Preserving Public Art for the Future

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The San Francisco Arts Commission is tasked with the care and preservation of the Civic Art Collection – all 3,800 pieces
To ensure the City’s art for the future, we are now required to develop long term cost estimates as part of the City’s 10 Year Capital Plan.
But estimating the cost of preserving public art is harder than estimating the costs of other types of City infrastructure.
That’s because each piece of art is a unique asset that enriches public space, our cultural landscape and supports our local art community.
Part of each artwork’s uniqueness is in the material used, location, size and scale, microclimate, historical importance and current condition.
To estimate the cost of preserving, we had tried putting these pieces together but we were getting some odd estimates.
So what’s the best way to piece these factors together to estimate the cost of preserving public art over the long term?
The Arts Commission had already put the pieces in a particular order.
We first rearranged it to get an initial estimate from size and condition, update using material, then multiply by a frequency factor.
We then added some additional pieces like interest, fixed costs, a dynamic condition scoring to create long term cost projections and a prioritized schedule.

Revised formula:

\[ \text{Interest} + \text{Fixed Costs} = \text{Frequency Factor} \]

New components:

\[ + \% + \text{Fixed Costs} + \text{Interest} \]
Service Change
The new formula is built into Excel and allows us to easily update data, revise estimates at the push of a button and adjust model assumptions as needed.

- Copy and paste to update data
- Revise estimates at the push of a button
- Adjust assumptions
Built into the tool is long term projections of counts and costs by treatment type and data quality flags we can use to improve the data in our system over time.
Which allows us to easily generate 10-20 year forecasts for costs and to prioritize our preservation projects.
Data, for the love of the City

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