



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

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26-0063

Agenda Date: 4/15/2026

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### REPORT TO ARTS COMMISSION

#### SUBJECT

Review and Recommendation of Public Art for the Community Center Grounds Renovation

#### **REPORT IN BRIEF**

Subject to Council Policy 6.4.4 (Art in Public Places), the project budget for the Community Center Grounds Renovation (project #830310) includes a 1% provision for public art (\$94,173). This report provides information on the five conceptual design proposals for a new public art piece. The Arts Commission will review and rank each of the proposals and their recommendation will be forwarded to City Council on June 2, 2026 for consideration and final approval. There is no staff recommendation for this project.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Originally constructed in 1972, the Sunnyvale Community Center comprises 14 acres of scenic grounds and recreation buildings, including a Creative Arts Center, Performing Arts Center (Sunnyvale Theatre), Indoor Sports Center and Recreation Center. The complex was expanded in 2003 by adding the Senior Center and Bianchi Barn, and again in 2008 with the completion of the Heritage Orchard Park Museum.

The grounds include a quarter-mile walking trail that loops around the lower ponds amongst large lawn areas and trees, including a heritage valley oak tree estimated to be over 200 years old. The grounds also house several large-scale public art works by artists Sal Pecoraro, Dan Dykes, John Battenberg and Gordon Huether.

A renovation of the grounds began fall of 2024 and includes the following upgrades and construction:

- reduction of upper and lower pond sizes
- pathway and site lighting upgrades, including American with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements
- site furnishing upgrades (drinking fountains, benches, and tables)
- new plaza area with shade trees and picnic tables
- reduction of lawn area
- new amphitheater space
- new playground areas with swings
- new restroom and mechanical equipment building
- new game area (cornhole, table tennis, and chess/checker tables)
- new berm trails

Subject to Council Policy 6.4.4 (Art in Public Places), the project is required to incorporate 1% of construction costs for new public art, totaling \$94,173. To determine what public art should be installed, the City formed a nine-member Public Art Review Committee of art professionals,

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Sunnyvale residents and project staff. After the committee considered three locations appropriate for public art, they selected a planter area where three pathways converge in the center of the grounds as the most appropriate location.

In December 2025, a request for qualifications (RFQ) was distributed to artists and arts organizations through public art websites, artist networks, and the City's website inviting artists residing in California to apply for the commission (Attachment 2). A total of 19 artists applied for the commission and the review committee juried the applications down to five artists who were invited to develop detailed conceptual designs. The five artists/artist teams and their conceptual designs are outlined in this report.

The Arts Commission is being asked to review and rank the proposals. The Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to City Council on June 2 for consideration and final approval.

Following City Council's approval, staff will work with the selected artist/artist team to finalize the design, engineering, fabrication, placement and lighting of the art, as well as the development of a community workshop to engage residents. Any substantial changes to the approved conceptual design will require additional Arts Commission review and City Council approval before proceeding.

### **EXISTING POLICY**

Sunnyvale Municipal Code 19.52 - Art in Private Development

Sunnyvale Council Policy 6.4.4 - Art in Public Places

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

CEQA review was completed prior to awarding the construction contract for the Community Center Grounds Renovation, and staff determined that the project was exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the following CEQA exemptions: Class 1 (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(d)), which applies to repairs, maintenance or minor alterations of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing use; Class 2 (CEQA Guidelines Section 15302), which applies to the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures involving negligible or no expansion of capacity; and Class 30 (CEQA Guidelines Section 15330) which applies to the removal of contaminated soils and water from the lower pond. Public Art was a required condition of the project, and the artwork proposed will not create any new environmental impacts.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Selected Locations**

The project team, which included the architects, Department of Public Works staff and public art staff, identified four potential locations for public art (Attachment 3):

- amphitheater seating area
- centrally located pathway area
- lower pond seating area
- berm along East Remington Drive

In October 2025, the four locations were presented to the Public Art Review Committee and after review and discussion, the committee selected the centrally located planter area as the best location (Attachment 4). The committee determined this location would provide high visibility, with space to accommodate large-scale public art, without inhibiting planned programming or anticipated traffic flow.

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### **Proposal Considerations**

The RFQ outlined that the selected artists will be expected to align with the City's vision of inclusion and diversity, and to represent the City's brand essence: Bold, Sustainable Innovation. However, no other guidelines or themes were provided for this project, allowing the artists to focus on any element they chose to incorporate.

### **Community Workshops**

The selected artist/artist team will be required to provide a community workshop to allow residents an opportunity to either contribute to the final design or to create a related art project aligned with the art installation. Details of the workshops were not required as part of the conceptual designs but will be finalized as part of the contract process.

### **Maintenance Requirements**

Each of the designs proposed will be easy to maintain/clean and straightforward to repair if needed. Graffiti prevention and weather sealants have also been considered.

### **Lighting Requirements**

The selected location has a planned light pole within the triangular planter area that will provide ambient light for the art during evening hours. No additional lighting is planned for the artwork at this time. However, the artists may choose to supplement the ambient lighting as part of their scope of work, with consideration of light pollution and dark sky requirements.

## **CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PROPOSALS**

**Proposal #1 - Sijia Chen Studio** (Attachment 5). This design is a painted stainless-steel sculpture with cutout imagery and LED lighting. The sculpture will stand 12 feet tall and 4 feet in diameter.

The overall design will be a series of abstract geometric shapes placed together flat and rolled into a circular 12-foot tall cylinder. The surface of the metal will be perforated by imagery specific to Sunnyvale and developed by community members at a future date. The overall color of the sculpture will also be determined through community input at a later date.

**Proposal #2 - Faducci/Solomon Bassoff** (Attachment 6). This design is a hand-sculpted totem honoring threatened and endangered animal species indigenous to the region. It will serve as a landmark and reflection point highlighting the connection between humans and animals, the built environment and natural ecosystems, and the current and future stewardship of the community.

The sculpture will be 5 feet wide by 5 feet deep and 8.6 feet tall and will consist of a metal armature covered with hand sculpted and pigmented cement. The animals will be playfully stacked in a vertical composition that can be viewed from all sides. Animals include salamanders, mice, owls, birds, foxes, frogs, turtles and butterflies native to the area.

**Proposal #3 - Studiofolia/James Dinh** (Attachment 7). This artist was inspired by the culturally rich tapestry of Sunnyvale and Silicon Valley residents. He proposes to celebrate these values with an 8-foot tall aluminum sculpture that depicts the imagery and symbolism of birds to speak about ideas such as migration, community and home. These ideals are further illustrated by the sculpture's location, next to the Community Center's ponds, a favorite stopping point for many types of migrating birds, which have to adapt and settle with each new arrival.

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The sculpture will resemble a field of slender curving reeds, with 'folded' origami-like birds resting quietly on top. The look of the artwork will change as the viewer changes position and as the reeds move slightly in the wind, adding a kinetic element. The color of the birds will be determined through future community input.

**Proposal #4 - UrbanRock Design/Jeanine Centuori and Russell Rock** (Attachment 8). This design proposes a stainless-steel sculpture 10 feet high by 5 feet wide by 6 feet deep titled *Stride*. The outline of the sculpture is representative of a pair of robot-like legs, frozen in a stride formation and filled with rocks sourced from nearby quarries. The retro robot legs directly speak to the progress made by local technology-focused industries while the rocks filling the legs pay homage to the history of the land itself, including its original inhabitants. The artists see their design as representative of both the individual human form and a community of accomplishments.

**Proposal #5 - Patricia Vader** (Attachment 9). This design proposes a 16-foot tall, kinetic sculpture, fabricated from metal and recycled bicycle parts. Titled *Follow Me*, the sculpture makes reference to the water and activities taking place at the Community Center, while embracing the bicycle-friendly values of the City.

The overall shape of the sculpture is an inverted water droplet, with a central post supporting it. The post is topped by a fish-shaped wind vane mounted on a bicycle fork. The wind vane will move up and down towards a school of five smaller fish, seemingly inviting the smaller fish to follow. Just below the larger fish will be five circles and a few smaller bicycle wheels that act as spinning windmills. The smaller fish appear to swim in and out of this framework.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The project budget for the Community Center Grounds Renovation (project #830310) includes a 1% provision for public art (\$94,173). Ongoing maintenance for this project will require an estimated \$1,000-\$5,000 per year, depending on the selected design, based on comparable public art maintenance history. Maintenance costs for this artwork can be covered through the Public Art Maintenance Fund (890180).

#### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the Council meeting agenda on the City's official notice bulletin board at City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Public Library and in the Department of Public Safety lobby. In addition, the agenda and this report are available at the NOVA Workforce Services reception desk located on the first floor of City Hall at 456 W. Olive Avenue (during normal business hours), and on the City's website.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

There is no staff recommendation for this project.

Pursuant to the Art in Public Places procedures, the Arts Commission should rank the proposals and develop a recommendation to City Council for consideration and final approval. The selected conceptual design will be further developed with oversight from staff to meet the Art in Public Places guidelines within the allocated budget.

LEVINE ACT

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The Levine Act (Gov. Code Section 84308) prohibits City officials from participating in certain decisions regarding licenses, permits, and other entitlements for use if the official has received a campaign contribution of more than \$500 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant in the previous 12 months. The Levine Act is intended to prevent financial influence on decisions that affect specific, identifiable persons or participants. For more information see the Fair Political Practices Commission website: [www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html](http://www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html)

An "X" in the checklist below indicates that the action being considered falls under a Levine Act category or exemption:

**SUBJECT TO THE LEVINE ACT**

- Land development entitlements
- Other permit, license, or entitlement for use
- Contract or franchise

**EXEMPT FROM THE LEVINE ACT**

- Competitively bid contract\*
- Labor or personal employment contract
- Contract under \$50,000 or non-fiscal
- Contract between public agencies
- General policy and legislative actions

\* "Competitively bid" means a contract that must be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

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Reviewed by: Matt Paulin, Director of Finance  
Reviewed by: Ramana Chinnakotla, Director of Public Works  
Reviewed by: Sarah Johnson-Rios, Assistant City Manager  
Approved by: Tim Kirby, City Manager

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Reserved for Report to Council
2. Call for Artists
3. Site Plan
4. Selected Location and Photographs of Current Site
5. Sijia Chen, Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
6. Faducci Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
7. Studiofolia Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
8. UrbanRock Design Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
9. Patricia Vader Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
10. Staff Presentation