



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

24-0216

Agenda Date: 3/20/2024

REPORT TO ARTS COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Recommend Council Approve Art in Private Development Project - Hunter Properties/Cityline, titled Redwood Blue (Phase 2, Artwork 3 of 4)

BACKGROUND

Under the City's Art in Private Development Ordinance (Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 19.52), the Cityline project in downtown Sunnyvale is required to provide public art. This project was permitted prior to the adoption of the Master Plan for Public Art in 2020 and therefore requires a minimum 1% of the project's construction valuation be allocated for art, which is equal to \$1,378,090 (Attachment 2).

The artwork for Cityline will be commissioned and installed in two phases.

Phase 1 required a combined minimum artwork expenditure of \$451,381. The combined actual expenditure for artwork is \$799,103 or 1.7% of the project construction valuation.

1. 1000 Suns by Future Forms (Attachment 3) was approved by Council on Feb. 25, 2022 (RTC No 20-0064).
2. Fountain by Woody de Othello (Attachment 4) was approved by Council on July 14, 2020 (RTC No. 20-0053).

Both sculptures were installed in September 2022.

Phase 2 includes four planned artworks, with a combined minimum expenditure of \$926,709.

1. Heads by Olaf Breuning (Attachment 5) was approved by Council on April 19, 2022 (RTC No. 22-0372). Currently installed in a temporary location and it is valued at \$200,000. The permanent location for Heads will be reviewed at a future date once the design for Redwood Square is complete.
2. Dropping the Ball by Camille Henrot (Attachment 6) was approved by Council on Oct. 24, 2023 (RTC No. 23-0747) and is valued at \$392,000.
3. Redwood Blue (proposed)
4. TBD at a future date

This report provides information for the Arts Commission's review and recommendation to City Council for Redwood Blue, the third proposed artwork of Phase 2. Redwood Blue is valued at \$223,750.

The procedure established for reviewing artwork is:

1. Review the artist's background, including their experience and ability to design, fabricate and install large-scale artwork; and
2. Review the proposed artwork to determine whether the nature and style of the artwork is

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appropriate to the site; and

3. Determine whether the proposed artwork is appropriate in scale for the overall development; and
4. Review the location of the proposed artwork for accessibility to the public.

The Arts Commission usually has final approval for Art in Private Development projects; however, due to the high visibility of the Cityline project, the conditions of approval state: “Upon approval (recommendation) by the Arts Commission the plan shall be forwarded for review and approval by the City Council.” The Arts Commission’s recommendation will be considered by the City Council for final approval at the March 26, 2024 Council meeting.

The remaining artwork for the Cityline development will be reviewed by the Arts Commission and approved by City Council at a future meeting.

EXISTING POLICY

Sunnyvale Municipal Code Chapter 19.52 (Art in Private Development)

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In 2016 (RTC No. 16-0458), the Planning Commission approved a Special Development Permit to amend the Final Conditions of Approval for the Cityline project. Required public art was included in those amended conditions of approval. The approved amendments to the Special Development Permit Final Conditions of Approval, including the public art requirement, were determined to be within the scope of the previous environmental analysis for the Downtown Program Improvement Update in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15168(c)(2). Subsequent environmental review is not required as none of the exceptions to the exemptions specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 have occurred, the amended conditions were deemed categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15304 and 15305, and the specific art proposal consists of a moderately sized metal sculpture that does not present any new environmental impacts.

DISCUSSION

Project Location: In 2007, City Council approved a master land use and site development plan for the Cityline site. The site covers six blocks located between South Mathilda, South Sunnyvale, West Washington, and West Iowa avenues (Attachment 7).

Project Description: Phase 1 of the 36-acre development is complete and includes office buildings, apartments (including affordable units) and retail spaces. Phase 1 also incorporated re-opening the area surrounding the large redwood trees near Murphy and McKinley Avenues (future home of Redwood Square), the extension of Murphy Avenue, demolition of the former Macy’s building, new construction of the AMC theaters, and Whole Foods Market. Additional Cityline tenants include AT&T, Xfinity, Salon Republic, Ulta Beauty, Urban Plates, Road Runner Shoes, City National Bank, Pacific Catch, Rumble Boxing, Topsy Putt and Teazzi.

Phase 2 construction, currently underway, includes apartments, offices, retail spaces and a landscaped open space area (Redwood Square). This phase is scheduled to be completed fall 2024.

Artwork Location: Hunter Properties (one of the partner owners) is curating a “dynamic installation

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of public art that invigorates communal spaces and provides a link between the past, present and future of Downtown Sunnyvale...by engaging avant-garde contemporary artists whose work addresses methodologies and ideas of our time.” Hunter Properties is creating an outdoor art walk that visitors and residents can experience throughout the downtown.

The art will help activate pedestrian spaces throughout the urban environment by inviting community members to experience the public artwork and many small businesses, restaurants, and shops along the way.

Cityline artwork is being developed, approved and installed in two phases. Two artworks previously approved for Phase 1 have been installed along the McKinley Avenue corridor and one artwork for Phase 2 has been temporarily installed, also along McKinley Avenue, until its permanent home in Redwood Square is complete (Attachment 8).

A second artwork for Phase 2, Dropping the Ball, has been approved for the corner of Washington Avenue and Murphy Avenue and is slated for installation in Q1 of 2025.

The third artwork being proposed for Phase 2 will be located along a pedestrian walkway at the nexus of Redwood Square, adjacent to the Frances Street Arch (Attachment 9). The sculpture will be anchored by a base plate below ground and will appear to emerge from the streetscape like a tree trunk.

Selected Artist: The artist selected for this location is Mark Handforth (attachment 10). Mr. Handforth is a sculptor living in Miami, FL. Most recently, his works have appeared in national and international exhibits, including Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; The Modern Institute, Glasgow, Scotland; Modern Art, London, England; Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles, CA; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, MI.

Handforth’s public art installations include NYC Art in the Parks Program, New York, NY; Qatar-USA 2021 Year of Culture, Doha, Qatar; Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Miami, FL; Governor’s Island, New York, NY; and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL.

The artist creates sculpture from things on the street, altering them by bending, twisting, or exaggerating their size then placing them out of context. The result is slightly surreal and surprising, coaxing viewers into reconsidering the often overlooked. He describes his sculptures as a “play between the looseness of intention and the physical weighted reality of objecthood.”

They are an extension of his interest in defining the role of art within our environment and how art fits into the intersection where private and public spheres meet. “The public realm is by definition full of unpredictable activity...and objects entirely beyond my control, so my sculptures are quite deliberate and made to be surrounded by people and completed by crowds.”

Artwork Proposal: Hunter Properties selected Redwood Blue, a large aluminum star sculpture that rises 18-feet above the pavement. The lines/arms of the star will be constructed of a 10-inch wide, aluminum L-channel, bent into an abstract, fluid star and powder-coated blue. The relationship of the crisscrossed arm elements will change as the viewer moves closer, changes direction or circles around the piece.

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The star will be supported by a 12-inch wide, stainless-steel, reinforced, L-channel pole. The lowest point of the star will stand at 8-feet, 4-inches and the blue planes of the star will be lined with red, amber, and violet, fluorescent lights causing it to glow at night and create a “drawing in space.”

Maintenance: The powder coating on the aluminum and stainless steel will protect the sculpture from rusting and it can be repaired if the paint is chipped or scratched. When necessary, the sculpture can be washed with a mild soap and water. The bulbs for the lighting will need to be replaced every 15 to 25 years. The developer (or current landowner) is responsible for ongoing maintenance of the artwork.

Lighting Plan: Art in Private Development projects are required to submit lighting plans (SMC Section 19.52.050) to ensure lighting is incorporated into the overall art proposal. Final review and approval of the lighting plan and light fixtures is overseen by the Community Development Department as part of the permitting and installation process. This process allows for adequate review to verify the art lighting is following the various specific and precise plans within the City and the applicable design guidelines and standards, including Bird Safe Guidelines, Dark Sky Requirements, and Downtown Streetscape Standard Specifications and Details.

Hunter Properties’ proposal includes minimal uplighting around the sculpture base, at ground level (Attachment 12). These lights can be adjusted to point directly at the artwork to comply with dark sky requirements. Additionally, the lights will illuminate the varying shades of blue color and alert pedestrians to the support pole emerging from the cement. The oversized “star” element will include fluorescent light strands embedded in the crook of the L-channels, to provide added layers of colors.

Art Bond: The City has collected a security in the form of a bond to guarantee installation of the art. The bond will be held until completion of the public art requirement, consistent with SMC Chapter 19.52 (Art in Private Development). The requirement will be deemed complete when the following conditions are met:

1. Art installation
2. Plaque installation
3. Lighting installation
4. Covenant recording, requiring the property owner to keep and maintain the art
5. Verification of the 1% expenditure

FISCAL IMPACT

If the artwork is approved, the developer will be responsible for design, fabrication, installation costs, and ongoing maintenance of the artwork. There is no fiscal impact on the City’s operating budget other than incidental staff time to monitor the project, which is budgeted in the Art in Private Development Program.

The Developer is required to provide supporting documentation to substantiate the art expenditures and anticipates the total budget for Phase 2 artwork will be equal to or greater than the minimum 1% of the construction valuation requirement (\$926,709). If it is not, the Developer will be required to contribute the difference to the City’s Public Art Fund.

Attachment 2 of this report illustrates that the developer has exceeded the minimum art requirement for Phase 1 and is trending towards meeting or exceeding the minimum art requirement for Phase 2.

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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.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend Council Approve Art in Private Development Project - Hunter Properties/Cityline, titled Redwood Blue (Phase 2, Artwork 3 of 4)
2. Do not recommend Council approve the artwork as proposed

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Recommend Council Approve Art in Private Development Project - Hunter Properties/Cityline, titled Redwood Blue (Phase 2, Artwork 3 of 4)

Staff concludes that the artwork is consistent with the criteria for Art in Private Development requirements. Under normal circumstances, this sculpture would not be considered substantial enough to stand out in such a busy environment and situated between two very large buildings. However, staff concludes the sculpture is adequate for this project due to the following considerations:

- The urban landscape of downtown naturally lends itself to viewing the art up close, without the entire building as a backdrop.
- The sculpture is 18-feet tall and illuminated, so it will be visible over a crowd.
- This is one of six artworks being installed as part of a larger art walk experience throughout the downtown area.

Prepared by: Kristin Dance, Recreation Services Coordinator II

Reviewed by: Trenton Hill, Recreation Services Manager

Reviewed by: Damon Sparacino, Superintendent of Recreation Services

Reviewed by: Michelle Perera, Director, Library and Recreation Services

Reviewed by: Jaqui Guzmán, Deputy City Manager

Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Reserved for Report to Council
2. Art Expenditures
3. 1000 Suns
4. Fountain
5. Heads
6. Dropping the Ball
7. Vicinity Map
8. Artwalk Locations
9. Redwood Blue Proposed Art Location
10. Artist Resume and Past Works
11. Redwood Blue
12. Lighting Plan