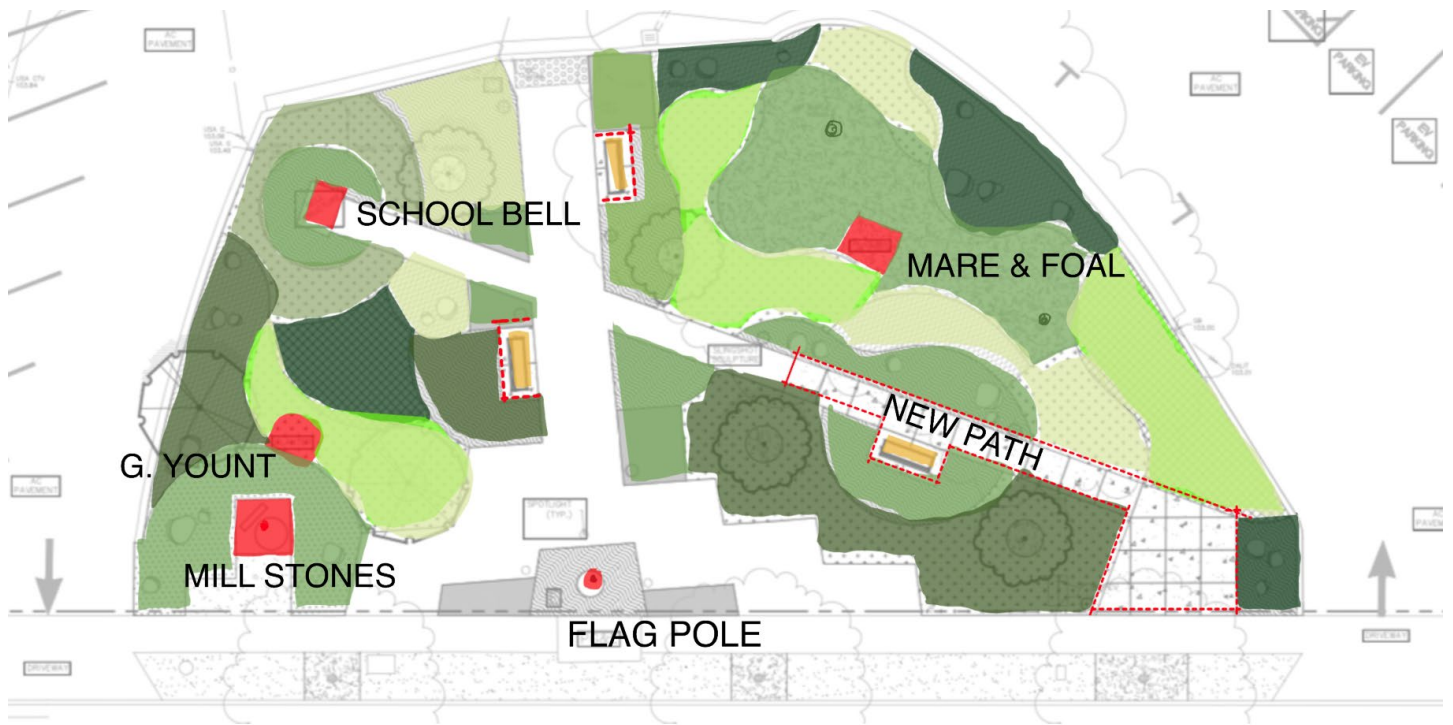
## **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive staff report and direct questions to staff.

Receive public comment.

Conduct discussion.

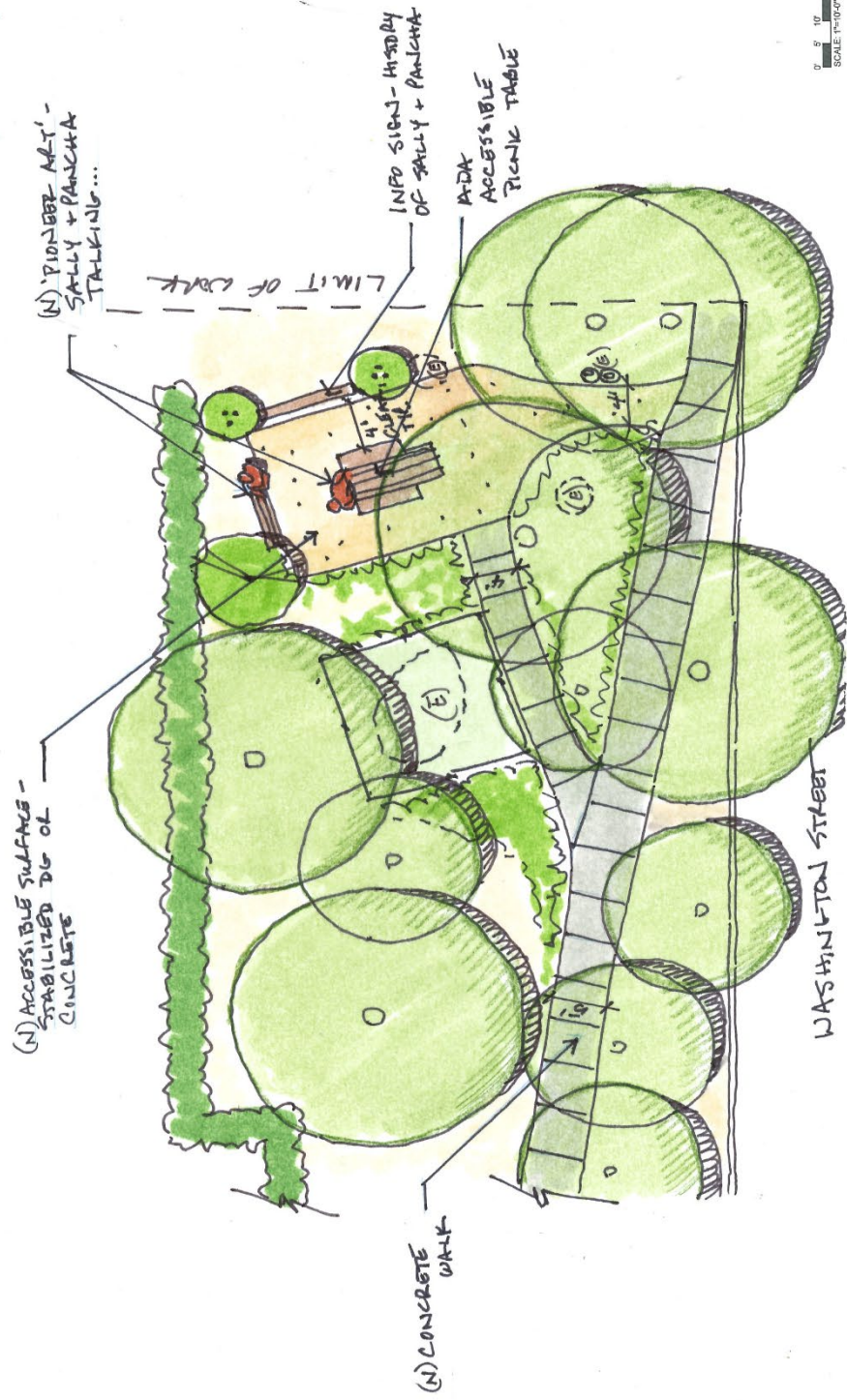
Motion and second to approve the Yountville Legacy Walk Concept and George Yount Sculpture by Artist Don Budy and recommend bringing forward to the Town Council for final approval.



## TOWN HALL ENTRY CONCEPT DESIGN







WASHINGTON STREET  
POCKET PARK IMPROVEMENTS  
YOUNTVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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AUGUST 2024