

COMMEMORATIVE BENCH SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The City of Novato wishes to adopt a uniform program for accepting charitable sponsorships to replace existing benches within city parks, along trails, or other public facilities. The Commemorative Bench Sponsorship Program is intended to provide individuals and organizations an opportunity to commemorate a person, celebrate an occasion, or express appreciation for parks and to provide a public benefit that supports the beautification of public spaces for the community.

The following Commemorative Bench Sponsorship Program serves to provide guidance and consistency to those interested in sponsoring a park bench in matters pertaining to bench standards, locations, length of terms, costs, plaques, and the application process.

This program is overseen and implemented by Novato Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department (PRCS).

1. PROCESS FOR SPONSORING A BENCH

- a. Review the Commemorative Bench Sponsorship Program Guidelines.
- b. Download and complete the Commemorative Bench Sponsorship Program Application.
- c. Submit completed applications via email to novatofun@novato.org for review.
- d. PRCS staff will be in contact with the applicant.

2. BENCH STANDARDS:

The City of Novato Public Works Department and Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department have a desire to standardize the sizes and style of benches installed throughout the park system to the greatest extent possible, with particular importance placed on the longevity, aesthetics, environmental considerations, accessibility, and maintainability of the furnishings. The PRCS Department works closely with the Public Works Department on these standards and identifying products that meet these needs on an ongoing basis.

Park benches are intended to be of a uniform design and commercial-quality construction. The model for sponsorship has been selected based on its maximum longevity, environmental considerations, aesthetics, and maintenance. Benches shall be six feet in length and able to be installed on the ground or surface mounted, depending on the approved location. If a commemorative plaque is requested—must include provisions to install the plaque centered in the backrest. When a park site and/or recreation facility is carrying out a particular theme, or is intended for specific use, the theme or use may be considered for the selection of an alternate park bench design. The PRCS Director or their designee will make the final approval of each commemorative bench to be installed.

In some circumstances, acceptable benches may not be commercially available due to backordered status, supply-chain manufacturing issues, or vendor shipping delays. In these cases, any pending commemorative bench applications may be suspended until an acceptable bench is available.

Bench donations commemorating commercial products, political parties, activist groups, or non-profit corporations involved in lobbying at any level of government, for-profit corporations, or memorials containing endorsements of products or services, or that otherwise may be construed to be advertising or commercial promotion are prohibited. It is forbidden to paint, stain, or lacquer the benches. Benches are maintained by the Public Works Department.

3. COST AND LENGTH OF TERMS:

Sponsorship of a bench includes the cost to furnish and install the bench and a plaque with inscription. Because these costs vary over time, an estimate to furnish and install a bench will be prepared following the submittal of an application. The applicant will be responsible for these costs and benches shall become the property of the City of Novato once they are installed. The City will maintain the commemorative bench and plaque throughout its usable service life, which is expected to be 10 years.

The term of each commemorative bench sponsorship shall be 10 years from the date of installation to coincide with the expected useful service life of the furnishings. When the sponsorship reaches its 10-year term, the sponsor will have an opportunity to initiate a new agreement for another 10-year term and pay for the cost of the new furnishing and installation, or have the plaque removed and returned at no cost to the sponsor. If the sponsor chooses to renew the bench dedication after its initial 10-year term, the sponsor will need to submit a new agreement and provide payment for a new bench and plaque.

If a bench is damaged beyond repair within 10 years of installation, the City will attempt to contact the sponsor to discuss replacement.

4. INSTALLATION & LOCATION:

It is the preference of the City to replace existing, older benches with new commemorative benches as a way to enhance the quality and aesthetics of park furnishings and reduce long-term maintenance costs. If the sponsor has a desired installation location for the bench, the City will work with the sponsor to try to accommodate the requested installation location. However, the final decision regarding location and placement must be consistent with City policies and approved by the PRCS Director or their designee.

The City of Novato retains the right to relocate a commemorative bench at any time. If the bench needs to be relocated, PRCS will attempt to contact the sponsor to discuss an alternate location. The PRCS Director, or their designee, will make the final determination for the bench location.

5. PLAQUES STANDARDS

Plaques installed on sponsored benches must be for an individual or a purpose that is non-controversial with text that is appropriate for display in a public place and approved by the PRCS Director, or their designee. The recognition will be regulated, styled, and handled in a tasteful and consistent manner, as determined by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Text that in any way markets a product or service shall not be permitted. The City of Novato will not pay for the replacement of damaged plaques. A new replacement plaque may be purchased.

The plaque is not intended as a memorial marker and may not include birth and death dates or years. Messages should be simple statements recalling the event or person(s) recognized. The plaque is merely symbolic of the sponsorship; it does not provide the sponsor with ownership of the bench.

6. CITY RESPONSIBILITY & CONDITIONS

The PRCS Department will inventory, date, and maintain a listing of sponsored benches and plaques. The City of Novato will not be held responsible if the contact information on file is outdated and the original sponsor cannot be contacted.

Should the name of any individual or organization honored on a plaque be considered to have acquired a negative connotation or definition, the City reserves the authority to revoke the sponsorship and remove the plaque.

As the intent of the Commemorative Bench Sponsorship Program is to provide a public benefit as and support the beautification of public spaces for all, sponsorship of a park bench shall not conflict with the City's mission, values, policies, goals, objectives, or future plans. Any individual or entity found to be engaged in the marketing, production, or distribution of items that are regarded incompatible with the City's mission, values, policies, goals, objectives, or future plans shall be barred from participating as a sponsor or being recognized on a plaque.